

The Hoosier Orientation Handbook on Employment

A Guide for Indiana Employment Specialists

Center on Community Living and Careers

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

Indiana University

Third Edition

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This manual is a project of:

The Center on Community Living and Careers
The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
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**CENTER ON COMMUNITY
LIVING AND CAREERS**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

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This third edition of the *Hoosier Orientation Handbook on Employment* is an adaptation of a manual initially co-produced by the **Center on Community Living and Careers** at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University and the Supported Employment Consultation and Training (SECT) Center with support from Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The presentation of the material is similar to that of the original manual (original title: *Hoosier Orientation Handbook on Supported Employment*); however, this revision reflects changes throughout the state in programs, services, funding, and legislation since the original publication.

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The Center on Community Living and Careers will update the online version of this handbook to reflect changes to state and federal laws, policies, and service implementation in Indiana. You can find the online version of the *Hoosier Orientation Handbook on Employment* at <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/cclc-publications>.

ABOUT THIS BOOK. . .

The *Hoosier Orientation Handbook on Employment* is a basic introduction to employment services for new employment specialists working with Indiana community employment providers or agencies. If you are a new employment specialist reading this book, we want you to know that the *Hoosier Handbook* should complement any current agency orientation provided to you during your first few weeks of employment. The handbook does not replace in-depth training, such as Employment Specialist Training courses offered by the Center on Community Living and Careers, or the need for regular, continued education in the field of employment services. Beyond its initial training use, the handbook also serves as an ongoing reference and resource guide.

We have divided the manual into three sections:

1. **Foundations in Employment Services** (overview of disability, definition of employment services, the employment specialist's role, and the vision of employment services);
2. **Employment Services Systems** (referral and funding, rights and advocacy, and additional resources to support job seekers); and an
3. **Overview of Employment Services** (getting to know the job seeker, job development and placement, training and support, and ongoing support).

Each section builds upon the information in the previous section. Read in succession, the manual will fortify a basic understanding of the employment process and the role of the employment specialist.

Providing employment services requires the development of a complex skill set. Throughout the handbook, there are **employment specialist competencies** listed that correspond to the skills you will need to develop for a successful career as an employment specialist. Reading and understanding this manual is only the first step in achieving these competencies. An employment specialist is expected to work toward developing these skills during his or her first 6-9 months of employment by shadowing other professionals in the field, reading applicable references, attending training on specific skills, and obtaining knowledge related to employment services.

This manual will help you and your supervisor develop a personal learning plan. In each section, you will find thought-provoking **questions and suggestions for additional information**. The manual will be most effective when you take the time to answer these questions, seek out the suggested information, read and understand the **important things to remember**, and review the support information (glossary, list of abbreviations, and resources found at <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/resources-links>).

Becoming a successful employment specialist means continuously discovering new learning opportunities. This manual is only a beginning to developing skills. By participating in external and internal, formal and on-the-job training and through interactions with individuals with disabilities, the community, and others in the field, you'll begin your journey toward a productive and rewarding career!

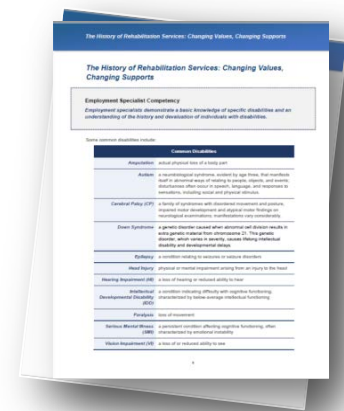


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FOUNDATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



The History of Rehabilitation Services: Changing Values, Changing Supports

Employment Specialist Competency

Employment specialists demonstrate a basic knowledge of specific disabilities and an understanding of the history and devaluation of individuals with disabilities.

Disability Services in the United States

Perhaps the most fulfilling aspect of your job as an employment specialist is that you have the opportunity to develop, strengthen, support, and make use of “ability.” This book will guide you and help you hone the skills you need to do just that.

To get there, though, it is important that you have an understanding of the history of the development of disability policy and support services in America. A short look back, will help you better understand where we’re headed.

There are medical, legal, and personal definitions of the word “disability.” Since we will be focusing on disability from an employment perspective in this book, we will use the definition provided by federal laws pertaining to work and nondiscrimination. Those laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). (More on those later.)

According to the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and WIOA, a person with a **disability** is:

“someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

The essential thing for you to remember is that not all individuals with a particular disability or diagnosis label are alike. Treating all of the people with disabilities that you work with or support as individuals and with respect is key to becoming a successful, effective employment specialist.

Some Common Disabilities	
<i>Amputation</i>	actual physical loss of a body part
<i>Autism</i>	a neurobiological syndrome, evident by age three, that manifests itself in abnormal ways of relating to people, objects, and events; disturbances often occur in speech, language, and responses to sensations, including social and physical stimulus.
<i>Cerebral Palsy (CP)</i>	a family of syndromes with disordered movement and posture, impaired motor development and atypical motor findings on neurological examinations; manifestations vary considerably.
<i>Down Syndrome</i>	a genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in extra genetic material from chromosome 21. This genetic disorder, which varies in severity, causes lifelong intellectual disability and developmental delays.
<i>Epilepsy</i>	a condition relating to seizures or seizure disorders
<i>Head Injury</i>	physical or mental impairment arising from an injury to the head
<i>Hearing Impairment (HI)</i>	a loss of hearing or reduced ability to hear
<i>Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD)</i>	a condition indicating difficulty with cognitive functioning; characterized by below-average intellectual functioning
<i>Paralysis</i>	loss of movement
<i>Serious Mental Illness (SMI)</i>	a persistent condition affecting cognitive functioning, often characterized by emotional instability
<i>Vision Impairment (VI)</i>	a loss of or reduced ability to see

A History of Segregation; the Development of Employment Services

Historically, individuals with disabilities in America and other countries were treated with disrespect, pity, or fear. They were often labeled and defined by their disability. Many individuals with disabilities were segregated in the classroom; in work situations; and in non-work, recreational activities.

The effects of segregation can stifle change and growth. Individuals with disabilities in segregated settings seldom have the opportunity to interact with the community. Aside from family members and other personal stakeholders, interactions are often limited to either paid staff or other individuals with disabilities. There is little chance to meet new community members, limiting networking opportunities and personal relationships, and hindering the potential to model positive behaviors.

The History of Rehabilitation Services: Changing Values, Changing Supports

Until the mid-1980s, many Americans and policy makers believed that **sheltered workshops** were the ideal mechanism for the employment of individuals with developmental and other disabilities. These sheltered experiences were the intended training grounds for competitive work experiences. States, service providers, and even groups of families developed them as safe places where individuals with disabilities gathered to develop work skills. Unfortunately, sheltered workshops often promoted segregation while limiting community-based opportunities.

This chronology lists the development of service provisions for individuals with disabilities in the United States:

Development of Service Provisions	
1800s	Special schools and training center models are developed.
1900s	Population of institutions flourish.
1930s	The Fair Labor Standards Act is signed into law; it includes a subminimum wage clause (14c).
1960s	Community options are explored.
1970s	Normalization and deinstitutionalization become priorities.
1980s	Community options are readily seen as viable options to segregation; supported employment grows.
1990s	Inclusion activities gained momentum; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is signed into law.
2000s	Community-based service initiatives and efforts to close institutions continue to grow.
2007	Employment First Initiatives begin. "Employment is the first and preferred outcome of people with disabilities."
2008	Americans with Disabilities Act is amended.
2014	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is signed into law.

Employment Services for Individuals with Mental Illness

Individuals diagnosed with mental illness are often placed in segregated day treatment programs. Heavily grounded in medical treatment models (treating and/or curing an illness), day treatment is frequently combined with simulated activities and therapy. These programs, not unlike sheltered work, minimize daily living options, choice, and community exposure.

Newer developments in day treatment programs for individuals with mental illness include Community Support Programs **Psychosocial Rehabilitation**, often organized as a Clubhouse model, Recovery Works, or as **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams**. These programs generally offer a package of services that includes social/recreational, vocational, residential, and educational opportunities. These service areas focus on helping members develop necessary skills and supports to function within their communities. Community-based employment programs for people with serious mental illness come out of this model.

Shifts in Values and Assumptions

Services in the rehabilitation field are constantly changing. These shifts are influenced by disability, civil rights, and self-determination movements, research, and lawsuits.

We can find the rationale for these changes in shifting values and assumptions:

FROM a focus on pre-requisites, readiness, and a continuum of services TO providing individualized and customized supports so people can live, work, and contribute to their community. Traditionally, programs focused on a continuum of services (institutions, day habilitation programs, work activities, work adjustment, sheltered work, and then community employment). Individuals had to demonstrate they were ready for the next step. While this may sound logical, the reality was that many individuals were never making it to the community.

FROM a focus on disabilities and trying to correct “deficits” TO recognizing and encouraging capacities and gifts. Traditionally, services were based on the medical treatment model. The role of rehabilitation staff was to find out what someone could NOT do and try to fix it. Value shifts have led providers to realize that individuals with disabilities have strengths and capacities to build upon.

FROM a belief that the community is rejecting, hostile, and unsafe for people with disabilities TO believing in the capacity of natural communities to accept and include individuals with disabilities. Reluctance and non-belief by providers may hinder the process much more than the reality of the community. Instead of thinking that the community is cold, rejecting, the “enemy,” dangerous, too risky, and incompetent, providers are realizing there are many community members who are tolerant, welcoming, appreciative, helpful, and yet inexperienced.

FROM an assumption that professionals know best and that they need the power TO taking direction from individuals with disabilities and the people who know them well. Professional control is no longer emphasized; work is not delegated to direct service workers; interdisciplinary teams are not being relied on to generate plans; meetings are not being organized in conference rooms at the convenience of professionals; and the team is not spending a lot of time planning with little action. Instead, professionals are sharing decisions with the person, family, and friends; empowering direct service workers; utilizing person centered teams; organizing in the communities at the convenience and comfort of the person, family, and friends; and spending lots of time taking action with regular planning time (Mount, 1989).

Out of these value shifts came changes in services. A growing number of people with disabilities were not satisfied with traditional, segregated options. The field was motivated to discover new ways to provide services. Universities developed research and demonstration projects in an attempt to discover processes that no longer focused on pre-requisites, readiness, and life-long continuums of services.

The Emergence of Employment Services

Supported employment emerged as an alternative to segregated, traditional services. Since the late 1970s, experimentation with employment models has expanded to the point of national acceptance.

The History of Rehabilitation Services: Changing Values, Changing Supports

States are increasingly using employment services to improve the outcomes of supported employment. The success of employment services arises from research and very basic, firm values. Some of these underlying values are:

- Everyone has the right to participate, to be employed, and to be integrated in his or her community, with access to adequate supports. We assume that everyone has the capacity to learn job skills and build relationships. The community will support individuals to contribute and be included.
- People with disabilities find community employment desirable and dream of contributing to their communities. This contribution includes responsibility to the community.
- Employment services should support dignified interactions between individuals with disabilities and others.
- Service providers assisting individuals with disabilities through employment services must participate in thorough training to support the job seeker or VR consumer's goals.
- Supported employees deserve to be connected to their communities in a respectful manner. Service providers and employers should treat supported employees as competent people who have choices and who are free to make decisions.
- As employment services participants, individuals have access not only to employment, but also career planning, job development, job placement, work supports, life-community supports, and career advancement. (Adapted from APSE's "Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment.")



This chronology shows the development of employment services in Indiana:

Development of Employment Services	
Early 1980s	State begins early supported employment demonstration projects.
1987	The state begins to expand employment services.
1988	Indiana implements employment services throughout the state.
1989	There are 21 successful supported employment closures for the year.
1992	Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services creates two employment services technical assistance centers.
1996	There are over 100 providers of supported employment throughout the state. State forms Conversion Task Force to help eliminate barriers preventing access to community-based services.
1997	There are 987 successful employment closures for the year.
2002	Numbers of community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and participants continue to increase.
2006	Indiana moves to an outcome-based funding system for employment services.
2007	State adopts Employment First Initiative.
2015	Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services introduces a new Employment Services Model, which is a hybrid of outcome-based and hourly funding.
2017	Employment First is signed into law in Indiana.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. What are some ways a label can be harmful to a person? Have you ever “labeled” anyone? If so, were the “labels” accurate?
2. How are intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) and mental illness different? Explain.
3. Do you believe simulated work activities can be beneficial? What can a person learn in a segregated environment that they cannot learn in the community?
4. Find out what “labels” of disability your agency typically serves. Are there other providers in the community that serve these individuals or individuals with different “labels”?
5. How are people with dual diagnoses (e.g., mental illness and developmental disability) served in your area? Does your agency provide services to these individuals? If not, how might an individual who has needs in both areas get the services they need?
6. Many websites contain information on disabilities. Type any disability category into a search engine and see what pops up (Down syndrome, mental illness, or even the general term “disability”). Often, websites will also contain links to other related websites.

Things to Remember

- ✓ Employment services are a successful and growing rehabilitation option for anyone with a disability.
- ✓ The effects of segregation can stifle personal growth and change. Interactions directly with the community often result in networking opportunities, expansion of life options, and real choices.
- ✓ Individuals with disabilities are all uniquely different, much like individuals without disabilities. A disability label does not define the totality of the person.
- ✓ The roots of employment services are firmly planted in ethical values and are research based.

What Are Employment Services?

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists believe that all people have the right to work and that no one should be excluded from employment services based on “readiness” skills or disability.*
- *Employment specialists maintain flexibility to ensure that their job seeker is the primary decision maker, that he or she remains engaged, and that the job seeker’s needs are met throughout Discovery, job selection and support provision.*
- *Employment specialists use a “rapid job search” as appropriate, based upon preference of the job seeker.*
- *Employment specialists understand that people with serious mental illness (SMI) have unique challenges and that employment services must be offered in a manner that is responsive to their needs.*

Work is an important part of life. It offers financial security, personal challenges, growth, and the potential to develop relationships. Employment services offer individuals with disabilities the opportunity to be successful at community work. Vocational rehabilitation provides quality individualized services to enhance and support people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or retain employment.

Employment Services Defined

The provision of employment services is a process of ongoing supports that assist an individual, regardless of severity of disability or intensity of supports needed, to be employed at a real job for real wages.

Successful employment is paid work with ongoing supports in an integrated setting for those with the most significant disabilities. Paid work implies commensurate wages paid by the local employer or business.

An **integrated setting** refers to an employment situation where individuals have the opportunity to interact with non-disabled individuals to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with others.

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and subsequent Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2014 defined “**supported employment**,” as:

“...competitive employment in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward integrated competitive employment, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals, for individuals with the most significant disabilities

(a) for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred; or

(b) for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and

(c) who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services for the period, and any extension, described in paragraph (36)(C) and extended services after the transition described in paragraph (13)(C) in order to perform such work.

Supported employment may be transitional for persons with chronic [serious] mental illness.”

Additionally, **customized employment** was added as a VR service and defined as:

“competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on the individualized determination of the strengths, needs and interests of the individual with a significant disability,” is “designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer,” and is “carried out through flexible strategies.”

Ongoing employment supports are services needed by an individual with a disability in order to continue successfully performing his or her job after stabilization has occurred. WIOA 2014 extended the standard post-employment support services under supported employment from 18 to 24 months.

What Are Employment Services?

Section 7 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 defines a “**significant disability**” as:

An individual. . .

- who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
- who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end stage of renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined, on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Finally, WIOA 2014, defined “**competitive integrated employment**” as full- or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities.

Employment services create and expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The employment services process may include:

- Getting to know the individual with a disability;
- Discovery services, which provide an opportunity for the job seeker and his or her team to explore talents, interests, preferences, capabilities, ideal work environment, challenges, support strategies, and informed choice in order to identify an appropriate vocational goal;
- Developing relationships with employers;
- Placement assistance, including job exploration and job development;
- On-the-job training and support as needed;
- Assistance with developing natural or typical supports;
- Performance monitoring and enhancement;
- Advocacy and community building;
- Career planning;
- Supported employment and/or customized employment, including on- and off-site supports;
- Extended/ongoing support for as long as needed, including both on- and off-site supports.

See the section, Overview of Employment Services, for more detailed information.

Employment services is **NOT**:



...a readiness program.

There are no job readiness criteria used to screen potential supported employees. All people, regardless of type or severity of disability, can work in the community. A person does not have to “prove” worthy of employment by participating in a daily activity or sheltered work program. The belief that everyone, regardless of type or severity of disability, has the right to work in the community or participate in any social or non-work activity is known as zero exclusion.



...transitional in nature.

Community employment is a desired goal. Employment is a preferred entryway into the world of work. An individual need not “graduate” into an employment program. However, employment services may be considered transitional employment (a series of temporary job placements leading to a permanent job placement) for people with serious mental illness.



...a “cookie cutter” approach.

It is individualized to meet a job seeker’s unique needs, capitalizing on his or her capacities, interests, personal strengths, and dreams. In the mental health arena, the employment process is often called the “choose, get, keep, leave” vocational model (Bond, 1991).



...a “place ‘em and pray that the job will work” program.

Employment services is a systematic process with its own technologies and methodologies.



