



# TOOLKIT JULY 2018

(REVISION 3)

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Training Fidelity  
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Evidenced-Based  
Implementation  
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## Introduction

The IPS Toolkit has been developed to provide KY IPS providers access to resources that are frequently used. While the toolkit is not all inclusive, we hope that these resources will be on use to you in this handy format. For more information, visit the IPS International Learning Community website:

<https://www.ipsworks.org>. The toolkit will be updated twice per year.



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**Kentucky Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment Sites  
June 2018**

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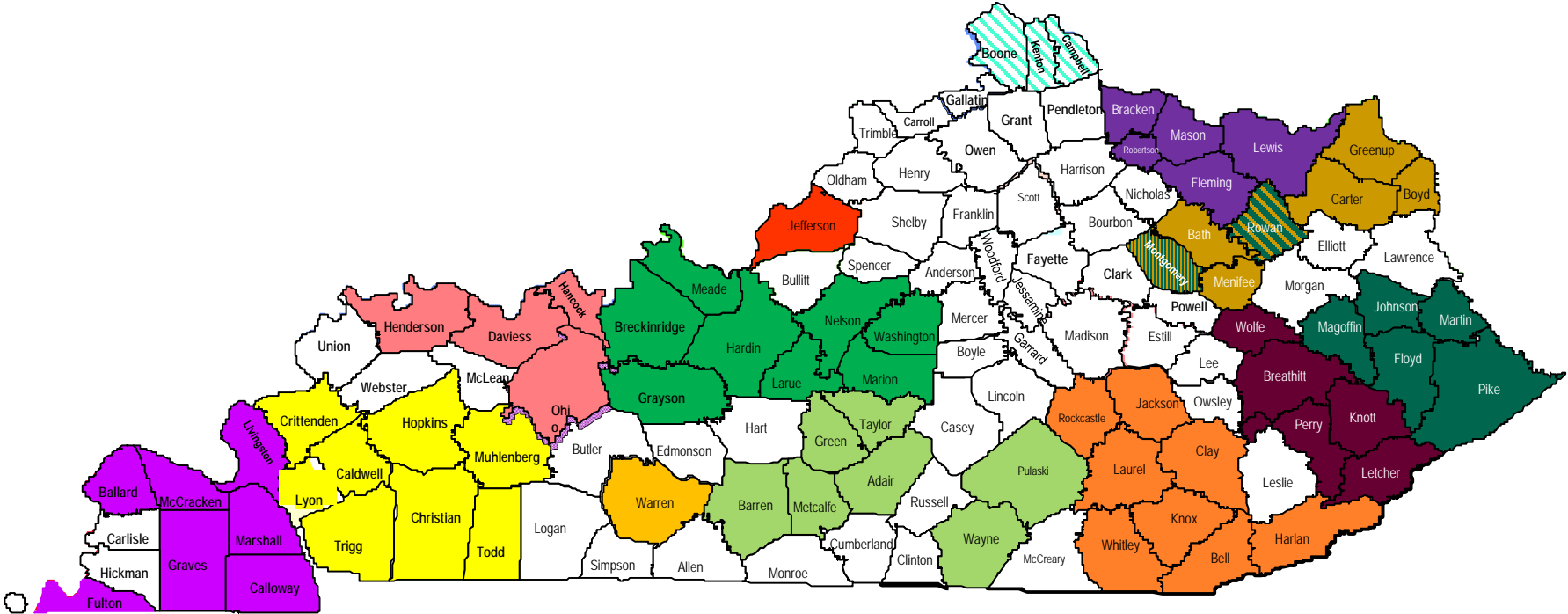
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# Kentucky IPS Supported Employment July 2018



- Four Rivers
- Centerstone
- Northkey
- Cumberland River
- Pennyroyal
- Bridgehaven
- Mental Health
- KY River
- Wellspring
- Transitions
- Mt. Comp
- Adanta
- Comprehend
- Pathways Taylrd
- Communicare
- Pathways

# GENERAL INFORMATION



# IPS Supported Employment Practice & Principles

## Overview of IPS Supported Employment

IPS supported employment helps people living with behavioral health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing. Although variations of supported employment exist, IPS (Individual Placement and Support) refers to the evidence-based practice of supported employment. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths.

## Characteristics of IPS Supported Employment

- \* It is an evidence-based practice
- \* Practitioners focus on each person's strengths
- \* Work promotes recovery and wellness
- \* Practitioners work in collaboration with state vocational rehabilitation counselors
- \* IPS uses a multidisciplinary team approach
- \* Services are individualized and last as long as the person needs and wants them
- \* The IPS approach changes the way mental health services are delivered

## Practice Principles of IPS Supported Employment

1. Focus on Competitive Employment: *Agencies providing IPS services are committed to competitive employment as an attainable goal for people with behavioral health conditions seeking employment. Mainstream education and specialized training may enhance career paths.*
2. Eligibility Based on Client Choice: *People are not excluded on the basis of readiness, diagnoses, symptoms, substance use history, psychiatric hospitalizations, homelessness, level of disability, or legal system involvement.*
3. Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services: *IPS programs are closely integrated with mental health treatment teams.*
4. Attention to Worker Preferences: *Services are based on each person's preferences and choices, rather than providers' judgments.*
5. Personalized Benefits Counseling: *Employment specialists help people obtain personalized, understandable, and accurate information about their Social Security, Medicaid, and other government entitlements.*
6. Rapid Job Search: *IPS programs use a rapid job search approach to help job seekers obtain jobs directly, rather than providing lengthy pre-employment assessment, training, and counseling. If further education is part of their plan, IPS specialists assist in these activities as needed.*
7. Systematic Job Development: *Employment specialists systematically visit employers, who are selected based on job seeker preferences, to learn about their business needs and hiring preferences.*
8. Time-Unlimited and Individualized Support: *Job supports are individualized and continue for as long as each worker wants and needs the support.*

## Glossary

**Age of majority:** The age children are legally considered to be adults. The age of majority is often, but not always 18 years in the U.S.

**Agency intake:** As part of the intake process, many agencies use a form to record background information when a person begins receiving services. At some agencies, the intake, or assessment, is updated annually.

**Assertive community treatment (ACT):** A multidisciplinary team approach with shared caseloads, frequent staff meetings, intensive community-based services, and a focus on assistance with daily living skills. ACT teams provide comprehensive, community-based psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and support to persons with serious mental illness. Services include case management, initial and ongoing assessments, psychiatric services, employment and housing assistance, family support and education, substance abuse services, and other services and supports critical to an individual's ability to live successfully in the community. Most ACT teams have eligibility criteria based on client need for intensive services.

**Benefits planning:** Refers to helping a person review all of her entitlements (e.g. Social Security benefits/disability benefits, medical benefits, food stamps, housing subsidies, Veterans Administration benefits, etc.) to determine the impact of earned income upon those benefits. Also called work incentives planning.

**Case manager (or care manager):** Person who assesses which services people may need and refers them for assistance. This person may also provide help directly with housing, family intervention and other needs.

**Career profile:** A document in which the employment specialist records work preferences, work history, education history, strengths, legal history and other information pertinent to a person's employment and education goals. Formerly called a vocational profile.

**Co-occurring disorders:** Sometimes referred to as "dual diagnosis." Most commonly refers to coexisting serious mental illness and substance abuse disorder. This term is also sometimes used for other co-occurring disorders (e.g., mental illness and intellectual disability).

**Competitive employment:** Part-time and full-time jobs that anyone can apply for rather than jobs set aside for people with disabilities, except when following federal guidelines to take affirmative action to hire a percentage of qualified people with disabilities. Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage and people receive the same pay as others receive performing the same work. Employees in the work setting do not consist exclusively of people with disabilities. The

jobs do not have artificial time limits imposed by the social service agency. Wages are paid directly from the employer to the employee.

**Disclosure:** Refers to disclosing information about one's disability (or other personal information) in the workplace. Some people choose to share information about a disability so they can ask for accommodations (such as the support from an IPS specialist) or because they are proud of having overcome barriers to employment. Other people do not disclose a disability because they are concerned about stigma or do not believe that their disability is pertinent to working a job.

**Employment specialist or employment and education specialist (SEE):** See IPS specialist.

**Evidence-based practice:** Refers to a well-defined practice that has been validated by rigorous research conducted by at least two different research groups. The practice has been shown to be effective, safe and (ideally) cost-effective. The practice has guidelines that describe the critical components.

**Fidelity scale:** A fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation to the standards for an evidence-based practice. The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical elements of IPS supported employment to differentiate between programs that follow the approach from those that do not use the evidence-based practice.

**Field mentoring:** Support and training to practitioners as they perform their work. For instance, a supervisor meets with a practitioner and young person as they complete the career profile to model or observe the practitioner's listening skills. IPS supported employment supervisors also go with employment specialists to demonstrate employer relationship building, observe specialists making employer contacts and provide feedback.

**First episode psychosis programs:** Teams of mental health and IPS practitioners who provide intensive support to young people who are experiencing psychosis for the first time. Mental health practitioners provide education about psychosis and its treatment as IPS practitioners assist with education and employment. Peer recovery specialists are sometimes part of the teams. In the U.S. these programs are now often called "coordinated specialist care" programs.

**General Educational Development (GED):** GED refers to a series of tests used to certify that a person has earned the equivalent of a high school diploma. They are an alternative for young adults (and older adults) who have not completed high school and for whom return to high school is not practical. Students who pass four GED tests (language arts, math, science, and social studies) earn a certificate.

**Individual Education Program (IEP):** In the U.S., a federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires that all students with special needs have plans to address their specific learning issues. The program includes supports and services to help the student reach his education goals.

**IPS specialist:** The position also known as employment specialist, job specialist, or supported employment and education specialist (SEE). The primary person responsible for helping people consider career options, explore school and training programs, conduct job searches, retain desired employment, and plan for career development.

**Job readiness groups:** These groups vary in content but typically focus on teaching people about the world of work; the importance of punctuality, proper grooming, managing symptoms in relationship to a job, etc. Job readiness groups are sometimes made a prerequisite for entering an employment program. Research has shown that job readiness groups do not help people gain employment and they are not part of the IPS supported employment approach.

**Mental health treatment team (or multidisciplinary team):** A group of mental health practitioners such as counselors, case managers, service coordinators, nurses, substance abuse counselors, medication prescribers, peer specialists, or others. May also include employment specialists, state vocational rehabilitation counselors, housing specialists or others.

**Minimum wage:** In the US, employers must pay most employees a minimum hourly wage, as set (and periodically adjusted) by Congress and as regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Excluded classes of workers include farm workers and waiters and waitresses. Certain businesses (sheltered workshops) can obtain a waiver to pay subminimum wage.

**Peer specialist:** Peer specialists are practitioners who have similar experiences to those served. For example, a peer specialist in a transition-age youth program may be a person who was in foster care when she was young. Peers share how they accomplished goals in spite of mental illnesses, substance abuse disorders, legal histories or other problems. Peers are not part of every IPS team because research has not demonstrated their effectiveness related to people working in competitive jobs. However, a growing number of IPS programs include peer specialists because of their unique ability to engage and inspire young IPS participants.

**Piece-rate wage:** Worker wages based on units of work produced instead of hours worked. Aside from farm work, only a small number of employers in the United States are exempt from paying minimum wage and pay workers piece rate instead. Sheltered workshop typically pay piece-rate wages.

**Rehabilitation agency:** An agency or center that provides employment services and other types of non-treatment services such as social activities or housing assistance.

**Service coordinator:** Another term for care coordinator or case worker. Position to assess what services people need or want and refer them for assistance. May also provide help directly with housing, family intervention and other areas.

**Sheltered employment:** Sheltered workshops hire people with disabilities to complete contracts for other businesses. For example, people with disabilities may be paid a piece-rate wage to assemble garden hose spigots for a company that makes garden hoses. Typically sheltered workshops are segregated settings in which all employees (except supervisory-level staff) are people with disabilities. In the U.S., sheltered workshops are regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor and typically pay subminimum wage rates. Sheltered workshops are not consistent with IPS supported employment.

**Situational assessments:** Short-term work assignments to evaluate work behaviors such as attendance, ability to persist at task, social skills and so forth. These assessments may also evaluate a person's ability to perform a particular type of work. Situational assessments are sometimes paid positions (for example, subsidized through the state office of vocational rehabilitation), but can also be unpaid positions. Situational assessments are not consistent with IPS supported employment.

**Steering committees:** Sometimes referred to as advisory committees or leadership teams. A group of stakeholders for IPS supported employment that meets to discuss implementation efforts and develop goals for better implementation and program sustainment. Steering committees typically include a variety of stakeholders, including several of the following: the IPS supervisor, young people, family members, state vocational rehabilitation counselors and supervisors, agency executive director, quality assurance director, clinical director or other administrators, area chamber of commerce representatives, and local college and high school equivalency program staff.

**Strengths-based approach:** Practitioners focus on a person's skills, interests, values, experiences, and abilities working a job as well as their needs. Youth are discussed in a respectful manner. Practitioners focus on what is most important for each young person and conveys hope for reaching goals. The strength-based approach is in contrast with the deficits-based approach used in many community mental health settings, in many cases to document "medical necessity" for Medicaid billing.

**Temporary staffing agency:** An agency that contracts with businesses to fill positions with qualified people on a short-term basis, and sometimes with an option for the business to hire people permanently.

**Transition-age youth:** People between the ages of 16 and 24 years who may be at risk of not completing school and may need support to transition to living and working independently. Programs for transition-age youth may include housing, assistance applying for welfare or disability benefits, counseling, and help with education and employment. Some programs serve only transition-age youth who have disabilities and other programs serve a broad group of young people.

**Vocational evaluation:** Usually refers to a battery of tests and work samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc. Using vocational evaluations to determine job readiness is not consistent with IPS supported employment. Sometimes job seekers or IPS specialists ask to complete vocational evaluations to help identify possible career directions, but if used in this fashion, they should be used sparingly and for special cases.

**Vocational profile:** The document referred to as the career profile. See above.

**Vocational rehabilitation (VR):** Each state, as well as the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories, supports a division of vocational rehabilitation that has offices throughout the state to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation counselors help people find gainful employment related to each person's "strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capacities, interests, and informed choice." Vocational rehabilitation counselors work collaboratively with IPS programs. They provide expertise about disabilities and jobs, and sometimes help with costs related to work clothing, transportation, or education when those are related to the person's employment goal. The specific name for the state vocational rehabilitation agency differs from state to state (e.g., Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR)).

**Vocational unit:** IPS specialists and their supervisor form the IPS team. They participate in group supervision to discuss how to help people on their caseloads with school and work goals, and share employer contacts. They provide back up and support for each other.

**Work incentives:** Special rules that make it possible for people with disabilities receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. For more information go to [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and search for Red Book.



## Unique Features of the IPS program

- Program serves clients with severe mental illness and co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use disorders).
- The caseload size is up to 20 clients to allow the employment specialist to provide intense services, participate in the treatment team, meet with the VR counselor, and job development.
- Integration with the treatment team
- Employment specialist spend at least 65% of their time out in the community. The rationale here is that there is a direct co-relation between community time and the number of job starts.
- Employment Specialist complete 6 contacts a week with the business' hiring authority. Rapid job search helps clients get jobs fast.
- The fidelity scale is used in order to provide the program with a roadmap to successful services. Two days are devoted to reviewing the program.
- "Step down" supports
- Scheduled monthly meetings with the OVR counselor.

## Snapshot of Kentucky IPS

Kentucky was the 12th state to join the Dartmouth Johnson and Johnson initiative. We started with the program in 2010 with four sites, Four Rivers, North Key, Communicare, and Comprehend. Now we have spread to all 14 Community Mental Health Centers throughout the state, and have recently added five new providers. Currently the sites receive performance based funding from OVR. Additionally, the agencies receive block grant dollars from the state in order to assist them in providing long term supports.

# Making the Case for IPS Supported Employment

## ***For most people with a mental illness, employment is part of their recovery.***

Most people with severe mental illness want to work. Approximately 2 of every 3 people with mental illness are interested in competitive employment,<sup>1-8</sup> but less than 15% are employed.<sup>9-12,</sup>

## ***Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment is evidence-based.***

IPS helps people join the competitive labor market.<sup>13,14</sup> IPS is three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with mental illness to work competitively.<sup>15-18</sup> IPS has been found effective for numerous populations in which it has been tried, including people with many different diagnoses, educational levels, and prior work histories;<sup>19</sup> long-term Social Security beneficiaries,<sup>20</sup> young adults,<sup>21,22</sup> older adults,<sup>23</sup> veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder<sup>24</sup> or spinal cord injury;<sup>25</sup> and people with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders.<sup>26</sup> To date, we have not discovered a subgroup for which IPS has not been effective.

## ***IPS is cost-effective.***

Severe mental illness is a leading contributor to the global burden of disease<sup>27,28</sup> and constitutes the largest and fastest growing group of beneficiaries in Social Security disability programs.<sup>29,30</sup> Once on the disability rolls, less than 1% of beneficiaries per year move off of benefits to return to work.<sup>31-33</sup> By helping people with mental illness gain employment, especially young adults experiencing early psychosis, IPS can help forestall entry into the disability system and reduce Social Security expenditures.<sup>34-38</sup>

IPS is an excellent investment, with an annual cost of \$5500 per client in 2012 dollars.<sup>39,40</sup> Most clients enrolled in IPS receive more mental health services than IPS services.<sup>41-43</sup> IPS is cost-effective over the long term when mental health treatment costs are considered. Studies have found a reduction in community mental health treatment costs for people receiving supported employment services,<sup>44-48</sup> and a reduction in psychiatric hospitalization days and emergency room usage by clients who receive supported employment.<sup>49-51</sup> Service agencies converting their day treatment programs to IPS have reduced service costs by 29%.<sup>45</sup>

Over the long term, clients who return to work produce huge long-term savings in mental health treatment costs. A 10-year follow-up study of clients with co-occurring severe mental illness and substance abuse disorder found an average annual savings of over \$16,000 per client in mental health treatment costs for steady workers, compared to clients who remained out of the labor market.<sup>52</sup>