...a short-term commitment.

By its very nature, employment services offers ongoing services.



...an individual effort.

A partnership of many—including the job seeker, the employment specialist, the employer, VR, other service providers—is fundamental to the employment services process.

Because this process emphasizes the job seeker, there is a high correlation between job seeker satisfaction and success. This personal success brings with it important contributions to community. The benefits to individuals and their communities include:

- Individuals with disabilities contribute to society by engaging in meaningful work, earning wages, paying taxes, and accessing community activities and resources as consumers of goods and services.
- Employers realize individuals with disabilities are productive and loyal employees and are an overall asset to their businesses.
- Individuals with disabilities transcend the stereotypes of being “disabled” by filling the roles of employee, co-worker, mentor, and friend.
- Individuals with disabilities engage in relationships outside the network of paid providers.
- People with disabilities gain control of their lives.

Employment Services for People with Mental Illness

There are many employment service providers throughout the United States and within Indiana whose consumer base reflects people with a variety of disabilities. Some of these providers offer programs that singularly support people experiencing a persistent and serious mental health diagnosis.

While employment services embrace universal principles and methodology, service delivery can look quite different for people experiencing serious mental illness (SMI). Serious mental illness is a persistent condition affecting cognitive functioning often characterized by emotional instability. When supporting people experiencing SMI toward employment goals, employment specialists must recognize unique differences that may exist when providing individualized, strength-focused, and respectful services. As noted by Drake, Bond & Becker (2012), the reasons most people with SMI want to work include “pursuing normal adult roles, participating fully in society, having something meaningful to do, meeting other people, having more income and so on.” In addition, “they want jobs that are competitive, interesting, and challenging...”



Individual Placement and Support for Job Seekers with Serious Mental Illness

The Individual Placement and Support service model was developed to more effectively and responsively address unique challenges presented by SMI.

Regardless of whether a provider formally defines or describes their services as Individual Placement and Support to their clients, you should be aware of the eight guiding IPS principles, which apply to all job seekers with SMI:

- 1. Competitive employment**—This is the goal for all consumers, including those with SMI. Employment specialists understand and believe that competitive employment is attainable for all consumers and that it encourages direct entry into the competitive work force.
- 2. Zero exclusion**—Eligibility for services is based upon a consumer’s expressed desire to work. Eligibility is not determined by required readiness programming, diagnosis, symptomology, hospitalization history, substance abuse, or legal involvement.
- 3. Close integration and communication with a mental health team**—Mental health and vocational services should not be provided in isolation with one another. Professionals on the employment team and the mental health team work together, alongside the client, toward optimal outcomes and service coordination.
- 4. Client preferences and choice guide service provision**—clients with SMI often arrive for services with already identified preferences, strengths, work experiences, awareness of workplace likes/dislikes and can strongly identify with work types/venues/responsibilities. “Several studies have shown that most clients with serious mental illness hold specific occupational preferences and that these preferences are usually realistic and fairly stable over time” (Drake, Bond & Becker, 2012). Moreover, “...clients who obtain jobs matching their initial preferences will be more satisfied with their jobs and will continue working longer than those who are not matched” (Drake, Bond & Becker, 2012).
- 5. Personalized benefits counseling**—This critical service component for all consumers must be delivered by a knowledgeable employment specialist. At minimum, you should connect your client

to a professional who can accurately provide benefits counseling as soon as possible. Understanding the impact of earned income upon benefits received can go a long way to calm fears connected to working and, as a result, improve financial empowerment and self-direction for consumers.

6. **Rapid job search**—This does NOT mean rapid placement. Rapid job search/job development simply means you and your job seeker are investigating job preferences immediately, using his or her preferences, choice, and experience to plan for job development. “Rapid” refers to the immediate process of looking for a job, not an immediate placement outcome.
7. **Systematic job development**—You spend dedicated time, weekly, building relationships with a wide variety of employers throughout the community. Consumers with SMI can often become discouraged and give up when attempting job searches on their own, despite what can be a strong desire to do so. According to Swanson and Becker (2013), “...if an employment specialist builds a relationship with an employer over time and then asks the employer to meet her client, there is a greater chance of that person being hired.” Relationship building through informational interviews and networking can be an invaluable tool for you.
8. **Support and follow along is not time limited**—As with supported employment, follow-along supports are individualized and continue for as long as the consumer indicates they want and need the support.

It is important that you adapt supported employment services ways and means, described throughout this manual, in a manner responsive and respectful to the unique challenges presented by a consumer with SMI. Some service delivery might look the same, some service delivery may look a bit different, and some service delivery will be entirely different. For example, Discovery will likely not roll out in the same manner for a job seeker with little or no work experience or self-awareness. The timeframe for completion may look different.

The experiences you use to gather information from Discovery may come from, in fact, actual job placements. If your consumer with an SMI finds a job immediately, but the job plan has not been finished yet, you and the consumer can use this job experience to gain further information about ideal job conditions, challenges, and strategies for support. In this case, Discovery would not stop and job placement begin, instead, you would support your consumer throughout the experience as you both discover additional information.



For more information, visit the IPS Employment Center at:

<https://www.ipsworks.org>

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/page29/page31/page31.html>



For more information about Indiana employment services, visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS-Manual%20of%20Employment%20Services%20Revised%20September%202016.pdf> and review the **Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual of Employment Services**.

Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. How are Indiana's employment services unique in contrast to other rehabilitation options? Why do you think it is successful?
2. What is your agency's mission? Do written value statements exist to support this mission?
3. What are your program's admission criteria for employment services? Are these criteria consistent with your organization's mission? Is this consistent with the employment services philosophy of zero exclusion?
4. Before this job, did you have any personal connections with a person with a disability? In what ways did those connections influence you?
5. What would you do if an individual really wanted to participate in employment services, but his or her significant others were against the idea?
6. Who are the other community rehabilitation providers in your area? How do their services differ from those provided by your agency? (Indiana VR can provide you with a list of supported employment providers in your area and across the state. Ask your program manager, local VR counselor, or find a list online at VRS.in.gov).
7. If you were an employment specialist unfamiliar with a specific mental health diagnosis and accompanying medication regimen, what would be your next steps?
8. How might employment service delivery to someone with a persistent mental health diagnosis look different than services to someone with an intellectual or developmental disorder?

Things to Remember

- ✓ Employment services rely on an equal partnership between the job seeker and the service provider. Both the individual and the employment specialist have defined rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Involvement in employment services requires sensitivity to all aspects of an individual's background and culture, current living situation, and dreams.
- ✓ Employment services involve a process of discovery.
- ✓ The main purpose of employment services is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment consistent with their interests and skills.
- ✓ Consider the principles of the IPS model when working with job seekers.

Skills Every Employment Specialist Must Have

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists display flexibility to make changes in daily schedules and have the ability to perform multiple tasks effectively and efficiently.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate working knowledge of positive behavior supports, support strategies, and assistive technology. All supports must be as typical and non-intrusive to individuals and the workplace as possible.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate familiarity with the local business community and resources.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate effective writing, documenting, and recording skills that use alternative formats as needed to assure understanding for everyone.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate effective conflict resolution, negotiation, problem solving, and self-advocacy skills and promote these skills in the individuals they serve.*

There may be many agency staff involved in the lives of individuals with disabilities. The professionals primarily responsible for assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through employment services are often known as employment specialists. Other common job titles for these positions include employment training specialist, employment advisor, employment consultant, employment support specialist, case manager, job developer, and job coach.

The employment specialist's role is one of equal partner, active supporter, and assistant as defined by the individual with a disability. It is a role of partner, consultant, and resource to an employer and of partner, vendor of service, and liaison to the funding source. It is important to balance these roles and remember that all these parties are your consumers.

Essential Employment Specialist Skills

Effective employment specialists must have a wide variety of skills, including:

- Specialized knowledge about the employment services process;
- Active listening skills, communication skills, and the ability to give feedback;
- Knowledge of support mechanisms, including positive behavior and natural supports, systematic instructional strategies, assistive technology and other typical, non-intrusive supports;
- Marketing and networking skills;
- General case management and collaboration skills, including effective recording and documentation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and problem solving;

Skills Every Employment Specialist Must Have

- Advocacy and facilitation skills;
- Knowledge and application of various disability and employment related legislation;
- Understanding of government entitlement/benefits and their inter-relationships; making connections to other organizations;
- Ability to work independently and as part of a service delivery team; and
- Willingness to work a flexible schedule.

Professional Skills

Regardless of the qualifications required (some agencies require a college degree while others do not), employment specialist is a professional position, and staff must conduct themselves in that manner. Whether working with individuals, employers, family members, or other service providers, it is important that employment specialists display confidence, competence, and professionalism. Some tips include:



- Communicate to all consumers to keep them updated and to let them know what's going on. Decide on a communication schedule with families or caregivers, if needed (e.g., once a week).
- Return all phone calls and emails within 24 hours.
- Communicate with job seekers, VR, and businesses in a professional manner. When writing an email, start with a greeting such as, "Dear Mr. Counselor"; use complete sentences; and use a signature so that people know how to get in touch with you. Your company may have a policy about how you answer the phone. If not, it's always a good idea to identify yourself and the company or program you work for.
- Dress the part. Carry an extra set of clothing with you, so you can be prepared for training at job sites, as well as job developing, or meetings with individuals or families. Also, remember your emotional appearance: Remain calm, collected, and confident.
- Be on time for all appointments, meetings, etc., and ALWAYS call if you are going to be late.
- Follow through on commitments, do what you say you're going to do, talk the talk and then walk the walk. Keep a to-do list, track assignments, and deadlines. Keep your calendar with you at all times. Try not to procrastinate and put off undesirable tasks.
- Keep brochures and business cards with you at all times. You never know when an opportunity for networking or job developing will come along.
- Be confident! You do not need to know everything; no one expects you to. But you do need to show confidence in your problem-solving ability. Say "I can find out" or "I'll refer you to someone who can help" to demonstrate your willingness to answer questions. Sometimes (for example, during job development with an employer), it may be more beneficial to "be impressed" than to "impress." This indicates that you are listening to the employer and paying attention to his or her needs, and not focusing too much on impressing him or her about what you know.
- Take time to thank people.

Documentation Skills

Do your paperwork (because it will not go away)! Edit and proof every letter, report, and other document that leaves your desk. Ask others for assistance if spelling and grammar are not your best skills. Be concise and brief. Be neat and legible. Be person-centered and respectful in your text. In other words, write about the person as though he or she would read it, avoiding unkind or judgmental statements that might be offensive to him or her. Be as objective and factual as possible in your writing. Make sure everyone who needs copies, gets copies in a timely manner.



Always document the necessity of your actions, in relation to the person's needs and the plan that you have established with him or her. If you cannot make a connection between what you did and what the individual needed and what was planned, it may not have been necessary.

Do not get behind; paperwork procrastination will come back to haunt you.

Organizations may use different software systems or have different protocol about how to take documentation. However, there are VR requirements that all organizations must follow. Additionally, it is always a good idea to confirm documentation expectations with your VR counselor ahead of time to avoid confusion!



Discovery

Discovery is the first step in the job search process. The Discovery Profile captures all of the information learned during the Discovery process to guide the job search activities. With each completed Discovery activity, you should update the profile with what you've learned. On a monthly basis, you'll send a summary of what you've learned to VR. You'll send the Discovery Profile itself at least every 90 days or more frequently if necessary. Always update the profile, because you never know when your VR counselor will ask for it!

Job Development

Keep in contact with your VR counselor through email, phone calls, and in-person meetings. At a minimum, you should submit a monthly update to VR.

On the Job

After a job seeker lands a job, you will be required to complete the "Employment Services and Retention Plan (ESRP)" within the first four weeks. You can do this sooner, though! You'll complete and submit a plan quarterly (every 3 months), but you also will use the form to send a monthly update to VR. The plan should outline all of the supports, both on and off the job, that the person will receive to be successful in employment. You will use the ESRP to document all of the supports you are providing until your consumer reaches stabilization.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. What title(s) does your agency use to describe the employment specialist position? Obtain and compare job descriptions of all employment-related positions in your agency.
2. How would you describe your role as an employment specialist to someone unfamiliar with rehabilitation services?
3. The Library at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community is a full-service lending library with a wide variety of resources about disabilities across the lifespan available online and for checkout. The Library loans and sends publications through the mail. The only cost is for shipping and handling of return materials. The collection is available for review online through the Indiana University Libraries' IUCAT system (www.iucat.iu.edu). Contact the library toll-free at (800) 437-7924 for assistance or visit the website at <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/library>.
4. The Center on Community Living and Careers, at Indiana University's Institute on Disability and Community offers certificate trainings and a number of other trainings for Indiana employment providers. Periodic flyers announcing dates and locations are sent to all employment program managers and are also available online at <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/cclc>.
5. Consider joining the **Association of People Supporting Employment First** (APSE). Your organization may already be a member. APSE publishes a quarterly newsletter, holds annual national conferences, publicizes current issues of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, disseminates information, and advocates for individuals with disabilities. They also publish ethical guidelines for professionals in supported employment. Membership in APSE includes membership in the Indiana Association for People Supporting Employment First (IN-APSE). Contact APSE at www.apse.org.
6. Many publications are available through the Training Resource Network www.trn-store.com.

Things to Remember



Employment services offers ongoing support and requires flexible work hours.



Every employment opportunity can positively impact an individual's life. There are no cookbook recipes for success. Involvement in employment services offers many tangible/intangible rewards and opportunities for personal growth and enrichment. Multiple skills and tasks keep the job fresh and fluid.



An employment specialist position can encompass the following roles: job developer, career planner, case manager, teacher, coach, bridge builder, mobility coordinator, benefits analyst, business consultant, advocate, marketing representative, professional, facilitator, supporter, and friend . . . definitely a job with variety!

Delivering Effective Employment Services

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists continuously evaluate services they provide as well as the satisfaction of their customers in order to improve services/supports.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate a basic knowledge of accreditation standards related to employment services.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate ability to work with others as team members.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate basic understanding of legislation effecting employment services.*

Quality Indicators

A continuous and constant pursuit of quality is critical to the success of employment services. It involves meeting the needs of many clients, primarily the individual and the employer, and secondarily the funder/referral agent, the co-workers, and other members of the individual's planning team. Employment providers must continually collaborate with, and seek feedback from all clients in order to assure quality. Employment specialists have a critical role in assuring the effectiveness and efficiency of employment services, while vigilantly promoting individual choice and control.

Employment specialists must always strive for quality. To the community, an employment specialist is often the initial (and sometimes the only) point of contact with the rehabilitation organization and the disability field. The benchmarks of quality define the success of employment outcomes. If outcomes are of good quality, the community will value the work of people with disabilities and see the value of competitive, integrated employment as a service.

Employment specialists can work to improve quality outcomes in many ways, including:

- Investing the time to really get to know supported employees, their families, and their planning teams;
- Constantly identifying barriers that might impede the job search or impact employment and strategizing ways to overcome them;
- Understanding the many roles of the employment specialist, as well as the roles of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, other funders and referral sources, the supported employee, and other stakeholders;
- Actively seeking out additional learning opportunities, including attending agency and statewide trainings and networking opportunities;
- Keeping current in the field and up-to-date on employment best practices;

- Tracking and monitoring one's own performance (placements, retention, productivity and job seeker's feedback);
- Supporting team members, supervisor, and the agency to strive for improving quality;
- Participating in local community transition councils that focus on the movement of students with disabilities from high school to adulthood;
- Working to develop all of the employment specialist competencies listed throughout this manual; and
- Serving as a mentor for others in the field as skills are developed.

Typical quality indicators of employment services:

- Individuals begin employment services without the use of readiness criteria.
- Employment specialists are strong advocates for individuals and for work.
- There are reasonable timeframes for entering services, finding a job, and receiving supports.
- The individual, family, and the planning team direct the employment process.
- The service provider offers a team approach to services. The team views the individual holistically.
- Employment specialists are professional and well trained. Turnover among employment specialists is minimal.
- Employment specialists develop a variety of jobs, based on an individual's wants and needs.
- Employment specialists focus on natural supports and on- and off-site community connections.
- The employment services team views job losses not as failures but as opportunities to learn what works for individuals. Individuals are quickly re-entered into active job development.
- Employment providers offer flexibility in terms of hours of support, job opportunities, and individual supports.
- Employment teams seek out and value the job seeker's input.



Another outcome-improving strategy is to understand and participate in the accreditation process. Any vendor currently under contract to provide rehabilitation and/or habilitation day program services for adults must seek and attain accreditation from an accrediting body. Specifically, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services will contract with organizations or individuals accredited by an independent national accreditation organization approved by the Secretary of FSSA, including any of the following accrediting organizations:

1. **CARF International:** a not-for-profit organization that annually establishes a set of consensus standards that define the expected inputs to, processes for, and outcomes of rehabilitation programs and services for those people receiving services. CARF recognizes an organization's compliance with these standards through accreditation. (CARF originally stood for The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Services.) <http://www.carf.org>



2. **The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities:** an international organization that provides a continuum of services and resources, including accreditation and quality enhancement reviews of human and social service organizations and systems. Review provides organizations with external benchmarks for practices and ways to strengthen their own internal practices. The Council emphasizes the outcomes that people with disabilities identify as most important; identification of organizational and individual supports that enable people to achieve outcomes; provision of individually-tailored supports and services; connectivity between staff activities and desired outcomes of persons served; person-centered life planning and service delivery; and organizational accountability and pursuit of excellence. <https://c-q-l.org/>



3. **The Joint Commission (formerly the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations):** an independent, not-for-profit organization that has developed professionally-based standards and evaluates the compliance of health care organizations against these benchmarks. Their evaluation and accreditation services are provided for the following types of organizations: general, psychiatric, children's and rehabilitation hospitals; health care networks; home care organizations; nursing homes; and laboratories. <https://www.jointcommission.org/>



4. **The National Commission on Quality Assurance (NCQA):** an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to evaluate and report on the quality of the nation's managed behavioral health care organizations and providers. The NCQA's accreditation program is designed to foster accountability for the quality of care and services to members; provide employers, public purchasers, health plans, and consumers with meaningful information about the organizations; strengthen population-based continuous quality improvement programs; and encourage effectiveness of care by addressing the need for prevention, early intervention, and coordination of behavioral health with medical care. www.ncqa.org



Federal and State Initiatives Supporting Employment for People with Disabilities

Employment services are constantly evolving and expanding. Changes in federal legislation can dramatically affect employment services. Recent examples include:

- **Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act** were designed to make it easier for the job seeker to access competitive employment and vocational rehabilitation services. These include presumption of eligibility for VR for individuals who are recipients of SSI or SSDI, strengthening the informed choice of individuals who access VR, and encouraging the use of self-employment throughout VR.
- **The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA, signed into law in 2014, addresses a number of employment issues, including pre-vocational transition services and subminimum wage for transition-age youth. The intent is to ensure that young adults are not transitioning from high school directly to “sheltered workshops” or other employment arrangements where they could be paid a subminimum wage without having had the opportunity for training or to explore employment in their communities. The law also is designed to strengthen relationships between VRS and Workforce Development
- **The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act**, passed in 1999, encourages SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients to use “tickets” to choose the service provider of their choice from an Employment Network. This legislation also provides for expanded availability of health care: **Extended Medicare Coverage** for SSDI beneficiaries for at least 93 months, and expanded state options and funding for **Medicaid Buy-In** (known as M.E.D. Works in Indiana). Provisions also include **Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits**, changes to the **Continuing Disability Review** process for individuals making timely progress on achieving their goals under the Ticket program, **and work incentive planning and assistance** for beneficiaries. On July 1, 2008, Social Security issued new regulations significantly improving the Ticket to Work Program. These new regulations make it more feasible for employment and training programs to become Employment Networks and provide services to beneficiaries to help them work toward self-sufficiency. *(See “Ticket to Work at a Glance” for more information.)*
- **Indiana M.E.D. Works (Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities)** is a program designed to provide access to comprehensive health care for working people with disabilities. This program is critical for people with disabilities who have a difficult time finding affordable, comprehensive health care coverage in the private market. The M.E.D. Works (sometimes called the Medicaid Buy-in) program allows working people with disabilities to pay a premium to participate in their state’s Medicaid program, just as they would if they were buying private health care coverage.
- The **Indiana Employment Services Model** is a flexible, consumer-driven blend of outcome and hourly-based service menus. The model typically begins with Discovery that guides the job search. Discovery activities provide an opportunity to explore each individual’s skills, interests, personality traits, ideal conditions of employment, and vocational themes. These activities are key in identifying: appropriate employment goals, the nature and scope of services needed to reach the goal, and preparation for achievement of the goal. The employment services model puts a greater emphasis on natural or typical supports, community connections, holistic and team-centered service provision, and career advancement versus “just finding someone a job.”

As the demand for services increases, Indiana VRS fully expects that the importance of a job seeker’s choices will continue to expand. Therefore, quality and consumer satisfaction will become even more vital to an

organization's survival. Employment services staff must be able to thrive in environments of organizational change. Staff must focus on professionalism and competencies, including effectiveness and efficiency as even greater numbers of individuals with disabilities gain access to new employment opportunities.

Ticket to Work at a Glance

The Ticket to Work program is based on the premise that Social Security beneficiaries can work.

How the Ticket Works

Ticket to Work is a voluntary program for people, age 18 through 64, who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on disability. The program gives them more options to obtain services and supports that they need to work and to achieve their employment goals. If a beneficiary chooses to use the ticket, they have the opportunity to contact Employment Networks (ENs) to discuss services and choose the right EN to help them. ENs are any entity that has entered into an agreement with the Social Security Administration to provide employment services to Social Security beneficiaries.

How the Ticket Encourages Increased Self-Sufficiency

Ticket to Work is designed to reduce reliance on Social Security and promote increased self-sufficiency for beneficiaries with disabilities. While some beneficiaries of Social Security may choose to work at a level where they are no longer dependent on cash benefits, some may not. The program is flexible and allows individuals to use Social Security's work incentives and work to their fullest potential.

How Beneficiaries and Employment Networks Work Together

Beneficiaries and an EN enter into an agreement to achieve goals through an Individual Work Plan (IWP), also known as an Individual Plan for Employment. When beneficiaries achieve certain benchmarks with

their earnings and employment goals, Social Security rewards the EN with outcome or milestone payments for helping beneficiaries achieve these benchmarks.

How Employment Networks Are Paid

There are two types of payment systems for the Ticket to Work program: the Outcome Payment System and the Outcome-Milestone Payment System. Most ENs, including community rehabilitation providers, use the Outcome-Milestone Payment System, which disburses payments in three phases.

Because these payments are contingent upon reaching certain goals with cash benefits and work incentives, it is critical that employment service providers and their staff understand Social Security programs and work incentives. Work incentives trainings are offered in Indiana through the Center on Community Living and Careers. See the Benefits Information Network training page at <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/bin-training>.

How to Become an Employment Network

If your agency is in the business of helping people with disabilities find work, it is a good idea to discuss becoming an EN or partnering with other organizations to combine resources as an EN. There is a Request for Proposal (RFP) to participate as an EN through the Social Security Administration. Find more information at Social Security's website: <https://www.ssa.gov/work/>.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. How are employment services successes defined in your agency? What quality indicators does the agency track? Ask for a copy of your program's outcome measurement (or program evaluation) system.
2. Ask yourself:
 - a. What can I do within the scope of my job to promote quality?
 - b. How will I determine and monitor quality?
 - c. What are your agency's employment program goals?
3. Is your agency an Employment Network? How can an agency benefit from becoming an EN? How does Ticket to Work benefit consumers of supported employment services?
4. Does your employment program have a mechanism in place to collect feedback? How is it collected (surveys, telephone interviews, etc.)? Is feedback sought from job seekers or placed clients? Employers? Funders and referral sources? How is feedback used for program planning and development?
5. Take responsibility for your own growth. Positions within the employment field are professional. Take time to grow in your knowledge, attend trainings and conferences, and set personal learning goals. Consider sitting for the national Certification of Employment Professionals exam (CESP), offered through national APSE (www.apse.org).
6. Your supervisor will have a copy of the accreditation standards your agency or department must follow. Ask to see a copy and review these standards. Do not worry if you do not understand everything. Use the manual as a tool to ask questions and learn more about quality measures in employment services. Accreditation standards are revised regularly (often annually), so your review should be ongoing.

Things to Remember

- ✓ It is important to measure success by both achieving professional goals and assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals.
- ✓ Networking with peers is very important. Employment specialists must constantly seek training and new learning opportunities to grow in their roles.
- ✓ Changes in state and federal legislation affect supported employment. It is important to keep current on these changes, issues in supported employment, and pending legislation.
- ✓ Quality outcomes are essential to the success of supported employment.

- EXCELLENT**
- GOOD**
- AVERAGE**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SYSTEMS



Referral and Funding Sources

Employment Specialist Competency

Employment specialists demonstrate a basic knowledge of referral and reporting requirements of funders and referral systems, specifically Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Medicaid Rehabilitation Option, and Medicaid Waiver.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Employment is one of many services provided through the **Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)**. VRS is one of BRS's programs and a federally funded program, which uses matching funds from the state of Indiana to assist in obtaining the federal money for Indiana's vocational rehabilitation program. Supported employment was originally established as a service in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 and was subsequently included in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 and 1998.

Employment services were developed to provide opportunities to individuals with the most significant disabilities to secure competitive employment in their communities and to give Hoosiers with disabilities the opportunity to work alongside their non-disabled peers. In the early 1980s, Indiana began including integrated employment as one of many services available to individuals eligible for VRS. These services, available primarily to those with physical or developmental disabilities, were provided through community rehabilitation organizations.

Meanwhile, in 1988, the Center for Mental Health (CMH) in Anderson, Indiana, began providing employment services to address the specific needs of people with mental illness. In 1992, Governor Evan Bayh mandated the closure of Central State Hospital in Indianapolis. This prompted the recruitment of additional community rehabilitation providers and increased the accessibility of employment services to consumers of mental health services. Subsequently, all other state institutions such as Logansport, New Castle, Muscatatuck, and Fort Wayne Developmental Center were closed.

The Eligibility Process

Individuals with disabilities who would like assistance in securing employment should contact Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services. VRS in Indiana is divided into four regions, each of which is led by a Region Manager who oversees local areas. **Go to vrs.in.gov to learn more about your region.** In each local VRS area an area supervisor oversees the **Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs)** who work in their respective assigned area.

Some states implement a process called **Order of Selection**, which prioritizes individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive services. You should know that Order of Selection could affect the

eligibility of a person applying for services. A state VR agency is required to implement this process when they do not have fiscal or personnel resources to fully serve all eligible individuals.

An individual interested in receiving services from VRS may begin this process by contacting the local VRS office to express his or her interest in applying for these services. VRS will then obtain and process basic referral information from the individual and assign a VRC to the referral. Once the VRC receives the referral information, an appointment will be scheduled with the individual to meet and complete the application for services. School personnel, agency personnel, family members, or others who may be supporting an individual as he or she obtains assistance in securing employment may assist in the referral process.

Once an individual has met with his or her assigned VRC and completed an application for services (status 02, see “VRS Status Codes” box), the VRC will obtain needed medical and other documentation to assist in determining the individual’s eligibility. A VRC will rely on existing records whenever possible. VRS may cover the costs associated with obtaining needed documentation or assessments to determine the individual’s eligibility.

VRS presumes applicants will be able to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, the fourth eligibility guideline, unless VRS establishes that an impairment is too severe for an individual to achieve an employment outcome. If this is a possibility, VR may authorize an agency to complete an assessment called a Trial Work Experience (TWE). A TWE is a part of VR’s exploration into whether or not a person would benefit from VR services. When making this determination, VRS must explore the individual’s abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations.

Trial Work Experiences that you conduct should be one piece of the puzzle in determining eligibility for VR services. As an employment specialist, you may facilitate a TWE and identify abilities, capabilities, and capacity and provide feedback to the VRC about the experience. The VRC determines eligibility, not the employment specialist. Talk more with your counselor about guidelines and expectations if you receive this authorization for an individual you are working with.

After the VRC obtains all the necessary information, he or she will make a determination as to the individual’s eligibility for services. Determination must be made within 60 days of application. The VRC will then meet with the individual and review the determination decision with him or her. If VRS determines that the individual eligible (status 10) for services, the VRC will work with the individual to develop an **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**. This plan will outline all the services VRS will provide to the individual to help them secure employment in their identified vocational field of choice (status 12). The VRC can then begin providing these services to the individual, or the VRC can purchase the services outlined in the plan from other vendors.

VRS can provide many services to an individual beyond employment services. A few examples of additional services are counseling and guidance, transition services, training or educational services, or adaptive devices or equipment. Ask your VR counselor about other services VRS could provide that could help your client.

To receive employment services from VRS, an individual must first apply and be determined eligible for services. The eligibility guidelines are:

1. The individual has a physical or mental impairment;
2. The individual's impairment(s) result in a substantial impediment to employment;
3. The individual requires VR services to secure, retain, or regain gainful employment; and
4. The individual is able to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

Referral and Funding Sources

In Indiana, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) and other service providers who have a contract with VRS can provide employment services to eligible individuals. If the VRC and the individual decide that employment services would be beneficial, the VRC will provide the individual with a “pick list,” a list of the names of agencies in the area that provide employment services. The individual (and perhaps an advocate for the individual) can then contact each of these agencies to find out more about the specific services and supports they provide in order to choose the agency they think will best meet their needs.

The VRC will make a referral to the agency to provide employment services. When the agency accepts this referral, it is making a commitment to provide employment services to this individual, as well as to provide or facilitate extended or long-term follow-along support services. VRS will then authorize the agency to begin services.

At the time that VRS, the individual, the employment services provider, and other parties determine that the individual is successfully employed, VRS will close the individual's case. This is known as successful closure (status 26). VRS case closure is contingent upon an individual being “stable on the job” and retaining the job for 90 days.

An individual may be transferred to extended services under another funding source. While the definition of supported employment states that individuals receiving this service are entitled to receive ongoing extended services (often called follow-along services), in Indiana, VRS does not fund these extended services. VRS is a short-term funding agency and only provides funding for employment services for an individual until he or she has secured and is stabilized in competitive integrated employment. Once a client is employed, they may access supported employment services through VRS for up to 24 months. However, once a client is stabilized and closed successfully through VRS, the employment team must secure funding for ongoing extended services through other sources.

VRS Employment Service Model

Under this model, VRS consumers needing assistance with obtaining employment will typically go through the following employment service activities: Discovery, Employment Milestones, Supported Employment Services, and other supports. The Discovery process provides an opportunity for the consumer and his/her team to explore the consumer's talents, interests, preferences, abilities, ideal work environment, challenges, support strategies and informed choice, in order to identify an appropriate vocational goal.

VRS Status Codes	
00	Referral
02	Application
06	Applicant in Extended Evaluation
08	Case Closure from Applicant or Ineligible for Services
10	Eligible for VRS
12	IPE Written and Signed
14	Consumer Receiving Guidance & Counseling Only
16	Consumer Receiving Physical/Mental Restoration Services
18	Consumer in Service/Training
20	Consumer Ready for Employment
22	Consumer in Employment
24	Services Interrupted
26	Case Closed Rehabilitated
28	Case Closed Not Rehabilitated After Plan Implemented
30	Case Closed Initial Plan Not Implemented

Discovery

Discovery is flexible and consumer-driven. That means length and intensity of Discovery itself may vary with each job seeker. Employment specialists should rapidly and frequently engage the job seeker in the process.

Discovery begins with the initial intake or counseling meeting with the consumer's VRC and is a fluid process between the consumer, the VRC, and appropriate providers (e.g., CRPs, CMHs, schools, or other qualified providers). Discovery activities are part of the menu of services available to each individual and may include one or more of the following, based on the individual consumer's needs:

- Vocational Testing
- Job Shadowing
- Situational Assessment
- Other Discovery Activities
- Work Experience



The VRC and employment provider should be able to articulate:

- the reason a specific activity is necessary,
- what information the consumer should expect to gain from the activity, and
- how the activity will further the Discovery process (i.e. identification of employment goal and nature and scope of VR services).

Discovery activities should also include an interview with the individual and others as appropriate, to gain insight into education, employment history, and identification of transferable skills as well as a review of the local labor market.

Keep in mind, that Discovery is not a step-by-step, linear process. A number of experiences can occur simultaneously.

As you get to know the job seeker, and further exploration and refinement of information occur through the Discovery process, you'll begin to see **vocational themes** emerge. These themes can be "tested" through informational interviews with businesses where the theme makes sense. Developing vocational themes ensures that the employment team focuses upon the unique strengths and interests of the consumer and allows for creative job options. Vocational themes should be agreed upon by the individual and other team members and ultimately define the vocational goal for the VRS Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). VRS reimburses employment service providers for Discovery activities (with the exception of work experiences) at an hourly rate.

After the employment services team determines a vocational goal and creates a plan for job development, you can begin job development. VRS uses Milestone payments to reimburse providers for outcome-based employment activities.

Milestone 1: Job Development and Placement	Milestone 2: Support and Short-Term Retention	Milestone 3: Retention
Job development and job placement occurs and is reimbursed after one calendar week of employment.	Milestone is paid at four calendar weeks on the job. Short-term job retention occurs (four calendar weeks) with appropriate on- (or off-) the-job supports, and the job is consistent with the IPE and desired wages and work hours. Every consumer receives up to 45 hours over 4 weeks of support through Milestone 2, however providers can request additional hours which VRCs can authorize prior to the end of four weeks if needed.	Achievement of stabilization on the job must occur. The Milestone is paid after 90 days of successful retention after stabilization date.