## ***IPS improves long-term well-being.***

People who obtain competitive employment through IPS have increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life, and reduced symptoms.<sup>49,53-55</sup> Approximately 40% of clients who obtain a job with help from IPS become steady workers<sup>56</sup> and remain competitively employed a decade later.<sup>57,58</sup>

## ***IPS programs have a high rate of successful implementation and sustainability over time.***

The IPS model is a common sense, practical intervention that appeals to clinicians, clients, and the general public.<sup>59,60</sup> Quality of IPS implementation is measured using a

standardized fidelity scale.<sup>61</sup> Programs ordinarily achieve high fidelity implementation within one year's time.<sup>62</sup> High fidelity IPS programs have excellent competitive employment outcomes.<sup>63,64</sup> IPS is relatively easy to implement with high fidelity, as shown in numerous implementation projects.<sup>20,42,62,65</sup> With adequate funding, committed leadership, and fidelity monitoring,<sup>66</sup> multi-site projects have successfully implemented IPS in over 80% of programs adopting this approach. IPS has been successfully implemented in both urban and rural communities.<sup>67,68</sup> Once implemented, most IPS programs continue indefinitely to offer quality services if adequate infrastructure remains in place. One study found 84% of 165 IPS programs implemented over the last decade were still providing services in 2012.<sup>69</sup>

***Most Americans with severe mental illness do not have access to IPS.***

Despite the benefits of IPS, access to IPS is limited or unavailable in many communities. First the good news: the International Learning Community has grown to 138 programs in 14 states with two new international partners (Italy and the Netherlands).<sup>69</sup> But only 2.1% of clients with severe mental illness in the U.S. public mental health system received supported employment in 2009.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, during 2007, <1% of Medicaid patients with schizophrenia had an identifiable claim for supported employment.<sup>71</sup> Wider access to IPS would benefit people with severe mental illness, their families, taxpayers, and the general public.

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# IPS Supported Employment Program Implementation Guide

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Revised 2015

## Sample Employment Specialist Orientation Checklist

*(After completing all of the activities on the checklist, the IPS supervisor should send the completed checklist to be included in the specialist's personnel file.)*

- Read *IPS Supported Employment, A Practical Guide* (Swanson & Becker, 2013)
- View IPS Supported Employment videos found at <http://www.ipsworks.org>, select Resources for Programs and About IPS.
- Shadow another employment specialist (at least four hours)
- Shadow a case manager or mental health practitioner (at least four hours)
- Shadow a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor (at least four hours)
- Begin developing employer relationships with supervisors by going to meet with employers together (at least twice during the first month, and then monthly for first six months).
- Attend a mental health treatment meeting with supervisor.
- Work on career profile with supervisor (two client contacts)
- Plan for learning about mental illnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employment specialist signature                      date

\_\_\_\_\_  
IPS Supervisor signature                              date

## **Sample Job Description for IPS Supported Employment Supervisor**

**Overall Function:** Provides oversight to the IPS supported employment program. Ensures good program outcomes by providing training, supervision, and by working side-by-side with employment specialists (field mentoring). Attempts to meet most people who receive IPS services. Monitors outcomes and implements quality improvement plans. Acts as a liaison to other departments and agencies. Supervises up to ten employment specialists. Provides IPS supported employment services for a caseload of two or three people.

### **Responsibilities:**

Hires, trains, and evaluates employment specialists. Develops expectations for specialists regarding employer contacts, number of job starts each quarter, and employment rate (percentage of people employed on each caseload).

Assigns each employment specialist to one or two mental health teams. Attends each mental health treatment team monthly to enhance integrated services.

Conducts weekly group supervision following the principles of IPS supported employment.

Provides individual supervision for employment specialists. Supervision includes some office-based sessions, as well working side-by-side with specialists. Provides frequent (weekly or every other week) field mentoring for specialists who are new to their jobs, and those with outcomes that are less than desired.

Collects client outcomes on a monthly basis. Shares outcomes for the program, as well as individual practitioners, with the IPS supported employment team each quarter. Helps team members set goals for improvement. Reviews individual outcomes with each practitioner and develops written plans for improvement. Helps specialists refine their skills so they can improve outcomes.

Acts as a liaison to other department coordinators and administrators at the agency. Communicates regularly with mental health supervisors to ensure that services are integrated, to resolve issues, and to act as a proponent for employment.

Works with the office of Vocational Rehabilitation to coordinate services. Requests monthly meetings between Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS team members to discuss how to help people served by both agencies.

Arranges for IPS supported employment fidelity reviews. Assists with the development of fidelity action plans based on recommendations from the fidelity report.

Leads or participates in steering committee meetings to help with IPS supported

employment implementation and sustainability.

Provides IPS supported employment services to a caseload of two to three people.

Qualifications: Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or related field is preferred. Bachelor's degree is required. Previous experience in the mental health field is desired (for IPS programs serving people with serious mental illness). Previous supervisory experience is valued.

## Sample Employment Specialist Job Description

**Overall Function:** Carries out the services of the IPS Supported Employment program by assisting clients to obtain and maintain employment that is consistent with their vocational goals.

**Responsibilities:** Engages clients and establishes trusting, collaborative relationships directed toward the goal of competitive employment in community job settings with other workers who do not necessarily have disabilities.

Assists clients in obtaining information about their benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid, etc.) and how they will be affected by employment in order for clients to make good decisions about employment opportunities. Refers clients to benefits counseling, as needed. Helps clients report earnings, as needed.

Assesses clients' vocational functioning on ongoing basis utilizing background information and work experiences. With the client's permission, provides education and support to family members. Discusses client's preference for disclosure of psychiatric status to employers.

Conducts job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are individualized to the interests and uniqueness of the people on his/her caseload, following the principles and procedures of IPS supported employment.

Conducts a minimum of six employer contacts per week. Employer contacts are designed to learn about the needs of the business, describe supports offered by the program and describe client strengths that are relevant to the position.

Provides individualized follow-along supports to assist clients in maintaining employment. Writes job support plans with clients and incorporating input from the mental health team. Adjusts plan according to clients' needs and preferences.

Provides education and support to employers as agreed upon by clients, which may include negotiating job accommodations and follow-along contact by the employment specialist with the employer.

Provides outreach services as necessary to clients when they appear to disengage from the service. Uses a variety of methods to provide outreach.

Provides timely interventions. Returns phone calls and reacts to situations in a timely manner. For example, returns client phone calls within 24 hours. Goes to see employers about job loss or job problems within 24 hours. Follows up on job leads within 48 hours. Meets with clients within one week prior to job starts and within three days after job starts.

Participates in weekly meetings with mental health treatment team and communicates individually with team members between meetings in order to coordinate and integrate vocational services into mental health treatment.



Participates in face-to-face meetings with vocational rehabilitation counselors at least once a month to coordinate services for clients.

Develops an individual employment (and/or education) plan with clients. Incorporates input from mental health team and family members, with permission.

Spends 65% or more of scheduled work hours in the community. For example, meets clients at community locations such as home, workplace, coffee shop, meeting with potential employers, library, One-Stop, VR office, family home, etc. or takes clients to apply for jobs, investigate local GED or colleges, etc.

Provides supported education, using principles similar to supported employment, for clients who express interest in education to advance their employment goals.

Responsible for a minimum of \_\_\_ number or job starts per year or maintaining at least \_\_\_% employment on caseload.

**Qualifications:** Education and experience equivalent to undergraduate degree in mental health, social services, or business. Experience working with people with severe mental illness, experience providing employment services, and knowledge of the work world are preferred. Ability to work as an effective team player is essential.

## Hiring IPS Employment Specialists

### Background and Experience

Many supervisors report that they attempt to hire people who have marketing or sales experience. Others hire people who have been employers in the past, and still others hire people who have a background in providing mental health services. Obviously, all of these types of experiences would be helpful to an employment specialist, though it is usually quite difficult to find someone who has such a varied background.

Another approach is to think about the personality type of a successful employment specialist. For example:

A recovery-oriented candidate is someone who:

- is hopeful about every person's ability to succeed in employment
- is open minded about helping people move into competitive jobs, regardless of active substance use disorders
- believes that work can help people manage mental illness
- believes that people learn and grow from their experiences.

A creative problem-solver is someone who:

- asks questions to learn more about a problem
- changes her perspective about a problem by learning new information
- can think of more than one possible solution to a problem.

A candidate who is genuinely interested in the job:

- would attempt to learn about IPS supported employment (interviewers can provide the link to Dartmouth PRC employment webpage: <http://www.ipsworks.org>)
- would ask questions about the job and their potential job duties.

A candidate who would be a good job developer:

- would present him or herself in a professional manner
- may have a gregarious, "sales" personality or may be quiet, but persistent
- would be a good listener—interested in learning about other people.

One strategy for finding people who understand recovery from mental illness is to hire employment specialists who have lived experience of mental illness. Some supervisors add the following statement to job advertisements, "People with a lived experience of mental illness are encouraged to apply." If a candidate identifies as having a mental illness, the interviewers ask if he would be willing to share how he overcame barriers to employment with some of the people on his caseload. They

view the lived experience as an extra qualification for the job.

Supervisors also consider the cultures of the people served by the IPS team when they hire employment specialists so that at least some team members will reflect those cultures. To recruit candidates from other cultures they might advertise at community centers such as centers for people from a particular ethnicity or at a lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender center. Job advertisements might specify that fluency in a particular language is advantageous or the advertisement might be placed in a newspaper that targets a specific cultural group.

### Sample Interview Questions

Below each question are suggestions regarding what the interviewer should listen for in the candidate's response.

Did you have a chance to read about IPS supported employment? Based on that, what do you think a typical day would be like? (While setting up the interview, share the following website with the candidate: <http://www.ipsworks.org>)

- *Was the candidate interested enough to read about IPS? Does the person have a good understanding of the job?*

What would you enjoy about this job? What would you not enjoy about this job?

- *Does the person have a good understanding of the job? Is the candidate able to provide a thoughtful, honest response about parts of the job she would not enjoy?*

How do you go about finding jobs for yourself?

- *What type of job search skills does the person use? Is networking one of the strategies he uses to find jobs?*

What would you do if one of your clients began missing appointments?

- *Does the response seem to blame the client or is the candidate using more of a problem-solving approach?*

What do you think about helping people with active substance use problems find employment?

- *Does the person have an opinion about waiting for people to become sober? If so, how does the candidate respond to information from the interviewer about zero exclusion?*

What would be your expectations for the people you would serve?

- *Beware of answers similar to the following: "People have to be working as hard as I am with the job search"? "People have to show up dressed like they would if they were interviewing for a job." If people miss appointments then they must not want to work."*

How would you learn about employers and their job opportunities within this community?

- *Does the person have creative ideas? Does the candidate think of ways to get out of the office to meet employers or does the candidate suggest using websites only?*

How would you build credibility and strengthen relationships with employers?  
*- Does the person have ideas such as in-person meetings, following through with what she says she will do, listening to what is important to the employer...?*

Role-play: Candidate is approaching a restaurant manager for the very first time. Candidate has a client in mind—a person who is interested in food prep.  
*- This exercise may be difficult for someone who has never done job development, but see if the candidate listens carefully to the employer, talks about her client's strengths, asks questions....*

Role-play: Candidate is going back to the restaurant after the person has been working for one week. Manager reports that the worker is too slow on the job.  
*- Does the candidate try to ask questions to learn more about the cause of the problem?  
Does the candidate listen carefully to the employer to learn what is important to him?  
What type of solutions does the candidate propose – more than one?*

What languages do you know? Are you fluent in those languages?  
*- Does the candidate have special language skills similar to those people served at your agency?*

Why do you think it would be important to stay in close contact with the mental health team? With Vocational Rehabilitation counselors?  
*- Does the candidate know how to work as a team member? Does the candidate value the contributions of others?*

What do you hope to be doing in five years?  
*- Does this job fit the person's work interests?*

For candidates who do not have mental health experience but who are final candidates for the job: Offer to let them shadow an employment specialist for a few hours. Ensure that the employment specialist will be working in the community, contacting employers, visiting people at their homes, etc. (Be sure to have completed releases in advance of going out with the candidate.)  
*- Does the candidate think that this is work s/he will enjoy? Does it feel okay to go into people's homes? To spend his/her days in the community, out of the office? Does the candidate think that s/he would enjoy job development and be able to develop good skills over time? Does s/he understand that developing relationships with employers would be part of his/her weekly responsibilities?*

### Employment specialist competencies

Develops relationships with employers by learning about their businesses, hiring practices, hiring preferences etc., over multiple visits.

Investigates the local business community in order to learn about different employers and types of jobs available.

Utilizes good client interviewing skills in order to learn about individual preferences, past experiences, hopes and concerns regarding employment.

Effectively collaborates with mental health practitioners, VR counselors, family members and other members of the vocational unit.

Utilizes a strengths-based approach when serving clients by recognizing each person's skills, experiences, and values that support employment.

Employs a recovery-based orientation including the belief that people learn from their experiences, develop new skills, and achieve life goals over time.

Applies new work methods, skills and technologies to complete work.

Assists with finding and accessing resources such as work incentives planning, local schools, available transportation, etc.

Uses a problem-solving approach when faced with challenging or difficult situations.

Conducts work in community settings (at least 65% of scheduled work hours).

Assists individuals to analyze each work experience for lessons learned, using input from employers, the worker, mental health practitioners, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, family members or others. Also, analyzes what he might have done different to provide better supports or more effective job matching.

Writes person-specific plans that are congruent with each person's goals and includes specific steps that will be taken to meet those goals.

Provides timely documentation that meets requirements of various funding sources including Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid, and others.

## *IPS-Q*

**Directions:** The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment is a program that provides employment services to persons with a mental illness. For each question, please select the answer that is most consistent with the practices and principles of IPS. If you are unfamiliar with the IPS model that's OK, please answer each question based on your knowledge of how employment services should be provided.

**1. Employment specialists may have caseloads:**

- A. Of up to 50 clients
- B. Of up to 20 clients
- C. Of up to 10 clients
- D. Of any size; it will vary depending on how much service the different clients on the caseload need

**2. Employment specialists:**

- A. Should only provide employment services
- B. Should provide both employment and case management services
- C. May have a small case management caseload in addition to their employment duties
- D. May provide other services (e.g., assisting with an illness management and recovery group) in addition to employment services, depending on the needs of the agency

**3. In the IPS model, benefits counseling is considered:**

- A. An integral part of employment services that should be offered to every client
- B. A supplemental service that should be provided to clients who request it
- C. Important, but beyond the scope of services provided by the employment program
- D. Important only for clients who are working

**4. Employment specialists:**

- A. Should specialize in one or two specific employment program areas, such as job developing or job coaching
- B. Should not specialize in a particular employment area, but instead should provide all phases of employment services

- C. Are hired to carry out several job functions, but do not necessarily do the entire employment process
- D. Will have varying responsibilities depending on the structure of the agency

**5. Susan was recently fired from her job for repeatedly showing up late. According to the IPS model, this:**

- A. Indicates that Susan is not ready to go back to work yet
- B. Demonstrates Susan's unwillingness to return to work
- C. Is viewed as a positive learning experience
- D. Is a good time to refer Susan to a training program that will teach her the skills she needs to succeed in the future

**6. Employment specialists:**

- A. Work completely independently of the mental health treatment team
- B. Function independently of the mental health treatment team and attend treatment team meetings on an as-needed basis
- C. Serve as consultants to mental health treatment teams and occasionally provide input in treatment team meetings
- D. Are full members of the mental health treatment team and attend all of the treatment team meetings

**7. Clients who have co-occurring disorders (a mental illness and substance use disorder):**

- A. Are eligible for employment services if they show some willingness to be abstinent
- B. Are eligible after 90 days of abstinence
- C. Are eligible for employment services even if they are unwilling to be abstinent
- D. Are not eligible for employment services

**8. Given the following scenario, please select the best answer from below:**

April is a 42-year-old woman with bipolar disorder who hasn't worked for several years. She was recently referred to an employment program and says that she would like to try working as a flight attendant, even though all of her previous job experience has been as a mechanic. Her employment specialist should:

- A. Help her investigate a job as a flight attendant because that is what she wants to do
- B. Encourage her to look for a job as a mechanic because of her prior work history

- C. Get her a job in the local factory because several clients have already been successfully placed there
- D. Start her out in a transitional job to help her get back into the workforce

**9. Research has found that approximately what percentage of people with a mental illness say that they want to work?**

- A. Less than 25%
- B. 25%-50%
- C. 51% -75%
- D. 76%-100%

**10. A career profile can be helpful in finding a good job match for the client. Which of the following best describes the initial career profile process?**

- A. A simple battery of paper and pencil tests along with information from the clinical chart
- B. Placing the client in a sheltered setting or in a volunteer job for a brief period of time to find out about their work habits
- C. Gathering information from the client, the clinical chart, previous employers, school records and other staff
- D. It is best to skip an initial assessment and get the client working because the first job is likely to be brief

**11. As a general rule of thumb, employment specialists should have:**

- A. No more than 15% of their clients employed in the same type of job
- B. No more than 30% of their clients employed in the same type of job
- C. Over 50% of their clients employed in the same type of job
- D. None of the above, the percentage depends on the job market

**12. Employment specialists help clients begin a job search:**

- A. Within one month of starting the employment program, after gathering initial assessment information
- B. After the client's psychiatrist or other mental health providers decide that a client can work
- C. After a thorough assessment has been completed, using both standardized instruments and work samples



D. After VR provides authorization

**13. Employment specialists conduct job searches primarily by:**

- A. Searching on the internet and in newspapers because this is an efficient way to find a variety of jobs
- B. Going out in the community and meeting employers to develop a large job network so there are available jobs for clients
- C. Meeting face to face with employers to learn about jobs in the community that reflect the individual preferences of clients
- D. Employment specialists usually do not conduct job searches, the agency supplies the jobs

**14. Which of the following best characterizes an early employment program goal?**

**The client is:**

- A. Regularly attending skills training classes
- B. Working in a competitive job
- C. In a transitional job placement
- D. Working in a volunteer job