Supported Employment Services

Supported employment (SE) services involve the ongoing services needed to support and maintain an individual with MSD in supported employment for a period of time generally not to exceed 24 months. Supported employment services and long-term supports should be identified on the individual's IPE. People who need ongoing support and qualify as Most Severely Disabled (MSD) as defined in the VRS state policy, have deficits in three out of nine life domain areas:

- Cognitive and Learning Skills
- Communications
- Interpersonal Skills
- Mobility
- Motor Skills
- Self-Care
- Self-Direction
- Work Skills
- Work Tolerance

Supports funded through Milestone 2 are provided day one on the job through completion of four calendar weeks on the job. SE hourly funding begins after completion of 4 weeks on the job through achievement of stabilization. VRS can authorize additional SE hours as needed prior to the end of the 4-week period if the individual's level of support need extends beyond what is provided through the Milestone 2 payment. The employment specialist must clearly articulate the number of support hours and the supports needed for the individual to reach stabilization on the Employment Support and Retention Plan.

On-The-Job Supports Short-Term

This is another VRS service for people needing supports beyond **Milestone 2, or instead of Milestone 2**. A consumer with a severe disability (SD) or non-severe disability (NSD) designation (who is not eligible for SE hourly) might require supports beyond the 45 hours or beyond the 4 weeks covered in Milestone 2 to stabilize their placement and enhance job retention. If the individual requires support beyond the 4-week period, you can make a request for additional hours, typically for 3-6 months, until stabilization occurs. If it becomes apparent that the consumer is requiring supports for more than 3-6 months in order to achieve stabilization, VRS will re-evaluate severity determination and eligibility for SE services. The Employment Support and Retention Plan must specify the support needs of the individual to justify the request for additional hours.

Stabilization

Stabilization refers to the highest level of independence an individual is able to attain after an appropriate period of supports, including SE services (up to 24 months) and other supports. The individual and his or her support team must jointly agree to stabilization. Individuals may achieve stabilization immediately upon starting a job, or may require many months of support prior to achieving the highest level of independence. Stabilization usually is indicated by the gradual reduction and leveling off of intervention time, both on and off the employment site, although on-going support may be necessary.

Once an individual achieves stabilization and he or she and the employment team agree to it, the 90-day retention period begins. This 90-day period is funded through the **Milestone 3 Retention** payment.

For those individuals requiring extended services, the VRC will complete the "Stabilization and Notification of Transfer to SE Extended Services" form and send it to the provider and BDDS. Upon successful closure, VRS places the consumer on status 22 (employed) and then transfers them to SE Extended Services.

Job Search Assistance/Job Placement Assistance

Individuals who require minimal assistance obtaining employment and who do not require employment services through the job development/support/retention milestones may be referred for job search assistance/job placement assistance service, which is paid at an hourly rate. Also, VRS may supplement job search activities occurring through Milestone 1 with hourly job search/job placement assistance if necessary for the individual. This may be appropriate in situations where job search strategies have not been effective and/or have not resulted in a job offer after a period of time. More intensive strategies might be necessary, such as work-based learning opportunities to gain skills or demonstrating skills to a potential employer. Another way this service could be used is if a consumer experiences a job loss prior to retention and needs minimal assistance in securing another job.

Job Readiness Training

Job Readiness Training is a service meant to address a specific, significant barrier an individual may be experiencing regarding work behaviors or performance. Some examples include getting to work on time, appropriate dress and grooming, increasing productivity, soft skills development and social skills development. Again, if an individual requires Job Readiness Training, the service must be written as a needed service on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This service is paid at an hourly rate.

Post-Employment Services

Post-employment refers to one or more services provided after the achievement of an employment outcome. These services are necessary for an individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment. Post-employment services are available to meet rehabilitation needs that do not require a complex and comprehensive provision of services and should be limited in scope and duration.

To better understand funding and definitions of the VRS employment service model, visit the VRS website: <http://www.in.gov/fssa>.

Funding Sources for Extended Services

Once an individual receiving employment services is employed and has reached VRS status 26, he or she will be transferred to extended services (also called “ongoing supports” or “follow-along”). VRS will then discontinue funding for the supported employment services. However, the individual will continue to receive services or support from the employment provider agency or through other funding sources. The funding source for individuals who receive extended services will vary depending on availability of funds and eligibility criteria. Funding sources should be identified prior to job development.



Some of the more common funds used for extended services are **Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS)** funds (Community Budget), **Medicaid Waiver** funds, Medicaid **group home** day rates, **Medicaid Rehabilitation Option** funds (**MRO**).

Funding for extended services through **BDDS** is available for individuals who have a developmental disability (Title XX).

The term “**developmental disability**” means a severe, chronic disability of a person that:

- is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of a mental and physical impairment (other than a sole diagnosis of mental illness);
- is manifested before the person is twenty-two (22) years of age;
- is likely to continue indefinitely;
- reflects the person’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated;
- results in substantial limitations in at least (3) of the following:
 - self-care;
 - receptive and expressive language;
 - learning;
 - mobility;
 - self-direction;
 - capacity for independent living;
 - economic self-sufficiency.

BDDS has eight districts located throughout the state that provide services to various counties in each area. Each district office has several service coordinators, who provide eligibility determination and service coordination.

For individuals who reside in a **Medicaid-funded group home**, the group home provider receives funds from Medicaid as part of their rate to provide or purchase day program services for the individual. These funds can be used to pay for an individual's extended services.

Medicaid Waiver funds may also be used to fund extended services. These funds are limited to individuals who are eligible and receiving Medicaid Waivers for services. This service must be planned, approved, and included in the individualized plan for services, developed with the individual and the independent case manager for Medicaid Services. Finding out if an individual has a Medicaid Waiver at the time of intake is best practice. If he or she does not have a waiver, you may need to assist them with applying for one prior to job placement.

MRO funds may be used to fund some extended services that individuals with serious and persistent mental illness receive. These services may not be direct on-the-job training, but could include case management services, adult daily living skills training, off-site supports, social skills, community integration skills, and other skills development or support services that may be needed to assist the individual in maintaining community employment. These services may only be provided through an agency that is an approved Medicaid provider. In order for an individual to receive MRO funds, a physician or health service provider in psychology must certify the diagnosis and authorize the plan of care as indication of his or her approval of the assessment, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-V) classification, and the proposed methods of treatment.

The **Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)** is an agency under FSSA whose mission is "To ensure that Indiana citizens have access to quality mental health and addiction services that promote individual, family, and community resiliency and recovery." DMHA is responsible for:

- providing funding support for mental health and addictions services to target populations with financial need through a network of managed care providers,
- certifying all Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) and managed care providers,
- licensing inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and
- administering federal funds earmarked for mental health services and substance abuse prevention projects.

While DMHA does not provide funding directly for employment services, CMHCs may receive funding from DMHA to provide various services to persons with mental illness or addictions. **DMHA Supported Consumer (DSC)** is the primary funding system used to pay for mental health and addiction services through contracts with managed care providers who provide a continuum of care for individuals who meet diagnostic, functioning level, and income criteria.

Other sources of funding: Extended services may also be funded for individuals through resources that an agency may receive from special grants, United Way funds, county funds, or other funds that the agency may set aside for this purpose. Individuals may pay for their extended services privately or may use Social Security work incentives, such as Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE) or Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) to assist with the cost of this service. You'll find more detailed information about specific benefits in the chapter titled, "Consumer Resources and Federal and State Benefits Programs."

School-to-Work Transition

Other providers of employment services not traditionally funded through VRS in Indiana are local school corporations and special education cooperatives. Many of the local school corporations provide work experiences and employment services to students as part of the transition component of their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Since this service is only available to students while they are in school, the student, his or her family, and school personnel must develop goals and an action plan to transition the student to adult services upon completion of school.



These transition goals need to include the local VRS office to ensure that the student has completed the eligibility and application processes for employment services. VRS or members of the case conference committee should provide information to the student about local agencies who provide employment services, so the student can make an informed choice about an employment provider. Ideally, an adult service agency will start working with a student before he or she leaves high school (on Discovery activities, for instance, or by overlapping job coaching with the school). Generally, VRS pays for this support.

Sometimes, however, a student may already be employed and may not require some VRS services (such as job development or training), but rather might just need an adult service provider for extended follow-along services. In these cases, the VRC will contract with the service provider. The student's transition goals need to include the adult service provider that the student has chosen to provide him or her services.

Revisions under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014 (WIOA) require that states reserve not less than 15% of allotted VRS funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) in collaboration with local educational agencies. Required activities funded by VRS for these pre-employment services are:

- Work-based learning activities
- Job exploration counseling
- Instruction in self-advocacy
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Counseling on enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs



Questions to ask and information to seek:

- 1.** In what VRS region is your agency located and to what local VRS offices does your agency provide employment services?
- 2.** Who is/are the Region Manager(s) for your area? The local Supervisor(s)? The VRCs?
- 3.** Ask one of your local VRCs to explain what services, other than employment services, they can provide.
- 4.** What is the referral process for your agency for receiving new referrals for employment services from the local VRS office? What are the timelines that you must follow? How do you know if an authorization to provide services for an individual has been provided by VRS?
- 5.** Is Indiana in Order of Selection? How does this affect the referral process?
- 6.** How does your agency interact with local school programs that provide employment services to students? What is your role with school systems? How do students who are exiting the school system get involved with adult services for supported employment?
- 7.** How are individuals participating in other services through your agency (e.g., sheltered work, day treatment, habilitation, etc.) who are interested in community employment? Have they been referred to the local VRS office?
- 8.** What type of information does your agency provide to individuals who contact your agency about employment services? Does this assist them in making an informed choice about the agency they would like to receive these services from?
- 9.** What funding source(s) does your agency utilize for extended services?
- 10.** Where is your district Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services office located and who is the service coordinator for your area?

Things to Remember

- ✓ VRS is the primary funding source for supported employment services in Indiana, but does not provide funding for extended (ongoing) services.
- ✓ Employment providers should seek out consumer satisfaction information from their local VRS office and VRS counselors.
- ✓ VRS must assume all persons with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, are employable (zero exclusion).
- ✓ Individuals should be able to choose their employment provider.
- ✓ By the federal definition, individuals receiving supported employment services are entitled to long-term extended services to support them with job maintenance, in making career advancements, and/or job changes.
- ✓ Employment providers should report progress of services to the VRC. Best practice in employment services indicates that documentation should include: 1) monthly summaries documenting progress in Discovery, a Discovery Profile containing all relevant and strength-based information learned during the Discovery process; 2) all job development progress notes including a review of the individual's vocational objective and ideal work environment, and a list of all businesses contacted on the individual's behalf; and 3) the Employment Support and Retention Plan (ESRP) document, containing all training and support progress notes, which should include an update of the current job (duties, wages, hours, etc.), the reason for continued intervention, and a plan for fading.
- ✓ Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services use the Discovery process to determine vocational goals and an outcome-based payment system using Milestone payments for achieved benchmarks. Funding for employment services focus on an individual's interests, abilities, capabilities, strengths, and informed choice.

Rights and Advocacy

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists demonstrate a basic, general knowledge of the ADA, disclosure, civil rights and related legislation, and Department of Labor standards.*
- *Employment specialists interact with and represent individuals in a positive, professional, respectful, and dignified manner and provide them with support and information, enabling individuals to make informed choices and ensuring that others see these individuals as citizens with full rights.*
- *Employment specialists ensure that an individual is aware of his or her rights.*

Individuals with disabilities have the same rights as any citizen, and we should treat them as full citizens with respect and dignity. Important roles of an employment specialist include assisting an individual in understanding his or her rights, advocating on his or her behalf, and assisting with self-advocacy/self-determination. An employment specialist can assist an individual with developing these skills through person-centered planning activities, self-management tools, problem-solving skills development, and interviewing skills development.

Employment specialists should encourage and support job seekers to take an active role in the employment process and ensure that job seekers' wants and desires are being included. In addition, employment specialists must treat job seekers in a dignified and respectful manner and help employers, co-workers, and other employment team members do the same.

If a job seeker is dissatisfied with the services they are receiving, either through an agency or through VRS, there are actions he or she may take. If a job seeker is dissatisfied with the services received through VR, they may file a complaint and pursue mediation about the services they are, or are not, receiving. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, establishes a formal hearing process as well as a Client Assistance Program to support concerns a job seeker might have with services funded by the Rehab Act. For more information, contact Indiana Disability Rights (IDR). See the resources listed at the end of this section.

Agencies that provide VR-funded services also have grievance policies to ensure that job seekers and families are satisfied with services. If you are unsure of how a policy is carried out in your agency, talk with your manager or colleagues to learn more.

On a larger scale, there are many laws, resources, and agencies available to assist individuals who may be discriminated against because of their disability.

Laws and legislation that protect the rights of people with disabilities include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Indiana Department of Labor Rules (DOL), and the federal Civil Rights Act. These were developed and enacted to prevent discrimination and ensure that all individuals are treated equally. The Americans with Disabilities Act contains a section that addresses employment issues, reasonable accommodations, and accessibility for businesses.

Disclosure

Deciding to disclose a disability is deeply personal and should be made by the job seeker after discussing the pros and cons with the employment specialist. You and everyone on your team must honor the job seeker's decision.

Your job seeker or supported employee's decision will change the way you support him/her. Be aware of your behavior and the language you choose when speaking with employers. For example, by introducing yourself as an "employment specialist who supports people with disabilities," you are disclosing that the person you represent has a disability.

There is no timing requirement for disclosure under the ADA. A person who chooses not to disclose, can change his or her mind and decide to disclose long after job stabilization.

When talking with employers, it is usually possible to keep some things, like a diagnosis, private. In other cases, a job seeker may be okay with disclosing to a supervisor, but not to co-workers. Make sure you and your job seeker are clear on what they would like you to share, and what's off limits.

Advocacy and Support Organizations		
	<p>Arc of Indiana is committed to all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities realizing their goals of learning, living, working and fully participating in the community.</p>	<p>(800) 382-9100 (317) 977-2375 http://www.arcind.org/</p>
	<p>Breaking New Ground Outreach Program/Indiana AgrAbility Project is a USDA-sponsored program that assists farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers who have disabilities. It helps to eliminate or minimize obstacles that inhibit success in production agriculture or agriculture-related occupations.</p>	<p>(800) 825-4264 http://engineering.purdue.edu/~bng/</p>
	<p>The Library at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community can help you find and get resources that you need. The Library's wide variety of resources about disabilities across the lifespan are available online and for checkout.</p>	<p>(800) 437-7924 https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/library</p>
	<p>Centers for Independent Living, located across the state, are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support • Information and referral • Individual and systems advocacy • Independent living skills training • Transition 	<p>To find the center that serves your county, visit: http://www.insilc.org/resources</p>

Advocacy and Support Organizations		
	<p>Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities is an independent state agency that facilitates change. Its mission is to advance the independence, productivity, and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. The council accomplishes its mission through planning, evaluation, collaboration, education, research, and advocacy.</p>	<p>(317) 232-7770 (317) 232-7771 TDD http://www.state.in.us/gpcpd/</p>
	<p>Indiana Disability Rights (formerly IPAS) protects and promotes the rights of individuals with disabilities through empowerment and advocacy. It focuses on accessibility, employment, education, community integration, justice, and voting rights. IDR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides information and resources • Advocates with and for people with disabilities • Investigates abuse and neglect against people with disabilities • Monitors any facility which serves people with disabilities 	<p>(800) 622-4845 (317) 722-5555 http://www.IndianaDisabilityRights.org</p>
	<p>KEY Consumer Organization offers a variety of services aimed at educating consumers and the public about psychiatric disorders, as well as support services to assist individuals with mental illness in living healthy and productive lives.</p>	<p>(800) 933-KEYS Toll Free (317) 205-2500 http://www.keyconsumer.org</p>
	<p>Mental Health America of Indiana works for the mental health of all citizens and for victory over mental illness and addictive disorders through public education, advocacy and public health reform.</p>	<p>(317) 638-3501 https://www.mhai.net/</p>
	<p>National Alliance on Mental Illness-Indiana provides advocacy, support, education, and training programs for people and groups across Indiana.</p>	<p>(800) 677-6422 http://www.namiindiana.org/</p>
	<p>Self-Advocates of Indiana is a statewide advocacy organization that empowers people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</p>	<p>(317) 977-2375 http://www.saind.org/</p>



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. Learn more about the grievance policy at your agency. What steps would you take to ensure the policy is carried out as intended?
2. If you feel that a person's rights are being violated, how do you report this and/or assist the person to self-report?
3. How can you ensure that you promote individuals in developing self-advocacy skills?
4. List some situations where a job seeker may choose not to disclose to an employer.
5. Talk to other staff and your supervisor about what information you should provide to a prospective employer about an individual. Do you discuss the individual's specific disability? How can you best handle questions that a prospective employer may ask about the individual's specific disability?

Things to Remember

- ✓ All people should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- ✓ Individuals with disabilities are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as people without disabilities.
- ✓ It is important for an employment specialist to talk with each job seeker about disclosure and how he or she wants the employment specialist to represent him or her.
- ✓ There are a number of resources that can be used to support the job seeker in advocacy and self-determination.

Consumer Resources and Federal and State Benefit Programs

Employment Specialist Competency

Employment specialists demonstrate a basic knowledge of Social Security (including application, appeal procedures, and benefit calculation), Medicaid, Housing and Urban Development, food stamps, work incentives, and other public assistance programs.