**15. In the employment program:**

- A. If a client has difficulty finding a job opening, the employment specialist should wait patiently until the client is able to locate one in order to give the client a sense of empowerment when a job is finally secured
- B. Employment specialists encourage clients to take the lead in the job search as much as possible, and provide as much help as necessary to secure the job
- C. Employment specialists encourage clients to accept at least some responsibility when clients do not follow through with homework assignments because they shouldn't be working harder than the job seeker on the job search
- D. Employment specialists should provide clients with job leads, but then it is up to the client to take the initiative and contact employers

**16. In the IPS program, a vocational evaluation:**

- A. Occurs prior to job placement and consists of a wide variety of assessment batteries
- B. Is conducted by watching the client perform various simulated job tasks
- C. Is a stepwise process that includes standardized testing, followed by transitional employment

- D. Occurs over a few initial appointments and is updated with information from competitive job experiences

**17. Tyrone was fired for using alcohol on the job. His employment specialist should:**

- A. Help him identify ways to prevent alcohol use from interfering with future jobs and help him to find another job
- B. Help him identify ways to prevent alcohol use from interfering with future jobs and tell him that they will help him obtain another job after a reasonable period of sobriety, such as 90 days
- C. Notify the referring agency and let them know that the employment program can no longer work with Tyrone because of his alcohol use, which precipitated the job termination
- D. Refer Tyrone to a chemical dependency/substance abuse program and resume work with him after he completes the program and is sober

**18. Of the following, which is the best way for benefits counselors to provide beneficiaries with information?**

- A. Give beneficiaries a link to an informational website in order to foster their autonomy
- B. Hold group meetings so that beneficiaries have the opportunity to learn from questions asked by others in the group
- C. Mail beneficiaries a package of information about their benefits so that they always have something to refer back to
- D. Meet with beneficiaries individually because each person has a unique situation

**19. After a client secures a job, s/he should continue to receive support:**

- A. For as long as s/he wants and needs the support
- B. Until s/he is stable on the job
- C. For about 90 days, with occasional phone calls thereafter
- D. For up to six months or until s/he is stable on the job, depending on which occurs first

**20. Ideally, employment specialists should be out of the office and in the community:**

- A. Less than 15% of the time
- B. 15 - 40% of the time
- C. 41 - 64% of the time
- D. 65% or more of the time

**21. If a client misses several appointments with the employment specialist, the employment specialist should:**

- A. Recommend that the client return to the employment program when s/he is ready to keep appointments and be an active participant
- B. Continue to try to engage the client
- C. Contact the case manager and ask that a referral be resubmitted when the client demonstrates an interest in work
- D. Recommend that the client attend a prevocational program to become work ready

**22. Given the following scenario, please select the best answer from below:**

Jackie has worked as a courtesy clerk in a local grocery store for several months. She had a very tough time adjusting to the job, but she is now doing quite well. Last week, Jackie noticed that another grocery store a few miles away is looking to hire a cashier, and she would like to apply for the position. Her employment specialist should:

- A. Tell Jackie that this isn't a good idea, and that it would be better for her to continue her job as a courtesy clerk because she is finally stable and doing well
- B. Make a referral to Jackie's psychiatrist because he will need to determine if she is ready to make such a change
- C. Congratulate Jackie because this demonstrates that she is now ready to graduate from the program
- D. Support Jackie's interest in applying for the new job, and encourage her to continue working at her current job until she learns more about the cashier position

**23. A primary purpose of vocational unit team meetings is to:**

- A. Take care of administrative business
- B. Share job leads
- C. Discuss program development
- D. Update clients' treatment plans

**24. Which of the following is an example of competitive employment?**

- A. Working for a mental health agency in a position that is reserved for people receiving services from the agency
- B. A temporary job as a sales clerk that pays \$12.00 an hour and is set up by an agency as a short-term work experience
- C. Working indefinitely as a janitor making minimum wage
- D. Occasionally babysitting for one's family and friends

**25. The IPS coordinator and employment specialists from the agency meet as a group at least:**

- A. Once a week
- B. Once a month

- C. Once a quarter
- D. Once a year

**26. Given the following scenario, please select the best answer from below:**

Marco would like to get a job as a cook at a diner located just a few blocks from his home. He is happy about the location and feels comfortable in the diner having eaten there frequently. However, when Marco and his employment specialist meet with the employer, they learn that in addition to cooking, the position consists of taking customers' orders and waiting on tables. Knowing that Marco is very uncomfortable interacting with strangers, the employment specialist should:

- A. Talk to the client about looking for another job because the job at the diner turned out to be a bad fit
- B. Talk to the client about trying the job in spite of his discomfort because jobs are hard to find and the location of this job will be tough to beat
- C. Talk to the client and employer about the possibility of shifting the customer service responsibilities to another position in exchange for duties with which the client is more comfortable
- D. Ask VR to pay for a work adjustment program so that the client can build customer service skills

**27. Which of the following is NOT an employment specialist responsibility?**

- A. Ensuring that a client has information about his/her benefits
- B. Helping a client apply for housing assistance
- C. Assisting a client with filling out a financial aid application for college
- D. Communicating with the client's treatment team

**28. In the IPS model, assessment is best thought of as:**

- A. A task that is completed when a client first enters the program, and is referred back to in order to determine if the client is achieving his/her goals
- B. A battery of several vocational interest inventories that help the client determine what kind of work s/he wants to do
- C. An unnecessary step that wastes both the client's and employment specialist's time
- D. An ongoing process based on lessons learned from each job

**29. At a minimum, an employment specialist should meet with the client's other mental health providers (e.g., case managers, nurses, clinicians):**

- A. Once a week
- B. Once a month
- C. Once a quarter

D. Once a year

**30. It's best for employment specialists to:**

- A. Assist several clients find jobs with a single employer because this is most time efficient
- B. Assist several clients find jobs at the same job site so that they can provide support for one another
- C. Make decisions about which employers to contact based on client preferences
- D. Establish a strong working relationship with the major employers in the community so that clients will be able to choose between a few different job options

Updated 8/18/10

## IPS-Q

**Directions:** The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment is a program that provides employment services to persons with a mental illness. For each question, please select the answer that is most consistent with the practices and principles of IPS. If you are unfamiliar with the IPS model that's OK, please answer each question based on your knowledge of how employment services should be provided.

**[Note to reviewers: Correct answers are *italicized*]**

**1. Employment specialists may have caseloads:**

- A. Of up to 50 clients
- B. *Of up to 20 clients*
- C. Of up to 10 clients
- D. Of any size; it will vary depending on how much service the different clients on the caseload need

**2. Employment specialists:**

- A. *Should only provide employment services*
- B. Should provide both employment and case management services
- C. May have a small case management caseload in addition to their employment duties
- D. May provide other services (e.g., assisting with an illness management and recovery group) in addition to employment services, depending on the needs of the agency

**3. In the IPS model, benefits counseling is considered:**

- A. *An integral part of employment services that should be offered to every client*
- B. A supplemental service that should be provided to clients who request it
- C. Important, but beyond the scope of services provided by the employment program
- D. Important only for clients who are working

**4. Employment specialists:**

- A. Should specialize in one or two specific employment program areas, such as job developing or job coaching
- B. *Should not specialize in a particular employment area, but instead should provide all phases of employment services*

- C. Are hired to carry out several job functions, but do not necessarily do the entire employment process
- D. Will have varying responsibilities depending on the structure of the agency

**5. Susan was recently fired from her job for repeatedly showing up late. According to the IPS model, this:**

- A. Indicates that Susan is not ready to go back to work yet
- B. Demonstrates Susan's unwillingness to return to work
- C. *Is viewed as a positive learning experience*
- D. Is a good time to refer Susan to a training program that will teach her the skills she needs to succeed in the future

**6. Employment specialists:**

- A. Work completely independently of the mental health treatment team
- B. Function independently of the mental health treatment team and attend treatment team meetings on an as-needed basis
- C. Serve as consultants to mental health treatment teams and occasionally provide input in treatment team meetings
- D. *Are full members of the mental health treatment team and attend all of the treatment team meetings*

**7. Clients who have co-occurring disorders (a mental illness and substance use disorder):**

- A. Are eligible for employment services if they show some willingness to be abstinent
- B. Are eligible after 90 days of abstinence
- C. *Are eligible for employment services even if they are unwilling to be abstinent*
- D. Are not eligible for employment services

**8. Given the following scenario, please select the best answer from below:**

April is a 42-year-old woman with bipolar disorder who hasn't worked for several years. She was recently referred to an employment program and says that she would like to try working as a flight attendant, even though all of her previous job experience has been as a mechanic. Her employment specialist should:

- A. *Help her investigate a job as a flight attendant because that is what she wants to do*
- B. Encourage her to look for a job as a mechanic because of her prior work history

- C. Get her a job in the local factory because several clients have already been successfully placed there
- D. Start her out in a transitional job to help her get back into the workforce

**9. Research has found that approximately what percentage of people with a mental illness say that they want to work?**

- A. Less than 25%
- B. 25%-50%
- C. 51% -75%
- D. 76%-100%

**10. A career profile can be helpful in finding a good job match for the client. Which of the following best describes the initial career profile process?**

- A. A simple battery of paper and pencil tests along with information from the clinical chart
- B. Placing the client in a sheltered setting or in a volunteer job for a brief period of time to find out about their work habits
- C. *Gathering information from the client, the clinical chart, previous employers, school records and other staff*
- D. It is best to skip an initial assessment and get the client working because the first job is likely to be brief

**11. As a general rule of thumb, employment specialists should have:**

- A. *No more than 15% of their clients employed in the same type of job*
- B. No more than 30% of their clients employed in the same type of job
- C. Over 50% of their clients employed in the same type of job
- D. None of the above, the percentage depends on the job market

**12. Employment specialists help clients begin a job search:**

- A. *Within one month of starting the employment program, after gathering initial assessment information*
- B. After the client's psychiatrist or other mental health providers decide that a client can work
- C. After a thorough assessment has been completed, using both standardized instruments and work samples



D. After VR provides authorization

**13. Employment specialists conduct job searches primarily by:**

- A. Searching on the internet and in newspapers because this is an efficient way to find a variety of jobs
- B. Going out in the community and meeting employers to develop a large job network so there are available jobs for clients
- C. *Meeting face to face with employers to learn about jobs in the community that reflect the individual preferences of clients*
- D. Employment specialists usually do not conduct job searches, the agency supplies the jobs

**14. Which of the following best characterizes an early employment program goal?**

**The client is:**

- A. Regularly attending skills training classes
- B. *Working in a competitive job*
- C. In a transitional job placement
- D. Working in a volunteer job

**15. In the employment program:**

- A. If a client has difficulty finding a job opening, the employment specialist should wait patiently until the client is able to locate one in order to give the client a sense of empowerment when a job is finally secured
- B. *Employment specialists encourage clients to take the lead in the job search as much as possible, and provide as much help as necessary to secure the job*
- C. Employment specialists encourage clients to accept at least some responsibility when clients do not follow through with homework assignments because they shouldn't be working harder than the job seeker on the job search
- D. Employment specialists should provide clients with job leads, but then it is up to the client to take the initiative and contact employers

**16. In the IPS program, a vocational evaluation:**

- A. Occurs prior to job placement and consists of a wide variety of assessment batteries
- B. Is conducted by watching the client perform various simulated job tasks
- C. Is a stepwise process that includes standardized testing, followed by transitional employment

- D. *Occurs over a few initial appointments and is updated with information from competitive job experiences*

**17. Tyrone was fired for using alcohol on the job. His employment specialist should:**

- A. *Help him identify ways to prevent alcohol use from interfering with future jobs and help him to find another job*
- B. *Help him identify ways to prevent alcohol use from interfering with future jobs and tell him that they will help him obtain another job after a reasonable period of sobriety, such as 90 days*
- C. *Notify the referring agency and let them know that the employment program can no longer work with Tyrone because of his alcohol use, which precipitated the job termination*
- D. *Refer Tyrone to a chemical dependency/substance abuse program and resume work with him after he completes the program and is sober*

**18. Of the following, which is the best way for benefits counselors to provide beneficiaries with information?**

- A. *Give beneficiaries a link to an informational website in order to foster their autonomy*
- B. *Hold group meetings so that beneficiaries have the opportunity to learn from questions asked by others in the group*
- C. *Mail beneficiaries a package of information about their benefits so that they always have something to refer back to*
- D. *Meet with beneficiaries individually because each person has a unique situation*

**19. After a client secures a job, s/he should continue to receive support:**

- A. *For as long as s/he wants and needs the support*
- B. *Until s/he is stable on the job*
- C. *For about 90 days, with occasional phone calls thereafter*
- D. *For up to six months or until s/he is stable on the job, depending on which occurs first*

**20. Ideally, employment specialists should be out of the office and in the community:**

- A. *Less than 15% of the time*
- B. *15 - 40% of the time*
- C. *41 - 64% of the time*
- D. *65% or more of the time*

**21. If a client misses several appointments with the employment specialist, the employment specialist should:**

- A. Recommend that the client return to the employment program when s/he is ready to keep appointments and be an active participant
- B. *Continue to try to engage the client*
- C. Contact the case manager and ask that a referral be resubmitted when the client demonstrates an interest in work
- D. Recommend that the client attend a prevocational program to become work ready

**22. Given the following scenario, please select the best answer from below:**

Jackie has worked as a courtesy clerk in a local grocery store for several months. She had a very tough time adjusting to the job, but she is now doing quite well. Last week, Jackie noticed that another grocery store a few miles away is looking to hire a cashier, and she would like to apply for the position. Her employment specialist should:

- A. Tell Jackie that this isn't a good idea, and that it would be better for her to continue her job as a courtesy clerk because she is finally stable and doing well
- B. Make a referral to Jackie's psychiatrist because he will need to determine if she is ready to make such a change
- C. Congratulate Jackie because this demonstrates that she is now ready to graduate from the program
- D. *Support Jackie's interest in applying for the new job, and encourage her to continue working at her current job until she learns more about the cashier position*

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Updated 8/18/10

# PARTNERSHIP: IPS INTEGRATION WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS



## Helping Individuals Consider Employment

### Tips for Mental Health Practitioners

Attached is a worksheet designed to help you and your clients with discussions about employment. Before you begin, please consider these strategies that other mental health practitioners have found to be helpful:

- Try not to encourage the person in one direction or another. In other words, do not cheerlead the person to get a job or advise the person to slow down.
- Be curious. Learn all you can about the person's feelings and thoughts about work. For example, if someone says she wants to work so that she can spend more time with others, ask "What else?"
- If someone says that they know how their benefits would be affected by a return to work, ask where they got their information. Make sure that they are not relying on misinformation. Offer a meeting with a benefits planner.
- When working on the rating scales for confidence about working and importance of working, ask the person about the number that he chose. For example, "Why did you select a 5?" or "Why a 3 and not a 1?"
- Suggest a next step. Examples of ways that people could learn more about working are below.
  - ⇒ Schedule a meeting with an employment specialist to learn about how s/he helps people with jobs.
  - ⇒ Schedule a meeting with a benefits planner.
  - ⇒ Plan to have more discussions about work.
  - ⇒ Set up a meeting with another person who has gone back to work. Ask that person to share how she overcame barriers to work and why working is important to her.
  - ⇒ Make a referral to supported employment (IPS)
  - ⇒ Help with identified barriers to work, for example, help find options for childcare

Tips for talking about work on an ongoing basis:

- Ask about job preferences. What is your dream job? What type of job would you like next?
- Ask about the person's work history. What was your favorite job? Why? Least favorite? Who was your favorite boss? Why?

- Ask if the person knows others who are working? What do they do?
- Ask the person to describe their life 5 years from now. Where will he be living? What relationships would he like to have in his life? How will he be spending his days?
- Repeat the attached worksheet from time to time (for instance, in a few months). With your client, compare the old worksheet to the new one. Did the answers change? Why?



## Considering a Job

It may help to talk to someone about your decision to work, or not work. You can use this worksheet with your case manager or counselor as a way to discuss your job goals and think about the best ways to get started with employment.

**What are your hopes regarding a job? How will employment benefit your life?**

**What are your concerns about working?**

**Do you know how your benefits would be affected by a part or full-time job?**

**What type of assistance would be most helpful to you?**

- help contacting employers
- help finding job leads
- practice answering job interview questions
- help explaining a legal history to employers
- information about different types of jobs
- other:
- help managing benefits while working
- help building a career
- someone to talk to about my job

**On a scale of 1—10, how important is a job to you?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Not at all important

Important

Extremely Important

Comments:

**On a scale of 1—10, how confident are you that you can be successfully employed?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Not at all confident

Confident

Extremely Confident

Comments:

**How soon would you like to begin looking for a job?**

Within a week

Next month

In a few months

In six months

I am not sure—I would like to keep talking about this

**The plan for right now is to:**

---

Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Practitioner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Role of Mental Health Practitioners

- **Help people think about work: Share the Philosophy that “Believe People Can Work”**
- **Introduce clients to the Employment Specialist**
- **Share input in to the Person Centered Employment Plan**
- **Help connect Employment Specialist with person’s support system**
- **Share job ideas, job leads**
- **Help provide encouragement-hopeful message-while looking for work, if lose a job**
- **Provide job supports-coping strategies, conversation starters**
- **Help with outreach/engagement**
- **Anything to help the person with work**

# Integrating Mental Health Treatment and Supported Employment

## Introduction

This document is intended as a tool to identify ways to integrate Supported Employment (SE) and Mental Health Treatment, as part of the evidence-based practice. It may be used as a discussion tool, or a planning tool for steps to further develop integrated services.

## Definition

- ❑ Employment Specialists (ES) who provide evidence-based supported employment are full and equal participants on the mental health treatment team (MHTT). Supported employment shares the same status, importance and roles as other services such as case management, residential, psychiatry, and “clinical” services that compose the treatment team. Other services are aligned, supervised, monitored, evaluated and modified to collaboratively support each consumer’s employment goal.
- ❑ Employment specialists are each assigned to no more than one or two treatment teams. This ensures that employment specialists are able to coordinate services with mental health practitioners and still be free to spend most of their time providing services in the community.
- ❑ Employment specialists have office space that is shared with mental health practitioners or is in close proximity to their mental health team(s).
- ❑ Employment specialists attend weekly mental health treatment team meetings. If a specialist is assigned to two teams, the specialist attends each team meeting on a weekly basis. Employment specialists participate in the entire meeting to help the team think about employment for people who have not been referred to SE and to provide job leads or strategies for people who are pursuing work on their own.