An employment specialist wears “multiple hats” and has a variety of roles. Providing employment services involves more than just locating a job in the community and teaching someone how to do the job tasks. Many things influence what type of employment site will match an individual’s wants and desires and what supports the individual will need to be successful in his or her pursuit of employment. One item that often influences an individual’s decision to work competitively in the community is the impact employment may have on his or her benefits. It is important for employment specialists to have at a minimum, a conversational level of knowledge about benefits and work incentives.

An individual may receive a variety of benefits, including any of the following:

Common Benefits	
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	provides benefits to individuals who are disabled or blind who are “insured” by the workers’ contributions to the Social Security trust fund. These contributions are made under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) as Social Security tax paid on their earnings or those of their spouses or parents.
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	cash assistance payments to people who are aged, blind and/or disabled (including children under age 18) who have limited income and resources. The federal government funds SSI from general tax revenues.
Medicare	a federally funded health insurance program for seniors, age 65 and older, as well as for individuals with disabilities who have been receiving SSDI benefits for at least 24 months.
Medicaid	a federally funded medical insurance provided to persons by the State through Indiana’s Family and Social Service Administration, available to certain low-income individuals who are disabled.
Section 8 Housing Assistance	a federal program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides rental subsidies to low-income families, single people over age of 62, single women who are pregnant, and people with disabilities who live in privately owned housing units.
Food Stamps	a resource offered under the Indiana Department of Family Resources of FSSA, that supplements the available food purchasing dollars of low-income households.

Federal and State Benefits and Work Incentives

Understanding benefits can often be very confusing for individuals, advocates, and employment specialists. The Social Security Administration (SSA) has funded Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Programs in Indiana, known as **Indiana Works**. These WIPA programs have trained Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) who can provide individualized benefits counseling to Social Security beneficiaries who are employed or seeking employment. Specifically, Indiana Works:

- provides work incentives planning and assistance;
- refers beneficiaries with disabilities to appropriate Employment Networks or state VR agencies based on individual needs and impairment types;
- provides general information about potential employer-based or federally subsidized health benefits coverage available to beneficiaries once they enter the workforce; and
- informs beneficiaries with disabilities of further protection and advocacy services available to them.

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services supports and encourages employment providers to learn about benefits and work incentives and use this information to support beneficiaries in reaching their employment goals. As of this writing, the **Benefits Information Network** (BIN) trains and supports staff from Indiana employment services agencies to provide VRS consumers with information on federal and state benefit programs. Staff who successfully complete the training are referred to as BIN liaisons and are trained to gather information about a beneficiary's federal and state benefits; develop a plan to support work incentives; and collaborate with Indiana Works CWICs as individuals prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. VRS makes referrals and provides funding for individuals in need of benefits counseling.

Many of the federal and state benefit programs offer work incentives that support efforts toward employment and self-sufficiency. The use of work incentives is based on the types of benefits, work history and financial goals of each individual. In general, work incentives help individuals pay for the services and items they need in order to work and maintain their benefits until they are stable in employment.

Just knowing about work incentives is not enough. You must be trained on federal and state benefits and the applicable work incentives and know how to support individuals in navigating these benefit programs.

The box below lists several of the most commonly used work incentives.

Federal and State Benefit Programs		
Social Security Work Incentives	SSDI Work Incentives	SSI Work Incentives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial Work Period • Extended Period of Eligibility • Subsidy and Special Conditions • Impairment-Related Work Expense for SSDI • Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits • Extended Medicare Coverage for SSDI beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earned Income Exclusions • Section 1619b • Student Earned Income Exclusion (for students 22 and younger) • Impairment-Related Work Expense for SSI • Blind Work Expense • Plan to Achieve Self Support • Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits
Other Work Incentives	Medicaid Work Incentives	Other Federal and State Benefit Work Incentives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid Buy In (M.E.D. Works) • Section 1619b Medicaid Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUD Earned Income Disregard • Individual Development Accounts • Family and Self-Sufficiency Accounts • Earned Income Tax Credit



To explore benefit programs and work incentives in detail, visit:

Work Incentives Fact Sheets <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/fact-sheets-on-work-incentives>

Social Security Administration <http://www.ssa.gov/disability/>

Social Security Red Book <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/>



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. Where are the local offices located that provide SSDI, SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, Section 8 and Food Stamp assistance? Does your agency have a contact person at these offices?
2. Who in your agency assists individuals with benefits monitoring? How can you obtain more information on the effects of employment on the benefits of individuals?
3. Several resources exist in Indiana for assistance with work incentives. Contact the **Center on Community Living and Careers** at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University, or one of the state's two Work Incentives Planning and Assistance offices. Visit <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/bin>.
4. Visit the Social Security Administration website or visit the local SSA office to obtain a copy of the *Red Book* on work incentives. <http://socialsecurity.gov/redbook>

Things to Remember

- ✓ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI or Title II) is a benefit paid to individuals with disabilities (and their dependents) who have been employed and who have paid Social Security taxes through wages earned.
- ✓ Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a benefit paid to individuals who need supplemental income if they are 65 or older or if they have a disability. SSI eligibility is based on income and resources.
- ✓ Work incentives are special programs to help individuals work and maintain their benefits until they are self-sufficient in employment.
- ✓ Individuals who receive SSDI benefits may also receive Medicare if they have been receiving SSDI benefits for at least 24 months.
- ✓ Medicaid is a needs-based program. Individuals with disabilities who have limited income and resources may receive Medicaid to assist with medical expenses, such as medication, doctor appointments, mental health services, etc.

OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



Discovery: Getting to Know Your Job Seeker

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists demonstrate the ability to gather and document information needed to develop a Discovery Profile, such as spending time with the individual in multiple settings, observing work in the community, and talking with others who know the job seeker well.*
- *Employment specialists encourage a team approach to developing a strategic/action plan that includes specific action steps and timeframes.*
- *Employment specialists display the ability to arrange for Discovery activities (home visits, job shadows, work experiences, and situational assessments) to enable the individual to explore options and preferences, as needed.*
- *Employment specialists, in partnership with the job seeker and others, identify the individual's strengths, conditions of employment, interests, support needs, desired vocational objective, and employment environment.*
- *Employment specialists document a list of businesses to be targeted based on the job seeker's vocational themes; and when this list has been exhausted, the team develops a new list.*
- *Employment specialists are sensitive to and help individuals advocate for themselves regarding socio-cultural issues.*

The Discovery Process

The process of getting to know the job seeker during employment services is critical for job success. The purpose of Discovery is to guide the job development process and find a good job match. The Discovery process differs from traditional evaluation in several ways:

1. The purpose is to identify the best job match, rather than to determine capability or eligibility for particular services or programs.
2. It relies heavily on existing information and real experiences, rather than testing and simulated activities, to determine strengths, interests, and support needs.
3. Its scope is broader and takes into consideration the job seeker's whole life.

During Discovery, you'll use different techniques to gather needed information, depending on the strengths, experiences, and needs of the job seeker. Typical activities include **interviews with people who know the job seeker well** (both paid and unpaid), **home visits**, **informational interviews** with businesses, **job shadows** (observing others doing potential jobs), **situational assessments**, and **work experiences** (arranging with the employer for the job seeker to try out a job for a short period of time).

Even though the exact process will look different for each job seeker, all Discovery activities lead the job search activities and involve:

1. getting to know the individual's strengths, preferences, abilities and support needs in an individualized, deliberate way;
2. developing vocational themes based upon what was learned in Discovery;
3. determining an appropriate vocational goal and ideal conditions of employment;
4. involving others to develop a strategic action plan to guide job development, the employment process, and job retention;
5. documenting all of the above in a strengths-based, understandable, usable format for all those involved (especially the job seeker); and
6. continuing to update and revise the Discovery Profile and information as needed (to address changes).

Identifying conditions of employment during Discovery can be key to successful employment. These conditions should be used in job development. These “wants” or “needs” can include a number of factors, including:

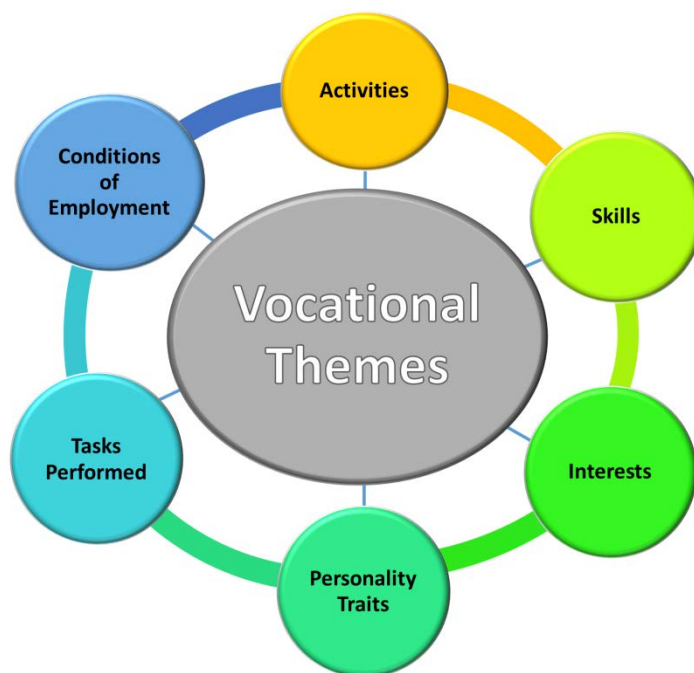
- Wages
- Benefits
- Advancement opportunities
- Time-off needs
- Desired hours and schedule (full time, part time, days, nights, weekends)
- Cultural considerations
- Location and transportation availability
- Supervision needs
- Safety concerns
- Required/appropriate dress
- Amount of public/consumer interaction
- Noise level
- Temperature factors
- Work environment (inside/outside, enclosed/open)
- Mobility requirements (sedentary/move around)
- Lifting requirements
- Number of required tasks and frequency of tasks
- Socialization skills

The **Discovery Profile** is a dynamic, strength-based, changing document that captures everything learned during Discovery, and helps to plan for job development. You, as the employment specialist should review, add to, and revise the plan with each Discovery activity completed. Use positive and understandable language. The plan also serves as a record for VRS, so it's important to keep it updated!

The Discovery Profile has two parts.

Part A: Discovery Process captures all of the activities the job seeker participates in during Discovery, and all strength-based information that you learn during the process, including skills, support strategies, interests, personality traits, and conditions of employment.

You will use all of the information you learn during the process to formulate **vocational themes**, and a list of businesses in the job seeker's community based on these themes. Vocational themes are broad, umbrella categories that include a wide variety of jobs across different kinds of businesses. Examples of themes include agriculture, medicine, or fashion. Below, the graphic illustrates how experiences and lessons learned through Discovery converge upon vocational themes:



Part B: Job Development and Placement Plan is completed if the VR counselor authorizes job development activities. In fact, oftentimes, but not always, this section will be completed with the job seeker's VR counselor. The plan will state the vocational recommendation, strategies for job development, expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

During this process, the job seeker, you and the VR counselor can assemble a planning team as many times as needed to assist with gathering information and developing strategies. The job seeker invites friends, family, rehabilitation counselors, school personnel if applicable, and other service providers paid and unpaid. The primary purpose of this meeting or series of meetings is to create a list of prospective employers for the employment specialist to use in the job development process.

Team members can also assist with identifying employment goals, recommending ideal job characteristics (work environment and socio-cultural issues), addressing concerns and barriers to employment (e.g., benefit loss, transportation), suggesting support techniques, and/or committing to providing supports.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. What is your program's typical process for getting to know an individual? How are Discovery activities developed and completed? Do employment specialists typically make visits to the family and home? If not, how do you get to know the job seeker?
2. Who typically completes the Discovery process? When do you become involved?
3. Various person-centered planning techniques, such as Personal Futures Planning (PFP), Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), and Essential Lifestyle Planning, can be extremely helpful in Discovery. Look these up online. How you can incorporate these techniques into your approach to Discovery?
4. How can you integrate cultural preferences into the conditions of employment?
5. How do you use a team throughout the Discovery process? Give examples of who may be on a team, or how the team could provide support to the job seeker.
6. How does Discovery drive job development and placement?

Things to Remember

- ✓ Traditional vocational evaluation in a sheltered setting is typically not a predictor of an individual's success in a community job.
- ✓ Getting to know an individual's strengths, interests, preferences, and support needs is critical for job success and to make a good job match.
- ✓ Always confirm, through activities, what you hear during Discovery; do not rely on past case files, student files, or just "hearsay" when getting to know the job seeker. Spending quality time in community settings with the individual will offer information that is more valuable and accurate.
- ✓ Completing the Discovery Profile helps guide the job development process and lead to a better job match.
- ✓ Even with the best job matching processes, it may take an individual several jobs in order to find the one best suited for him or her. The planning team should address potential job loss up-front during the assessment process. Job loss does not mean failure. It is an opportunity to learn more about the individual and to improve the job match for the next placement.

Job Development and Placement

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists rely heavily on personal networks, memberships, social connections, and referrals for job leads.*
- *Employment specialists develop long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses that result in quality jobs at a variety of levels with opportunities for advancement.*
- *Employment specialists organize employment contacts in a way that maximize efficiency, consumer service and follow-up; promote sharing of job leads; and maximize successful job placements.*
- *Employment specialists market services and represent job seekers with a positive, professional, and respectful approach that leads to successful employment while adhering to the job seeker's disclosure preferences.*
- *Employment specialists demonstrate creativity in development of job leads and situations through job carving, job sharing, job/task proposal letters, and other means.*
- *Employment specialists provide initial presentation to employers, obtain information on employer's needs, and secure a follow-up meeting with employer to show how services of ES can meet employers' needs.*
- *Employment specialists assist job seekers as they meaningfully participate in job development activities.*
- *Employment specialists thoroughly assess all job leads, including hours, wages, impact on benefits, duties, work locations, work culture, and supports available by using a job analysis tool before recommending a job placement.*
- *Employment specialists develop/create jobs based on an individual's interests, skills, preferences and work culture needs. Employment specialists do not group people together for the convenience of supports or job availability.*

Job development is the art of supporting the job seeker to find quality, competitive employment consistent with his or her strengths, preferences, and support needs. It is a set of job search activities, focused upon the individual, based on themes generated from the Discovery process and/or agreed upon action steps from the strategic plan.

As an employment specialist or a job developer, you will lead this process, in partnership with the job seeker and his or her planning team. In some cases, job seekers who have a great range of life experiences can lead their own job development process with limited supports.

As an employment specialist, your role during job development includes:

- 1. *Contacting potential employers and pursuing the job seeker's job development and placement plan.*** Never count on internet job banks or classified ads. According to several sources, most available jobs never make it to open advertisement. Asking about open positions and completing job applications are THE LEAST LIKELY WAYS for success. Better strategies include using referrals, developing long-term relationships with employers, expanding your network, following up with employers, conducting informational interviews, and asking personnel offices to send openings directly to the agency. For example, your local Work One and www.indianacareerconnect.com are excellent resources.
- 2. *Identifying businesses with needs that your job seeker can meet.*** The job market is extremely competitive. It may be difficult finding jobs posted that the job seeker qualifies for, if he or she has little or no work history. On the other hand, if he or she is qualified for the job, he or she will be in competition with many other job seekers who may not bring identified barriers to employment. To overcome this situation, the best strategy is to think about the skills and abilities that your job seeker has and match to businesses with those needs. Proactively contacting employers prior to job openings and developing employment proposals to meet their needs and the needs of the individual will often result in more job opportunities.
- 3. *Conducting a job analysis to thoroughly assess each potential job in terms of position responsibilities and work environment in order to recommend good job matches.*** This may include analyzing and identifying specific tasks within a given job that might be reassigned to another position (called **job restructuring or job carving**) or suggesting a position be created to increase productivity or provide a new service in order to create a better job match for the job

There are several important, unique things about job development:

- You will always work on job development on behalf of an individual. While general agency marketing and relationship building is important to generate contacts and leads, you'll make all employer contacts with a specific individual in mind. Job development is not sales but rather marketing the skills and abilities of an individual to an employment situation. However, during job development, you may discover positions not of interest to your client. You should coordinate and share these leads with other team members.
- Getting to know your job seeker well is the single most important aspect of job development, so that you can develop employer leads specifically based on the individual's strengths, preferences, and support needs.
- A job seeker and his or her team directs the job search and selection process.
- The use of both the job seeker's and the employment specialist's personal/professional contacts and networking are preferred job development techniques. The goal is to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses on behalf of the job seeker.

seeker (called **job creation** or **employment proposal**). However, when job carving or restructuring, you need to be aware of the potential risks: Since the supported employee is not in a “typical” position within the company, it could decrease integration and natural supports or might even mean the elimination of this position if the company downsizes.