## Rationale

- ❑ Supporting consumers in obtaining and retaining competitive employment is most effectively accomplished when SE services are integrated.
- ❑ Consumers report that they feel frustrated when providers do not all support the employment goal in a cohesive manner.

## Philosophy

- ❑ Assisting consumers in achieving their goals, especially regarding competitive employment, is a core function of the MHTT.
- ❑ When services exist that help consumers to achieve their goals, and these services have demonstrated effectiveness, consumers have a right to access these services.
- ❑ Employment is an important part of the recovery process for many consumers as they establish identities beyond the previous limitations of diagnosis and disability.

## Indicators of Integrated Mental Health and Supported Employment Services

### Consumer Level

- ❑ A mental health practitioner who knows the consumer well provides an introduction to the employment specialist. For example, the first meeting with the employment specialist could take place with a case manager in attendance.
- ❑ Consumers have the opportunity to request meetings with the employment specialist and MHTT.
- ❑ Case manager, medication prescribers and other MHTT members ask consumers about work-related goals, successes, concerns, and problems.
- ❑ Consumers are given the same hopeful employment-related messages from all team members.
- ❑ The consumer is aware that the employment specialist, case manager, and other clinicians work together as a team sharing information for the benefit of the consumer.
- ❑ The MHTT takes full responsibility for coordinating services, not the consumer.
- ❑ Treatment decisions are made by the consumer with equal input of all team members. For example, the team might generate several possible solutions to a problem, but the consumer is offered the opportunity to choose the strategy that feels like the best fit for him or her.

### Team Level

- ❑ Employment specialists are regular and fully participating members of MHTTs as evidenced by employment specialists speaking up frequently in team meetings.
- ❑ Employment specialists are invited to bring up clients to discuss during the mental health treatment team meetings.
- ❑ Employment specialists are each assigned to no more than one or two treatment teams.

- Employment specialists attend the mental health treatment team meetings weekly. If a specialist is assigned to work with two teams, he or she attends each meeting on a weekly basis. The employment specialists stay for the entire meeting to help team members think about employment for people who have not yet been referred. The specialists can also help by sharing job ideas or job leads for people who are pursuing employment without supported employment assistance.
- Members of the MHTT provide information for employment specialists regarding the consumer's strengths, talents, abilities, community resources, hobbies, diagnoses, symptoms, psychiatric history, medications and side effects, and coping strategies that pertain to employment.
- Members of the mental health treatment team provide information for the vocational profile and employment plan. For example, a nurse might share information that a consumer tends to use substances in the evening so the employment specialist would know that the consumer would have a better chance of showing up to work sober if he got an afternoon job. A medication prescriber could share information about a person's disorganized thinking and suggest a quiet work environment to maximize the person's ability to concentrate.
- The employment specialist shares information about the job so that others on the team can support the job. For example, case manager meetings could be scheduled around the person's work schedule. A medication prescriber could make medication adjustments if the person was having problems with medication side effects on the job.
- MHTT members have knowledge of the consumer's employment goals and plan.
- Employment specialist, case manager, and other clinicians actively support the consumer's employment goals.
- Employment specialists provide observations regarding signs of medication effectiveness for symptom management during the employment process, and this information is included in medication prescribing practices.
- MHTT members work with the consumer and the employment specialist to identify early warning signs of a potential relapse or acute increase in symptoms that may appear in the employment process.
- Employment specialists and mental health treatment members collaborate in providing education and support regarding employment to the consumer's family members and/or other supporters as evidenced in the service plan and progress notes.
- Employment specialists and other MHTT members collaborate in helping consumers manage symptoms, develop coping skills and learn new skills related to employment.
- Offices of employment specialists are co-located near the offices of other MHTT members. Employment specialists and mental health practitioners communicate frequently.
- All MHTT members participate in developing ideas, referrals, sources and brainstorming regarding employment leads. For example, a therapist might share information about a job opening at his sister's business. The team could also try to brainstorm job ideas for someone who wants to work outdoors.

- ❑ Employment specialists provide feedback to MHTT members about consumer's work performance, including information about symptoms or medication side effects.
- ❑ Mental health practitioners share information about diagnoses, symptoms, medication and side effects, and coping strategies and how they might impact job.
- ❑ Employment specialists keep the MHTT members informed of the consumer's employment status and any employment changes.
- ❑ MHTT members are informed and available to provide employment supports in necessary circumstances, especially when transitioning consumers who have developed stable employment to case managers to provide the job supports.
- ❑ Competitive employment is discussed at most MHTT meetings.

### Supervisory Level

- ❑ MHTT supervisors are trained to assess, monitor, and improve integration.
- ❑ Mental health team leaders are trained in the use of employment data as a quality improvement and team evaluation.
- ❑ MHTTs are regularly evaluated on the level of integration by the team leader.
- ❑ MHTT leaders develop and implement corrective action plans to improve the integration of services on a continuous basis.
- ❑ MHTT supervisors ensure that team members are encouraging all consumers to consider employment as a goal and obtain SE services if desired by the consumer.
- ❑ MHTT supervisors ensure that all services provided by the team are coordinated with and supportive of the consumer's employment goals.

### Leadership

- ❑ Executive Director explicitly defines competitive employment as part of the agency mission in supporting consumer goals and the recovery process and publicly states his/her position frequently.
- ❑ Agency identifies a leader within the agency to oversee the implementation and sustaining of SE.
- ❑ MHTT leaders ensure that employment and educational goals of consumers are discussed during team meetings.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and agency directors ensure that SE resources are not directed to other programs or services.
- ❑ MHTT leaders lead discussions about how to help consumers identify what role competitive employment may play in their recovery process.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors ensure that practitioners provide services in a hopeful, strength-based, recovery-oriented manner.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors ensure that all MHTT members have the skills and knowledge to support consumers' work efforts.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors help all team members to assess how other parts of consumers' lives and services, such as housing, medication, and benefits are impacted by employment and vice versa.

- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors ensure that all team members support an open self-referral process for consumers with competitive employment goals.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors highlight consumers' positive work experiences.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors review employment outcomes with the team and individual staff members on a regular basis.
- ❑ MHTT leaders and supervisors highlight staff members who demonstrate skills that reinforce the integration of employment and mental health treatment.

## Organizational Level

- ❑ The agency's mission statement supports the competitive employment goals of consumers.
- ❑ The agency Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff.
- ❑ Agency intake, assessment and treatment planning forms include questions about consumer employment goals.
- ❑ Agency services are available to employed consumers at times that allow employed consumers access to them.
- ❑ Data about competitive employment rates for people with serious mental illness is regularly collected for the agency as a whole.
- ❑ Competitive employment data is distributed to directors and managers of programs integrated with SE on a regular basis.
- ❑ Competitive employment data is used for quality improvement for job performance evaluation.
- ❑ The agency facilitates regular SE fidelity assessments that are integrated in the agency's quality improvement process. The agency responds to fidelity reports by developing a written fidelity action plan with specific timelines, action steps and persons responsible.
- ❑ The agency commits necessary resources for the provision of SE, including but not limited to community-based SE services.
- ❑ The agency carefully evaluates and makes modifications regarding all practices, policies and programs that provide disincentives for staff regarding supporting consumer competitive employment goals.
- ❑ The agency provides sufficient financial resources to support meeting times for the MHTT with supported employment staff.



## IPS Peer Specialists

Peer specialist refers to members of the IPS unit who have similar life experiences to people who receive IPS services. The duties of peer specialists vary by program location. What is common among peer specialists is that they share how they overcame obstacles to achieve their own career goals, and how they continue to move forward in their own recovery. IPS specialists (the practitioners responsible for helping people with education, finding and keeping jobs), and peer specialists have similar duties. But even though they may sometimes work on the same tasks, they do their work from different perspectives. Some IPS specialists also have lived experiences similar to those served and share the strategies that helped them.

“Peers break down barriers. When consumers hear my story (where I was and what happened, and where I am now) we have common ground so the person can gain strength and hope that they too can achieve their goals and dreams. Working can be stressful in early recovery – we can discuss any concerns and obstacles in their way and how we can get through them together. Sometimes, just another person on their side to listen to them and say, ‘We will get through this’ can motivate and bring problems into perspective. I, as a peer specialist, am just another person within their support system hoping to see them succeed.”

Diana McSheffrey, IPS peer specialist

This document includes examples of IPS peer specialists’ job duties, examples of a day in the working life of an IPS peer specialist, explanations of how IPS peers can be effective, and two sample job descriptions.

### **Examples of IPS peer specialist job duties**

- Attend and participate in mental health treatment meetings and IPS unit meetings.
- Discuss goals for employment and education with people. Help people explore career choices.
- Request services and make referrals for services that people need. For example, referrals for housing services or counseling, based on the person's preferences.
- Help people consider disclosing a disability (or other personal information) to employers and whether to ask for a job accommodation.
- Teach wellness management strategies.
- Engage people who are new to the program, or people who have missed appointments.
- Help people identify different options for money management.
- Teach people how to use available transportation.
- Share personal stories to inspire others.
- Assist in gathering identification documentation for employment.
- Discuss social situations at work.
- Assist with completing job applications and submitting resumes.
- Meet with working people to talk about their jobs.
- Discuss different ways to save paychecks for long-term goals or to budget income.
- Provide ongoing supports after the employment specialist is no longer involved.