4. **Assisting the job seeker in the application and interviewing process as needed.** Depending on the individual’s preference and need, this may take a variety of approaches. Assistance may range from helping job seekers by practicing/role-playing before an interview to actually accompanying them during the interview and completing the application for or with him or her. In some cases, it may be necessary to recommend that the employer forgo a traditional interview and meet the individual in a more informal way. Some job seekers with serious mental health diagnoses, however, may prefer that the employment specialist support them only minimally and in a more “remote” manner. You should respect these preferences at all times.
5. **Assisting the job seeker and his or her team in making the final job selection.** You should ensure that the job duties, required qualifications, job benefits, work-site supports available, and work environment match the individual’s needs (and as many of his or her “wants” as possible) as outlined in the Individual Plan for Employment.
6. **Finalizing and negotiating job duties, schedules, wages, accommodations, and benefits with the employer.** This may also include assisting with final arrangements for transportation, uniforms, on-site job training, and other needed supports.
7. **Assisting the employer to apply for any employer incentives.** One example is the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC), a federal income tax credit incentive that encourages employers to hire individuals who are traditionally difficult to place in jobs or who have trouble gaining experience in the job market.
8. **Facilitating natural or typical supports and connections within the workplace.** You should start by ensuring that the individual participates in the company’s typical orientation and training. You or other assigned staff will continue to support employer and co-worker involvement throughout the individual’s employment.
9. **Continuing to serve as a consultant to the employer after the placement.** You or other assigned staff will continue to provide consultation that may include recommending and facilitating job accommodations, benefits monitoring, assistive technology, and other work-related supports as needed.

Helping a supported employee get off to a good start is important. Prior to a supported employee starting a job, you may assist him or her to:

- Establish at least preliminary transportation arrangements.
- Tour the workplace and meet all supervisors and co-workers.
- Attend the company orientation, if applicable.
- Arrange for uniforms, if applicable.
- Fill out all paperwork (make sure that proper IDs are available).
- Understand all company benefits and policies (sick and vacation leave, health insurance, retirement plans, etc.).
- Understand how income may impact his or her benefits (e.g., Social Security, Medicaid).

- Contact VRS about potential adaptations, authorizations, etc., as needed.
- Negotiate or arrange any necessary accommodations to the job tasks, work environment, schedule, or routine.

Customized Employment

Customized employment builds on proven principles, services, and strategies, such as supported employment, and results in individually designed services, supports, and jobs negotiated to fit the needs of a specific job seeker or employee. The U.S. Department of Labor defines customized employment as a **flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job seeker and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both**. It is based on a personalized determination of the strengths, requirements, and interests of a person with a disability, and is also designed to meet specific needs of the employer.

It is not a program but rather a set of principles and strategies that result in employment. It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability.

Self-Employment

Many people with disabilities dream of owning a business, but there is a gap between dream and reality that can be filled only with careful planning. VR counselors, as well as other sources of support, understand the process and steps for helping a person start a business and can help people who wish to be self-employed start a successful business. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, self-employment is an important and often-used alternative to wage and salary employment. People who are self-employed also are major contributors to the economy and generate many new services and products.

Today, there are approximately 20 million self-employed workers in the U.S. working in some form of entrepreneurial activity. People with disabilities are no different from anyone else who goes into business for him- or herself. They want to be self-employed for various reasons. They may seek freedom from the 9-5 daily work routine or want to be their own bosses. They may want to improve their standards of living, be bored with their current jobs, or prefer to work when and where they want. They may have products or services that they think are in demand. In rural areas, there may be few employers and jobs. People with disabilities may need flexible work schedules or need to work at home.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. What kinds of marketing materials (such as brochures, fact sheets, introduction letters, videos, references from other employers, and slide presentation) does your program use to market employment services to employers?
2. Make arrangements to shadow several experienced employment specialists as they job develop. How did they describe the program to potential employees? How did they represent their job seekers? How did their approaches differ?
3. If the employment specialist is a different person than the one completing Discovery, how does the employment specialist assure that he or she gets to know the job seeker well?
4. What type of businesses or organizations does your agency encourage and support employment specialists to participate in for networking and business connection activities (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Civic Clubs)?
5. Does your program have a group of business and community members that meet regularly on behalf of your program to assist with job leads, marketing, and community awareness? Do employment specialists attend these meetings and what role do they play?
6. How are job leads coordinated within your department and within your agency? How do you document information from an employer lead?
7. How do you share job development progress with funding and referral sources (e.g., VRS)?
8. How do you conduct and document job analyses? Do they include socio-cultural concerns?
9. Ask others for examples of situations where jobs have been carved or restructured. Are written proposals typically used? What information is included in the proposals?

Things to Remember

- ✓ Positive attitude and image are critical for job development success. Be professional. Dress for the part. Go with someone else until you feel comfortable.
- ✓ Remember the power of networking: Become familiar with businesses, labor trends, services and products in your community; participate in trade shows, business expos, and job fairs; join and participate in the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations and civic clubs; volunteer for city/county events (fairs, parades, fund-raisers, cultural events) and not-for-profit organizations; do your personal business (shopping, getting your hair cut, working out) in the same town you work; and offer training in disability awareness, ADA, and diversity to businesses and community groups.
- ✓ Do not forget self-employment as an option. People with disabilities can and do own their own businesses!
- ✓ Follow up on all job leads, contacts, and callbacks in a timely manner. Get organized!
- ✓ Never over promise during employer contacts. Promising 100% productivity from day one or suggesting that the agency will do ALL the training or supervision will be detrimental to the placement.
- ✓ The Discovery Profile guides job development. If changes are needed to the IPE, you should discuss these at the individual's planning meetings.
- ✓ Job development coordination among agency staff is very important. Document your leads, and let others know where you have gone, and where you are going. Some agencies find a computerized employer log helpful, while others have success with weekly job development meetings.
- ✓ Be prepared for potential employer concerns. Have answers ready when an employer is reluctant to hire due to concerns about high turnover, insurance rates, training costs, attendance and punctuality, productivity, safety, public image, or union issues.

Training and Support

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists assist the worker, as needed and agreed upon, to orient to the new job, including helping he or she understand benefits.*
- *Employment specialists encourage typical employer ways and means of support, including probation period and performance appraisal processes within the workplace.*
- *Employment specialists thoroughly analyze tasks and collect and analyze data, as needed, in order to assist the supported employee to learn the job (data-based decision making).*
- *Employment specialists recommend job-site modifications as needed that are as typical as possible.*
- *Employment specialists use the employer and co-workers as the first source of training and support.*
- *Employment specialists provide, as needed, training, support, and consultation to the employer and co-workers.*
- *Employment specialists work in partnership with supported employee and employer on the best employment training approaches to meet the individual's needs, emphasizing self-management techniques.*

The type and amount of support that a supported employee receives from an employment specialist once a job begins will vary greatly depending on the needs and preferences of an individual and the employer. Sometimes the employment specialist will not go on-site at all, but rather will check in with the supported employee and the employer at regular times off-site. Other times, the employment specialist may be on-site, assisting with the orientation and training, until the supported employee and the employer are comfortable with the employee's performance and the employee is well integrated into the workplace.

In all training and support strategies, the employment specialist must strive to be as typical as possible. Current research shows that employees with disabilities are more likely to be well integrated AND earn more if the job acquisition process, compensation package, work roles, and initial orientation and training are typical to others in the workplace. We know that employees with disabilities who work more hours will be better integrated and will earn more.

The principles of adult learning are important when supporting individuals with disabilities as well as when supporting their managers and co-workers in the workplace.

Principles of Adult Learning	
1	People learn better when they are respected and treated as adults;
2	People learn better when they are comfortable and at ease;
3	People learn better when they are in the natural environment for whatever it is that they are learning;
4	People learn better when learning promotes progress toward their own goals;
5	People learn better when the trainer knows and takes into account the individual's strengths, support needs, and learning styles; and
6	People learn better when they can quickly feel a sense of accomplishment.

Once a job begins, the type and amount of support that a supported employee receives from an employment specialist will vary greatly depending on the needs/preferences of the individual and the employer. For example, an individual may need support learning the job tasks. Other individuals may need support ranging from how to deal with the stigma of having a disability to acquiring a sense of belonging at the work site. These types of support strategies may be provided by an employment specialist on-site (at the work site), and/or off-site (away from the work site).

Regardless of how much support the worker will receive from his or her employment specialist, the support and training must focus on both job tasks and work culture. The supported employee needs to learn his or her job tasks and fit into the work environment. It is very important that the worker go through the typical orientation and training process of the employer. The goal is to develop a strong relationship between the supported employee and his or her new supervisor and co-workers, and fully utilize the “natural supports” that exist in the workplace. See the box on Principles of Adult Learning.

Natural supports refer to the supports typically available in a workplace or community setting to all employees or members (e.g., orientation and training programs, company-sponsored social events, supervision, car pools, benefits, and reminders). As this relates to supported employment, it is any assistance, relationship, or interaction that allows a person to secure, maintain, and advance in a community job of their choosing; correspond to the typical work routines and social actions of other employees; and enhance work and non-work social life among co-workers and other members of the community.

On-Site Supports

If you determine that the supported employee needs more assistance than what the employer typically offers, you may supplement the training at the job site, in partnership with the employer and co-workers. You should develop a plan of organized and strategic training techniques to assist the supported employee to learn his or her job. This often begins by taking baseline data on a particular job or task (based on the job analysis), providing instructional techniques, and then comparing new data to the baseline measures.

You will develop a “tool box” of training supports to assist the worker. One of the first things you may find helpful is to complete a **task analysis** of the steps that the supported employee is having difficulty with in order to break down a specific part of the job (or task) into smaller, more teachable steps. You can then try a variety of methods of assistance, including modeling, demonstration, and/or physical guidance.

Other instructional techniques that can be helpful:

- **Prompting** is any type of instruction or feedback given to a worker (e.g., verbal, gestures, physical assistance) to assist him or her to learn a particular job or task. “Prompting hierarchy” refers to the progression of least to most (or vice versa) intrusive prompts.
- **Modeling** is demonstrating a task or skill by performing it. It teaches by observation and example. You may demonstrate for the employee how to physically complete a task and then ask him or her to repeat what you have just done. Modeling can also be delivered via video or by a natural support. You can use the same technique to learn social skills, such as introductions, starting a conversation, asking for assistance, etc.
- Highlighting **natural cues** or creating artificial cues is a type of assistance that involves identifying the natural cue in the work environment that would happen prior to the worker’s next step or task and then assisting the worker to recognize this cue either by calling attention to it or by implementing an artificial cue. For example, in order for someone to know when to go on break, you can highlight the cue by teaching the supported employee to break when he or she sees others heading towards the break room, or you can implement an artificial cue, such as pre-set clock that rings when it is break time. All artificial cues should be as non-intrusive as possible.
- **Reinforcement** refers to rewards paired with correct responses to instructional cues in order to encourage someone to continue or increase a particular behavior or set of behaviors. Reinforcers should be positive, age-appropriate, and the least intrusive as possible. Examples of common reinforcers are pay and praise from a supervisor. Some people may need extra things like time with you, family, or a preferred individual.
- **Self-management** techniques enable the employee to manage his or her own behaviors or events through self-prompting or the use of tools. At job sites, this might include pictures, apps, videos, symbols, word checklists, modified clock faces, pre-set alarms, counters, reinforcers, or asking for feedback.
- **Positive behavioral interventions** and supports are a way of thinking about behavior that goes beyond reducing the challenging or impeding behavior to multiple approaches, such as changing systems, altering environments, teaching skills, and focusing on positive behavior. Positive behavioral interventions and supports are procedures based on environments, teaching skills, and focusing on positive behavior. Positive behavioral interventions and supports are procedures based on an understanding of why challenging behavior occurs. They are part of an ongoing problem-solving process that includes a thorough functional behavioral assessment to designing effective interventions to reduce impeding behavior(s) and/or teach new skills and supports. Interventions that result in humiliation, isolation, injury, and/or pain are not positive behavior supports and are not appropriate.
- **Assistive technology** is any item, piece of equipment, service or product system, whether acquired commercially off-the-shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. VRS may assist with identifying and securing assistive technology when needed.

Regardless of how long an employment specialist plans to remain on-site, all training programs should begin fading from day one. Fading refers to the systematic reduction of training and support. You will negotiate the fading plan with the supported employee and the employer. You will need to collect data on the progress of the supported employee by documenting whether specific steps are achieved, what types of prompting and methods of assistance are still needed, and/or what types of errors the worker is still making. This data can assist with objective evaluation of performance, determining areas ready for fading or in need of continued training, and call attention to areas that may need different training methods, adaptations, or self-management systems. You can share the data with the employer and co-workers to ask for assistance, feedback, and new ideas, and share it with funding sources (e.g., VRS) to justify the need for additional intervention and/or to help determine when to transfer into extended services.



Tips for fading:

- Use existing orientation and training provided by supervisors/coworkers.
- Ask co-workers for assistance in solving problems.
- Encourage the employer and co-workers to communicate directly with the supported employee.
- Look for opportunities to back off, such as when a co-worker approaches and interacts in any way.
- Ask co-workers and supervisors to model a task or assist with training.
- Make sure that the individual takes breaks and lunches with others at the job site.
- Think about how you can start fading from the first day to help the supported employee avoid reliance on you and increase independence.

Off-Site Supports

You can also provide training and support strategies off the job site. Off-site supports refer to both 1) services/supports provided at the work site, when the individual is not present and 2) services/supports provided away from the work site. Such off-site supports may be necessary to assist the individual with maintaining employment and with securing a sense of belonging in the workplace. For some individuals, the supports provided off-site may be more critical to the success of the placement than those supports provided on-site. For example, some individuals with a severe and persistent mental illness may not necessarily need job task related support; instead, they may need support with how to deal with the onset of symptoms, counseling prior to work, social skills training, etc. The types of support strategies will vary from individual to individual.

Off-site supports may include assisting with the following:

- Follow-up services with the individual, employer, parents, family members, advocates, and/or other authorized persons;
- Pay and benefit information and monitoring;
- Arranging for or assisting with transportation;
- Medication monitoring;
- Money management and budgeting;
- Collaboration with other service providers, including case managers, therapists, physicians/medical personnel, living supports, and VR counselors;
- Accessing social and appropriate community activities necessary to obtain and maintain employment;
- Social skills and other job-related skills training such as grooming and hygiene, appropriate dress for work, getting along with co-workers, getting to work on time, breaks and lunch, and coping skills, such as stress management;
- On-going assessment of support needs conducted after the individual is on the job; and
- On-going assessment and modification of the environment to enhance socio-cultural match.

You may also provide other direct employment-related interventions associated with advocacy or case management (e.g., entitlement planning, coordinating referrals to other sources). To the extent possible, you should first assist with the development of a natural support system, on and off the job site, which reinforces the consumer's sense of belonging to the work environment. Employment specialists must be able to determine and implement the types of support strategies appropriate to the needs of the person, from basic on-site work skills development to off-site counseling that assists in relating to co-workers, supervisors, or dealing with the issue of stigma.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. If the employment specialist responsible for job training is typically a different person than the employment specialist who developed the job, how do you assure he or she gets to know the job seeker and the job site well?
2. Plan to visit several job sites. What supports (on- and off-site) are you providing? What natural supports are developed?
3. Ask other employment specialists for examples of adaptations, self-management techniques and assistive technology used at job sites. How were these developed? How can you access assistive technology for an individual, if needed?
4. How is coverage handled at job sites? How is on-site support handled if you are unable to go to a job site? What are the responsibilities of team members if they, or you, request “coverage” at a job site?
5. How does your agency typically document job or task analyses? How/when is data collected and shared?
6. How are contacts with other service providers, case managers, therapists, physicians/medical personnel, living supports, and VR counselors handled? What are the your responsibilities in relation to these providers?

Things to Remember

- ✓ Employment specialists can provide training and support both on and off the job site. You must strive to be as typical and unobtrusive as possible and must focus on both the job tasks and work culture.
- ✓ The principles of adult learning are important when supporting individuals with disabilities as well as when supporting their managers and co-workers in the workplace.

- ✓ While good common sense is important in providing on-site supports, you must be able to make objective decisions regarding training and fading. Taking and analyzing data regularly is critical for success.

Extended Services/Ongoing Supports

Employment Specialist Competencies

- *Employment specialists assist individuals, as needed, to develop relationships within and outside of their job, including employer-sponsored activities.*
- *Employment specialists facilitate individuals, as needed, to access housing, community connections, and other necessary services and supports.*
- *Employment specialists facilitate training and support for other work-related issues, such as transportation, monitoring of benefits, money management, and self-advocacy.*
- *Employment specialists interface with family members and other service providers, as needed, and as preferred by the individual.*
- *Employment specialists monitor job performance and satisfaction, and support the employee to pursue career development and advancement opportunities.*
- *Employment specialists know how to assist someone to access support for a job change through knowledge of funding sources and agency guidelines.*

Supported employment, by definition, assumes that an individual will need some type of extended services for the life of the job and perhaps for future jobs. Funding from VRS and most other sources that fund job development and training services are short-term. This necessitates a transfer to a long-term funding source once the supported employee is stable in the job, and the support you have provided fades or is minimized (called stabilization). Extended services (also called ongoing supports or follow-along) refer to any ongoing supports needed to support and maintain an individual in employment after transition from the initial funding service (often VRS). The goal of such services is to assess and assist the individual's employment stability.

Ongoing supports can range in intensity and scope based on an individual's and an employer's needs. They must either occur on-site at least twice monthly, or if an individual requests that such supports be provided off-site, they must consist of at least two monthly contacts with the individual and one contact with the employer (see the Federal Register, Volume 59, Title 34). Depending on the needs of the individual supports can be a combination of on-site and off-site.

At many agencies, the same employment specialist who provides the job development and/or training supports provides the ongoing supports. However, another employment specialist whose role is primarily follow-along, a case manager or service coordinator, or another service provider or agency (e.g., someone who assists the individual with his or her living supports) may provide extended supports.

The supported employee and their planning team should develop an extended support plan and implement it before the employee transitions from the job training and support phase. The plan includes

identification of the needed supports, who will provide the supports (and a back-up plan), and specific timelines and processes for monitoring the plan.

Extended supports can be put into place to meet a wide range of needs, including:

- monitoring work performance,
- monitoring a BIN-recommended benefits plan,
- offering crisis intervention,
- assisting with socialization and overall integration,
- supporting employers and co-workers,
- providing retraining of previously learned skills or training new skills, and
- career development,
- as well as to provide continued assistance with any previously identified off-site supports.

This may include helping to negotiate pay raises and/or increasing job duties in the current position, or assisting the individual to find a new position within or outside of his or her current company. Job seekers with persistent, serious mental illness may need to be assisted with repeated job searches, as each experience creates a continuum of learning and growth. If a supported employee loses or leaves a job, the employment specialist may assist the individual to re-engage with the VR system.

Extended/ongoing services also include collaboration and coordination with family members and other service providers, including case managers, therapists, physicians/medical personnel, and residential providers, to assist the individual with maintaining their employment status. Regular assessment of consumer satisfaction is another important component of extended services. Employment specialists do this in a variety of ways, both formally through surveys and interviews, and informally through regular contact. Ask supported employees about their satisfaction with their current job as well as with the supports they are receiving. In addition, you should obtain regular feedback from employers and from funding and referral sources. Use feedback to make improvements to services and supports.



Being Part of a Community

Despite the focus on integrated employment and natural supports, an employee may still feel isolated and lonely, especially if he or she was in a school program, a sheltered workshop, or a full-day activity or treatment program prior to obtaining competitive employment. Just getting a job does not necessarily mean people are developing connections and friendships or participating as community members.

Community participation is defined as:

“... the efforts and activities used to assist people to participate fully in their community and exercise control of their lives. This may include assistance with developing connections and friendships; membership in local community clubs, organizations and services groups; participation in integrated sports, recreation, and leisure activities; participation in integrated continuing education; and assistance with developing and maintaining volunteer work positions in not-for-profit or public organizations. These activities can be used to supplement supported employment or as alternative to supported employment during transition periods.” (BDDS Service Definitions)

Community connections are the set of ties a person has with others. True community participation is the experience of being known, being liked, and belonging with others. It is important to remember that “community” is an EXPERIENCE, not a PLACE.

The process of community participation is very similar to Discovery. It begins with getting to know an individual’s strengths, preferences, interests and support needs and then identifying and exploring possible connections:

- Where would you find others with the same or similar interests?
- Where are potential welcoming places? Examples include art organizations, business organizations, charitable groups and drives, church groups, collectors’ groups, diners, senior groups, ethnic associations/groups, health and fitness facilities, interest clubs, political organizations, service clubs, sports leagues, social cause groups, neighborhood and block clubs, and volunteer organizations.
- Who are the LEADERS and active members in the community? Who can you enlist as a bridge builder to assist with introductions?

Community participation is NOT an “outing” or a tour of the community with a staff guide. It is being part of a community.

You can make introductions and provide support as needed, and then fade support when appropriate. Just as in employment services, these connections may require continued follow-up and support. Consider how your job seeker is influenced and affected by community participation.



Questions to ask and information to seek:

1. If the person responsible for follow-along is typically a different person than the employment specialist who developed the job or provided training supports, how do you assure they get to know the job seeker and the job site well?
2. How are decisions made about when to transfer individuals to extended services in your agency? What is the process?
3. Once a person is no longer funded from their up-front funding source (e.g., VRS or a school system), what happens if he or she loses a job and needs assistance securing another one? Who provides this assistance? Who (if anyone) funds this?
4. How are extended service plans documented in your agency? How do you communicate with the case manager?
5. What are some of the options for individuals who are “in-between” jobs (waiting for another placement)? How do they typically spend their day?
6. How does your agency collect and use satisfaction information from supported employees, employers, and funding/referrals sources?
7. Is it the role of employment specialists within your agency to assist individuals with developing other community connections? How is this funded? If not, how can you assist an individual to access support in this area?
8. If your agency provides services to people with persistent, serious mental illness, how do staff address revolving job acquisition and loss?

Things to Remember

- ✓ Be proactive! Keep in regular contact with supported employees and employers to keep issues from building up.
- ✓ Extended services should include assistance with job changes and career advancement.

- ✓ You can provide extended services off-site, on-site, or both. Supports are not only related to job duties, but also to developing natural supports and connections on and off the job site.
- ✓ Remember that there are many reasons for job dissatisfaction, including boredom, feelings of not being able to do the job well, inadequate supports and interactions from employer and co-workers, or other personal (not job-related) issues.

RESOURCES



Additional Resources



For more information about the topics found in this manual, as well as additional information to support quality employment services, refer to

<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/resources-links>.

Glossary of Terms

Glossary	
Accommodation	Any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that will allow a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job and enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities.
Assertive Community Treatment	An intensive and highly integrated approach for community mental health service delivery. ACT programs serve outpatients whose symptoms of mental illness lead to serious functioning difficulties in several major areas of life, often including work, social relationships, residential independence, money management, and physical health and wellness.
Activities of Daily Living/ Adult Daily Living	The daily tasks required in life, including personal hygiene, preparing meals, managing household chores or finances, etc.
Advocate	A person who acts on another's behalf in his or her defense or support.
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)	Civil rights legislation that provides equal opportunity and access for people with disabilities. This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications.
Assistive Technology	Any item, piece of equipment, service, or product system, whether acquired commercially off-the-shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)	An international membership organization whose mission is to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes for persons experiencing disabilities.
Authorization	A document from Vocational Rehabilitation Services that authorizes payment for services rendered to an individual by an employment service provider. The authorization specifically outlines the type of service(s) to be provided and the rate of payment.
Benefits Information Network	An Indiana program that trains and supports staff from employment services agencies to provide VRS consumers information on federal and state benefit programs.

Glossary	
<i>Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS)</i>	A bureau under the Family and Social Services Administration of the State of Indiana that plans, develops and administers a variety of services for people who have developmental disabilities.
<i>CARF International</i>	A not-for-profit organization that annually establishes standards that define the expected inputs to, processes for, and outcomes of rehabilitation programs and services for those people receiving services. CARF recognizes an organization's compliance with these standards through accreditation. The acronym "CARF" originally meant The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.
<i>Case Manager</i>	An individual who organizes, coordinates, and sustains a network of formal and informal supports and activities designed to promote the well-being and self-sufficiency of persons with disabilities and to achieve continuity of care.
<i>Clubhouse</i>	A vocational and social rehabilitation program (often part of a CMHC) for adults with a history of mental illness. The model is one of membership and equality between staff and people with mental illness. Activities often include clubhouse operations, such as preparing lunches, publishing a newsletter, maintenance of building and grounds, outreach to other members, phone reception, etc. Some clubhouses operate prevocational work teams, transitional employment, or groups to develop or improve members' job-seeking skills or readiness to work.
<i>Community Mental Health Center (CMHC)</i>	Agencies established under the Community Mental Health Center Act of 1963 to deinstitutionalize individuals with serious mental illness from state hospitals and provide services in the community. CMHCs currently offer a range of services including outpatient care, day treatment, case management, emergency services, consultation and education, and are accessible to clients regardless of age, race, color, national origin, disability, diagnosis, or ability to pay.
<i>Community Participation</i>	The efforts and activities utilized to assist people to participate fully in their community and exercise control of their lives. This may include assistance with developing connections and friendships; membership in local community clubs, organizations and services groups; participation in integrated sports, recreation, and leisure activities; participation in community-based integrated continuing education; and assistance with developing and maintaining volunteer work positions in not-for-profit or public organizations. These activities can be used to complement supported employment or as alternative to supported employment during transition periods.
<i>Conditions of Employment</i>	Preferences or conditions to be considered when looking for employment. If a condition is a preference, it is a "negotiable" condition. An example of a negotiable condition might be having Sunday's off because a job seeker enjoys watching football games. In contrast, if the condition is a requirement, the condition is considered "non-negotiable." An example of a non-negotiable condition might be having Sunday's off because of religious obligations. Conditions of employment may span over job duties, workplace conditions, wages, or benefits, just to name a few.
<i>Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)</i>	An agency, or part of an agency, that directly provides or facilitates the primary provision of vocational rehabilitation and other community services to individuals with disabilities to enable individuals to maximize life opportunities, including employment and career advancement.

Glossary	
<i>Competitive, Integrated Employment</i>	Work in the competitive labor market performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting. An individual who is competitively employed is compensated at or above the minimum wage, at a rate comparable to (but not less than) the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.
<i>Consumer/Client</i>	The job seeker or supported employee for whom services are provided.
<i>Continuing Disability Review (CDR)</i>	Regular, variable-frequency eligibility determination assessment conducted by Social Security of all SSI and SSDI recipients. Review focuses on the appropriateness of the “disability” label in relation to substantial gainful activity (SGA), the severity of the impairment, and the prognosis for recovery.
<i>Customized Employment</i>	Individualizing the employment relationship between job seekers and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. Approaches include supported employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship.
<i>Cues</i>	An event or prompt that occurs prior to the next step or task. An example of a natural cue in the workplace could be the sight of co-workers leaving the office before break time. An example of an artificial cue might be a timer set to buzz 15 minutes before the bus arrives. Highlighting a natural cue or implementing an artificial cue are types of assistance used in systematic instruction.
<i>Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</i>	A federal agency designed to promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity, and suitable living environments free from discrimination for low-income, elderly, and disabled households. HUD provides grants, insures loans, provides housing assistance for people who are elderly or disabled or who have HIV/AIDS, enforces fair housing laws, supports public Housing Authorities so they can provide housing for poor and disadvantaged families, and provides other supportive services and financing to meet their mission.
<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-V)</i>	A manual published by the American Psychiatric Association that is a classification system for dividing mental disorders into types, based upon certain criteria and features. Mental health clinicians use this manual as a guideline to select a diagnosis for an individual depending upon the symptomatology that he or she presents.
<i>Disability</i>	A physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment or a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
<i>Discovery</i>	Under the VRS Employment Services Model, Discovery is intended to be a collaborative, consumer driven process, which may include a variety of fact-finding and information-collecting strategies. Discovery is designed to achieve the specific employment outcome selected by an individual that is consistent with his or her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choices.
<i>Discovery Profile</i>	A VRS form used to document the findings from Discovery.

Glossary	
<i>Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS)</i>	A division of the Family and Social Services Administration that works to inform, protect, and serve older adults and individuals with disabilities and their families in need of human services, resources or support to obtain employment and self-sufficiency or to gain independence.
<i>Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)</i>	A division of the Family and Social Services Administration that provides funding support for mental health and addictions services to target populations with financial need through a network of managed care providers. DMHA also certifies all community mental health centers and managed care providers, licenses inpatient psychiatric hospitals, operates the state mental health hospitals, and administers federal funds earmarked for substance abuse prevention projects.
<i>DMHA Supported Consumer (DSC)</i>	The primary funding system used to pay for mental health and addiction services, through contracts with managed care providers, who provide a continuum of care for individuals who meet diagnostic, functioning level, and income criteria.
<i>Employer</i>	An individual or organization providing competitive full- or part-time community work situations while compensating employees usually at or above the minimum wage, with or without benefits.
<i>Employment Networks (EN)</i>	An organizational entity (state or local, public or private) that enters into a contract with SSA with the intention of coordinating and delivering employment services, VR services, and/or other support services under the Social Security Ticket to Work program. The EN provides these services to beneficiaries who have assigned their Tickets to the EN.
<i>Employment Specialist (ES)</i>	A representative of an employment provider who provides a wide range of employment services to people with disabilities. These services may include assessment, job development, initial training and support, follow-along, and career planning. May also be called employment consultant, employment advisor, job developer, job coach, etc.
<i>Employment Support and Retention Plan</i>	A VRS form for documenting plans for supports that a consumer may need in order to successfully achieve stabilization and job retention.
<i>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)</i>	A federal agency established by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC promotes equal opportunity in employment through administrative and judicial enforcement of the federal civil rights laws and through education and technical assistance. The EEOC also enforces the principal federal statutes prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), age (Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)), gender (Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA)), and disability (Title I of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). The commission also enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which includes provisions for monetary damages in cases of intentional discrimination and clarifies provisions regarding disparity in hiring.
<i>Extended Medicare Coverage</i>	A provision of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act that allows working Medicare beneficiaries to continue their Medicare coverage for at least 93 months.

Glossary	
<i>Extended Services</i>	Ongoing support services needed to support and maintain an individual in his or her job. These services are provided by a state agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, natural supports, or any other appropriate resource from funds other than VR.
<i>Fading</i>	The systematic reduction of training and support.
<i>Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)</i>	A state agency that provides services to families who have issues associated with low income, mental illness, addiction, mental retardation, a disability, aging, and children who are at risk for healthy development.
<i>Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)</i>	The full SSI payment before deductions for income, in-kind services (such as free food, clothing, or shelter), or any other deductions. The FBR is reviewed annually and revised based on the cost of living.
<i>Food Stamps</i>	See “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.”
<i>Group Home</i>	A supervised residential program for individuals who are learning skills needed to progress to more independent or less supervised living situations. The term “group home” generally refers to a residential facility or house in which all residents have a disability and need some level of supervision by on-site staff. In some cases, group homes are more like halfway houses, in that there is less supervision and more opportunities for residents to use their independent living skills.
<i>Hoosier Assurance Plan (HAP)</i>	A state funding system used by DMHA to pay a CMHC for a year of mental health and addictions services at the most appropriate level for all enrollees based on their diagnosis, function levels, and income criteria.
<i>Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE)</i>	An SSI and SSDI work incentive that allows an individual to deduct the costs of certain items or services from his or her work income so that they are not counted in determining income for Social Security purposes. The costs must be related to the impairment or disability and must help the individual to work.
<i>Indiana Institute on Disability and Community/Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC)</i>	A University Center on Excellence within Indiana University that provides training, research, and advocacy services to affect systems and organizational change for people with disabilities. CCLC, one of six centers at the institute, focuses on improving transition and adult services through person-directed planning, employment, community membership, organizational change, career development, and inclusive education.
<i>Indiana Manpower and Comprehensive Training (IMPACT) Program:</i>	A program administered by the Department of Family Resources of the Family and Social Services Administration that provides services designed to help recipients of food stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to achieve economic self-sufficiency through education, training, and job search and placement activities. IMPACT is Indiana’s Welfare-to-Work program, a critical component of Indiana’s welfare reform initiatives, which places an increasing emphasis on “work first” (individuals are expected to accept a job that can be secured with their existing education and skills).

Glossary	
<i>Indiana Disability Rights</i>	An independent state agency (receives no state funding or support from any service providers) that provides legal and advocacy services to citizens of Indiana who have a disability and are either being denied a right or are discriminated against because of a disability. Six federally-mandated and funded services are currently available: Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI), Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD), Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR), Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS), Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP), Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA), and Protection and Advocacy for Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI).
<i>Individual Plan</i>	A person-centered and directed strategic guide to development containing goals and objectives, including timelines and responsibilities. A person may have more than one plan (education, employment, habilitation, and placement).
<i>Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)</i>	The IPE is the collaborative plan the VR counselor and job seeker, at a minimum, jointly develop and implement with an agreed upon vocational goal and objectives identified to reach the goal, including services, service providers, and supports.
<i>Informed Choice</i>	Implemented with the Rehab Act of 1973, informed choice requires that activities and services are carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on the informed choice of the person with disabilities. It requires that a person receiving services must be an active and full partner in the VR process.
<i>Integrated Setting</i>	A setting typically found in the community in which individuals with disabilities interact with non-disabled individuals.
<i>International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPRS)</i>	A membership organization for Psychosocial Rehabilitation practitioners, managers, advocates, researchers, behavioral health care officials, consumers and family members, who care about the rehabilitation, recovery, rights and community resources for people with psychiatric disabilities.
<i>Job Analysis</i>	The process of analyzing a potential job site in terms of position responsibilities and work environment to determine appropriate job matches.
<i>Job Carving or Restructuring</i>	The process of analyzing and identifying specific tasks within a specific position that might be reassigned to create a job for another person.
<i>Job Creation/ Employment Proposal</i>	The process of developing and negotiating a new job (one that did not previously exist) within a business to meet both the employer needs and the needs of the job seeker.
<i>Job Development</i>	The art of supporting the job seeker to find quality competitive employment consistent with his or her skills, abilities, interests, and desires.
<i>Job Readiness Training</i>	Training to address a specific, significant barrier a consumer is experiencing regarding one or more appropriate work behaviors likely to interfere with performance.

Glossary	
<i>Job Search Assistance/Job Placement Assistance</i>	VR service provided at an hourly rate for consumers who require minimal assistance with obtaining employment and do not require employment services through the job development/support/retention milestones.
<i>Job Shadowing</i>	An informal opportunity for an individual to observe and, in some cases, try out a job in the community of interest before making a decision to work or select a specific job goal.
<i>KEY Consumer Organization</i>	A self-help organization created and managed by mental health consumers that offers information, advocacy services, referrals, and support services and that promotes a philosophy of empowerment for individuals with mental illness.
<i>Major Life Activities</i>	A term used when discussing the following skills: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, and capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.
<i>Medicaid</i>	A federally-funded health insurance program (administered by Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration) available to certain low-income individuals (i.e., some families with children; pregnant women; and people who are aged, blind, or who have a disability).
<i>Medicaid Rehab Option (MRO)</i>	A type of Medicaid funding for medically necessary treatment. MRO may be used for outpatient and intensive day treatment services, and case management for individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses. Under MRO, a physician or health service provider must certify the diagnosis and authorize the plan of care as indication of his or her approval of the assessment, DSM-V classification, and the proposed methods of treatment.
<i>Medicaid Waiver</i>	Waivers given by the federal government to grant/allow a state permission to waive certain federal requirements in order to operate a specific kind of program. Funding from waivers can help individuals with disabilities be supported in their communities and, in some cases, in the workplace.
<i>Medicare</i>	A federally-funded health insurance program for individuals who are receiving SSDI/SS Disabled Adult/Child (SSDAC) benefits.
<i>M.E.D. Works</i>	A program designed to provide access to comprehensive health care for working people with disabilities. This program is Indiana's Medicaid Buy-in and is critical for people with disabilities who have a difficult time finding affordable comprehensive health care coverage in the private market. M.E.D. Works allows working people with disabilities to pay a premium to participate in their state's Medicaid program, just as they would if they were buying private health care coverage.
<i>Milestone 1 Job Development and Placement</i>	VRS employment outcome-based payment that supports the job development and placement process and is considered achieved when 1) the consumer obtains an appropriate employment outcome consistent with the goal outlined in the IPE and 2) employment is maintained for one calendar week.
<i>Milestone 2 Support and Short-Term Retention</i>	VRS employment outcome-based payment that provides support during the first four calendar weeks the consumer is on the job.

Glossary	
<i>Milestone 3 Retention</i>	VRS employment outcome-based payment made upon verification of achievement of successful employment retention of at least 90 days after stabilization. (See also, "Stabilization.")
<i>Modeling</i>	Teaching a skill or behavior by demonstration or example.
<i>Most Significant Disability (MSD)</i>	VRS severity determination indicating consumer has a severe physical or mental impairment that substantially limits three or more functional capacities. This consumer can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.
<i>Natural Supports</i>	Supports typically available in a workplace to all employees (e.g., orientation and training programs, supervisors, reminders and supports). Relating to employment services, natural supports are any assistance, relationships, and interactions that allow a person to secure, maintain, and advance in a community job of his or her choosing, corresponding to the typical work routines and social interactions of other employees, and enhance the individual's work and non-work social life among his or her co-workers and other members of the community.
<i>Non-Significant Disability (NSD)</i>	VRS severity determination indicating consumer has a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and who presumably will benefit from the provision of VR services leading to employment.
<i>Other Discovery Activities</i>	Additional purposeful activities that may be billed at the standard hourly rate under the Discovery process. Examples include career exploration, informational interviews, dealing with disclosure, home visits, and interviewing others who know the consumer well.
<i>Order of Selection</i>	A process that prioritizes individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) to receive services. A state's VR agency is required to implement this process when they do not have fiscal or personnel resources to fully serve all eligible individuals.
<i>Person-Centered Plan (PCP)</i>	Process that involves individuals with disabilities and their support systems developing a plan that identifies an individual's vocational and life goal(s) and the supports needed to obtain those goals.
<i>Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)</i>	An SSI-only work incentive that allows an individual to purchase items that will lead to increased independence in getting and keeping a job, and allows him/her to deduct the cost of these items from income counted by Social Security in determining benefits. (Note: Although PASS is an SSI work incentive, it may be used to make an SSDI recipient eligible for SSI.)
<i>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)</i>	A way of thinking about behavior that involves multiple approaches, such as changing systems, altering environments, teaching skills, and focusing on positive behavior, in order to go beyond just reducing or impeding challenging behaviors. PBIS are procedures based on understanding why challenging behavior occurs. Interventions that result in humiliation, isolation, injury and/or pain are not positive behavior supports and would not be considered appropriate in a supported employment setting.

Glossary	
<i>Post-Employment Services</i>	One or more services provided after a person achieves an employment outcome that may be necessary for he or she to maintain, regain, or advance employment. These services should be limited in scope and duration. Examples may include counseling or mediation when an individual's job is in jeopardy because of a conflict with co-workers, or assistance in learning a new skill because of a change in job duties.
<i>Prompting</i>	Any type of instruction or feedback given to a worker (e.g., verbal, gestures, physical assistance) to assist him/her to learn a particular job or task. Prompting hierarchy refers to the progression of least to most (or vice-versa) intrusive prompts.
<i>Psychosocial Rehabilitation</i>	A model of community-based mental health service that provides a comprehensive menu to service recipients (called members), including vocational, residential, social/recreational, educational, and personal adjustment services. The values and concepts associated with PSR include wellness, self-determination, normalcy, informality, strengths-focus, and collaboration with others to achieve mental health goals. The PSR model is most often organized as a Clubhouse. (See also, "Clubhouse.")
<i>Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)</i>	The principal federal agency established by Congress to carry out Titles I, III, VI, VII, and VIII, as well as specified portions of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, as well as certain other disability-related Acts. As part of its duties, RSA is responsible for the formulation, development, and implementation of regulations, policies, and guidelines for the statutes described above, which govern Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration. In addition, RSA is responsible for advising the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Secretary of Education on the formulation, development, implementation, and review of other policies and legislation affecting individuals with disabilities. RSA acts as an advocate to assure the rights of persons with disabilities; serves as a resource and clearinghouse of information for service providers. RSA is also involved at national, regional, state, and local levels in the development of national programs to reduce or eliminate social and environmental barriers experienced by people with disabilities, to establish eligibility standards, and to provide leadership in assuring that all categories of individuals with disabilities receive equitable consideration for access to services.
<i>Reinforcement</i>	Rewards that are paired with correct responses to instructional cues to encourage someone to continue or increase a particular behavior or set of behaviors. Reinforcers should be positive, age-appropriate, and as least intrusive as possible.
<i>Section 8</i>	A federal program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that assists very low income and elderly people as well as people with disabilities so they have access to affordable, safe, decent, and sanitary housing.
<i>Self-Determination</i>	The skill, ability, and drive to advocate for personal goals and to assert oneself to improve quality of life.
<i>Self-Management Techniques</i>	Use of a procedure that enables the user to manage his or her own behaviors through self-prompting or use of tools. At job sites, this might include pictures, symbols, word checklists, modified clock-faces, pre-set alarms, cassette recordings, counters, tokens or coins (self-delivered), or asking for feedback.

Glossary	
<i>Serious Mental Illness (SMI)</i>	Includes individuals, from birth up to age 18, who currently or at any time during the past year have had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that resulted in impairment that substantially interferes with or limits their role or ability to function in family, school, or community activities.
<i>Sheltered Workshop</i>	An agency-operated, work-oriented service for carrying out habilitation/rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities. The agency provides the individual with paid employment or other occupational activity. Individuals, however, are often paid a subminimum wage for work completed based on their productivity or a set piece rate.
<i>Significant Disability (SD)</i>	VRS severity determination indicating consumer has a severe physical or mental impairment that will substantially limit one or two functional capacities (communication, interpersonal skills, mobility, self-care, self-direction, work skills, and work tolerance) in terms of employment outcome. A person with an SD designation can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.
<i>Situational Assessment</i>	An opportunity to gather performance-based information about a consumer's strengths and needs through observation of behaviors or performance of a task(s) in a variety of environments. Situational assessment is a VRS service provided through the Discovery process.
<i>Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)</i>	Resources offered under the Department of Family Resources of the Family and Social Services Administration. SNAP, the Indiana food stamp program, is designed to raise the nutritional level of low-income households by supplementing their available food purchasing dollars with food stamp coupons. Eligibility includes financial (i.e., income and assets) and non-financial (i.e., state residency, citizenship/alien status, work registration, and cooperation with the IMPACT program) criteria.
<i>Social Security Disabled Adult/Child (SSDAC)</i>	A program identical to SSDI with the exception that the person receiving these benefits is paid based on his or her parent's contributions to the system, not his or her own.
<i>Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)</i>	Also known as Title II under the Social Security Act, SSDI is a benefit given to eligible individuals with disabilities. It is considered an "earned" entitlement, in that eligible individuals must have worked (Social Security taxes were deducted from their employment wages), have a medical disability, and gross countable earnings below substantial gainful activity (SGA). The cash payment remains the same, regardless of other income, as long as a person is not able to work at the level of SGA.
<i>Stabilization</i>	The highest level of independence an individual is able to attain after an appropriate period of supports, including supported employment and other supports. The individual and the VR counselor jointly agree to stabilization. A person may achieve stabilization soon after he or she begins work or after many months of support. Stabilization usually is indicated by the gradual decline and leveling off of intervention time.
<i>State Hospital/State Developmental Center</i>	A freestanding facility that provides long-term inpatient treatment for people with serious mental illness or developmental disabilities who cannot be effectively treated in a less intensive setting.

Glossary	
Status 26	A VRS code indicating that a consumer is "rehabilitated," and his/her case is closed successfully. This occurs when: (1) the VR services provided under the IPE has contributed substantially to the achievement of the employment outcome; (2) the employment outcome is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice; (3) the employment outcome is in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the individual's informed choice; (4) the individual has maintained the job for a period of at least 90 days; and (5) the individual and the VRS counselor consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well on the job.
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)	A level of employment earnings that the Social Security Administration uses to determine if someone is eligible for certain benefits. It applies to the SSDI program during initial application and on an ongoing basis. It applies to the SSI program only in determining whether a person is initially eligible for SSI disability payments, and does not apply to SSI recipients who are blind. Social Security automatically adjusts SGA annually, based on increases in the national average wage index.
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Also known as Title XVI under the Social Security Act, an entitlement provided to people who are 65 or older, or who are blind, or who have a disability, and who have little or no income. The cash payment varies in amount, depending on the amount of a person's earned (e.g., wages or self-employment earnings) or unearned (e.g., SSDI, Veteran's benefits, or pensions) income.
Supported Employment (SE)	Competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability.
Support System	Supports provided that assist individuals to achieve the goals of independence and productivity and facilitate their integration into the community. They are supports that occur naturally in the community, at work, in a social situation, or they may be planned, facilitated, or coordinated in partnership with a service provider.
Systematic Instruction	A plan of organized and strategic training techniques to assist someone to learn a job or task. Often begins with taking baseline data on a particular job or task (based on the job/task analysis), providing instructional techniques, and then comparing new data to baseline.
Task Analysis	The process of breaking down a specific part of a job (a task) into smaller, more teachable steps.
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program provides temporary financial assistance for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children. TANF provides financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and expenses other than medical.

Glossary	
<i>Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency/Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA)</i>	Passed in 1999, a law allowing SSI and SSDI recipients to use “tickets” to choose the service provider of their choice from an Employment Network. This legislation also provides for expanded availability of health care: extended Part A Medicare coverage for an additional 4 ½ years for working SSDI beneficiaries, suspended Medicare coverage while under group health insurance plans, and expanded state options and funding for Medicaid. Provisions also include expedited reinstatement of benefits, changes to the Continuing Disability Review process, and new work incentive programs for people with disabilities.
<i>Transitional Employment</i>	A series of planned, temporary job placements in integrated, competitive work settings with ongoing support services for individuals with the most severe disabilities due to mental illness. Transitional employment include continuing sequential job placements until the individual finds a permanent job.
<i>Trial Work Experience (TWE)</i>	An exploration of the individual’s abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations to determine whether or not a person is capable of benefitting from VR services.
<i>Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)</i>	An employee of VRS who provides guidance and counseling to individuals who are eligible for VR services. The VRC works with eligible individuals to establish a plan to achieve a vocational goal, based on his or her interests and abilities, and identify the services that will be needed to achieve the vocational goal.
<i>Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)</i>	A program of the Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services (DDRS) under the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) whose purpose is to assist people with disabilities to obtain essential services and to empower them to achieve equality of opportunity, gainful employment, independent living, economic and social self-sufficiency, and full inclusion in society. VRS assists people with disabilities in making informed career choices and utilizing available support services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.
<i>Vocational Testing</i>	Testing conducted in an appropriate secure setting to help evaluate and identify a consumer’s vocational strengths, aptitudes, abilities, capabilities, interests, and academic skill levels to identify an employment goal. Testing is performed and results are interpreted only by appropriate or qualified evaluators.
<i>Vocational Themes</i>	Overarching themes that include environments and businesses that might value a job seeker’s unique talents and abilities. Themes are not job descriptions, but a more expansive approach that looks at large umbrella topics representing many jobs, environments, skills, and interests; resulting from what a job seeker and his/her employment team learned during the Discovery process.
<i>Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)</i>	A federal income tax credit incentive that encourages employers to hire individuals who are traditionally difficult to place in jobs or who have trouble gaining experience in the job market. Contact the Department of Labor office to obtain more information on the WOTC.

Glossary

***Workforce Innovations
Opportunity Act 2014
(WIOA)***

Signed into law in 2014, WIOA replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA addresses a number of employment issues, including pre-vocational transition services and subminimum wage for transition-age youth. The intent is to ensure that young adults are not transitioning from high school directly to “sheltered workshops” or other employment arrangements where they could be paid a subminimum wage without having had the opportunity for training or to explore employment in their communities. The law also is designed to strengthen relationships between VRS and Workforce Development.

Zero Exclusion

The philosophy that everyone, regardless of type or severity of disability, has the right to work or participate in any social or non-work activity in the community.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

Abbreviations & Acronyms	
ACT	Assertive Community Treatment
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
APSE	Association for People Supporting Employment First
ARC	Previously known as the Association of Retarded Citizens; written as The Arc
Article 7	State regulations governing special education
ASK	About Special Kids
BDDS	Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services
BIN	Benefits Information Network
CARF	Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
CCLC	Center on Community Living and Careers
CDR	Continuing Disability Review
CIH	Community Integration and Habilitation Waiver
CMHC	Community Mental Health Center
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Program
CSP	Community Support Program
CQL	Council on Quality and Leadership
DDRS	Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
DMHA	Division of Mental Health and Addictions
DOE	Department of Education
DOL	Department of Labor
DSM-V	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition
EC	Employment Consultant
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EN	Employment Network

Abbreviations & Acronyms	
ES	Employment Specialist
ESRP	Employment Support and Retention Plan
FBR	Federal Benefit Rate
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
FSSA	Family and Social Services Administration
FSW	Family Supports Waiver
FY	Fiscal Year
HAP	Hoosier Assurance Plan
HCI	Home and Community Inclusion
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disorder
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDR	Indiana Disability Rights (formerly IPAS)
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IIDC	Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
IMPACT	Indiana Manpower and Comprehensive Training Program
INAPSE	Indiana Chapter of the Association for People Supporting Employment First
INARF	Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
IPAS	See, IDR, Indiana Disability Rights
IPE	Individual Plan for Employment
IRA	Indiana Rehabilitation Association
ICIL	Indiana Centers for Independent Living
IPS	Individual Placement and Support
IRWE	Impairment-Related Work Expense
ISP	Individualized Support Plan
ITP	Individual Treatment Plan

Abbreviations & Acronyms	
JCAHO	Abbreviation for what is now known as The Joint Commission. (The abbreviation JCAHO referred to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.)
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MHA	Mental Health Association
MSD	Most Significant Disability
MRO	Medicaid Rehabilitation Option
NAMI	National Alliance for Mental Illness
NCQA	National Commission on Quality Assurance
NOA	Notice of Action
NOJO	Notice of Job Offer
NSD	Non-Significant Disability
ODEP	Office of Disability Employment Policy
OMPP	Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
P&A	Protection and Advocacy
PAAT	Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology
PABSS	Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security
PADD	Protection and Advocacy for individuals with Developmental Disabilities
PAIMI	Protection and Advocacy for individuals with Mental Illness
PAIR	Protection and Advocacy for individual rights
PATBI	Protection and Advocacy for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury
PASS	Plan for Achieving Self-Support
PCP	Person-Centered Plan
PPF	Person Future Planning
PHP	Partial Hospitalization Program
PSR	Psychosocial Rehabilitation
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration

Abbreviations & Acronyms	
SD	Significant Disability
SE	Supported Employment
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity
SL	Supported Living
SMI	Serious Mental Illness
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDAC	Social Security Disabled Adult/Child
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TASH	Previously known as The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps
TWWIIA	Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency/Work Incentives Improvement Act
UCPA	United Cerebral Palsy Association
VRC	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
VRS	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
WDS	Workforce Development Services
WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board
WIPA	Work Incentives Planning & Assessment

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Notes



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