### **Two examples of how IPS peer specialists spent a working day**

#### Example 1:

1. Went with a jobseeker to cash a check from state Vocational Rehabilitation to purchase a bus pass and identification. Then accompanied him to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get a non-driver's identification card. Then went to the bus station to buy a bus pass.
2. Went with someone to the Social Security Administration office to get a replacement Social Security card (identification).
3. Met with a new worker to review how to use a new cell phone to call and text. Saved the IPS team member's contact information in his phone.
4. Attended a mental health treatment team meeting along with other members of the IPS unit. The peer and IPS specialists discuss how to help people achieve their employment goals with the mental health practitioners. At this meeting, the peer shared information about someone's new position.

#### Example 2:

1. Caught up on emails and writing notes from meetings with consumers.
2. Picked up a consumer, helped him get a bus pass, walked around a garden center while providing supportive listening around his housing and mental health. Discussed how he would like to prepare for paid employment and working with his employment specialist again.
3. Met consumer at the mall. Provided check in and assisted consumer in filling

- out applications at the mall.
4. Met consumer at home and checked in with her after she was hospitalized. Discussed what is required by her commitment. Provided supportive listening when speaking about medications and how to advocate for herself.
  5. Met consumer at home. Went over what he would like to work on with Employment Specialist and what he could work on with me. He would like to work on going back to college. We went over what documents he would need to file for FAFSA (Federal Application for Free Student Aid). Discussed boundaries around our relationship and how to communicate without using offensive words towards women.
  6. Worked on writing notes about meetings. Checked email.

For more information about what IPS peer specialists do, see pages 5-7 for job descriptions for peer positions at two agencies.

### **Reasons to include peer specialists on the IPS team**

People may be more comfortable sharing information with a peer specialist whom they think has been in similar situations and will be less likely to judge them. Peers can help people engage in IPS by explaining how IPS is different than out-of-date vocational programs that many people want to avoid. They also engage people by sharing hopeful stories.

“The peer specialist helped me regain my self worth through motivating me to go back to work.”

A working person

“The peer or employment specialist who has a lived experience of mental illness understands what it's like to have apprehension about returning to work and how a person may have trepidation regarding the entire social service system. It can help bridge the gap when there is a professional with lived experience, whether that person is a doctor, therapist, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, or any other service provider. There is more than empathy when the other person can say, “When I experienced that...” The shared experience results in a unique kind of partnership.”

Justin Meckes  
IPS Specialist (with previous work experience as  
a Peer Specialist)

Peers help practitioners use a strengths-based perspective. They help other IPS team members view issues from their client's perspectives. For example, if a person isn't returning calls, a peer could remind the team that the person may not be ignoring them, but just having a bad day.

"Peers help teams to remember to follow through with zero exclusion criteria by helping them to open up to other ways of thinking about things. We offer a real world perspective and take the opportunity to remind the team where a consumer might be coming from considering their situation."

Erika Ritchie, Peer Specialist

"Having a peer specialist has made our IPS team stronger by making sure that we are identifying each individual's strengths and providing strengths-based services. The peer specialist ensures that the individuals in our IPS program are reminded of their strengths and that the team is also reminded of those strengths. We are more aware of the importance of the impact of everything we say and do with the participant and to our team. Our team is stronger when we are all positive."

Renee Homolka, IPS Supervisor

Including peer specialist positions on the IPS unit shows that the social service system is leading by example.

"Chrysalis Vocational Peer Specialists help keep our agency focused on recovery and continue to remind staff of the power of employment. Peer Specialists take a holistic approach to consumer's vocational goals. Our IPS team is so much stronger because of our Peer Specialists."

Dani Rischall, Executive Director

Peers are a constant reminder of success as people are moving through the vocational process. When people begin to doubt themselves they have opportunities to interact with someone else who has struggled but was successful.

"Our peer mentor has been a wonderful addition to the IPS team. She is able to provide positive influences for our IPS consumers who may benefit from an extra person to talk with. I believe that our IPS consumers have greatly benefited from our peer mentor's encouragement, attention, and kindness."

Jennifer Evanick, IPS Specialist

**Importance of the Individualized Plan for Employment with OVR and how this relates to the client employment goal:**

After an individual has been determined eligible for services, the vocational rehabilitation counselor will talk to the individual (now consumer) about job interests and help her or him decide on an employment goal. This may require the vocational rehabilitation counselor to further assess the individual's strengths, abilities, limitations and interests to help ensure an appropriate vocational goal. The goal of this planning process is the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE will be a 'roadmap' for the consumer to follow to reach her or his vocational goal. It is a plan for services leading to an employment outcome. The individual has the option of developing and writing all or part of the IPE with the assistance of the counselor, developing the IPE alone without assistance, or developing it with the assistance of representative of her or his choice. The plan must be executed on the agency approved form.

The following elements must be included in the IPE, as appropriate:

- the specific employment outcome (vocational goal) in the most integrated setting based on the informed choice of the individual;
- the date the employment plan is estimated to be completed;
- the specific services to be provided in order to achieve the employment outcome;
- who will provide each service;
- the beginning date for each service;
- if supported employment services are to be provided, the provider of the extended on-going support services;
- the criteria for evaluating progress and success;
- the responsibilities of the consumer;
- the responsibilities of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The IPE must be mutually agreed upon, as must any necessary amendments to it, and must be signed jointly by the consumer and by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and, as appropriate, by a parent, guardian, or other representative. The IPE is reviewed with the consumer at least annually.

A copy of the IPE, including any amendments and the intended employment outcome, is provided to the individual and/or, as appropriate, the parent, guardian, or other representative. It must be provided in the individual's native language or mode of communication if necessary for the full participation of the individual with a disability.

## Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Eligibility Worksheet



NAME:	COUNSELOR:
CASE NUMBER:	DATE OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION:
SSI/SSDI Recipient <input type="checkbox"/> (Verified/Presumed Eligible)	Date Documentation Received:
Amended Date:	Counselors Initials:
<b>STEP I: ELIGIBILITY</b>	

1. Does the applicant have a physical or mental impairment?  YES  NO IMPAIRMENTS (Ineligible)

MAJOR IMPAIRMENT:	CODE:
SECONDARY IMPAIRMENT:	CODE:
OTHER IMPAIRMENTS:	

### FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

#### **A. SELF CARE**

- Ability to manage self is dependent upon devices or the services of others (i.e. ADLs, bathing, eating, money management)
- Ability to manage special health and safety needs is dependent upon devices or the services of others (i.e. medication management, treatment scheduling)
- Ability to manage living environment is dependent upon devices or the services of others (i.e. Accessibility (Transferring to wheelchair, shower, etc))
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of self-care: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **B. WORK SKILLS**

- Limited or absent work skills
- Limited capacity to learn working skills
- Inability to use present work skills
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of work skills: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **C. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

- Difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships (i.e. personal, family, community, and work)
- Exhibits behaviors which significantly detract from the performance of self and/or other workers
- Requires more than normal intervention on the part of a supervisor
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of interpersonal skills: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. COMMUNICATION**

- Inability to independently express or receive meaningful *verbal* communication or does so with extreme difficulty
- Inability to independently express or receive meaningful *written* communication or does so with extreme difficulty

- Ability to communicate is dependent upon a person, service, device, or alternate mode of communication or augmentation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of communication: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**E. MOBILITY**

- Impaired ability to physically or cognitively move about from place to place inside and outside the home
- Limited range of travel
- Requires modifications, adaptive technology, and/or accommodations in order to move around the community
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of mobility: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**F. SELF-DIRECTION**

- Limited ability to think through choices to a logical conclusion
- Difficulty in formulating plans dealing with employment or independent living
- Requires supervision and direction in order to begin and carry through on tasks, monitor behavior, and make decisions
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of self-direction: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**G. WORK TOLERANCE**

- Limited capacity to effectively and efficiently sustain the physical demands of a job
- Limited capacity to effectively and efficiently sustain the cognitive and/or psychological demands of a job
- Requires modification, adaptive technology, and/or accommodations in order to have the capacity or endurance to complete job tasks
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This individual will be limited in performing the following jobs and tasks in the area of work tolerance: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**SIGNIFICANT ATTENDANT FACTORS:**

Please specify Attendant Factors: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Does the individual have functional limitations that (in conjunction with attendant factors) result in a substantial impediment to employment?**

- NO (Ineligible)
- YES

**3. Are VR services REQUIRED to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment?**

- NO (Ineligible)
- YES

**STEP II: SIGNIFICANCE OF DISABILITY**

Self-Care  Work Skills  Interpersonal Skills  Communication  Mobility  Self-Direction  Work Tolerance

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Verified SSI/SSDI recipients do not require an expanded service. (Go to Step III)(If benefits are unable to be verified, check an expanded service definition.)

**EXPANDED SERVICE DEFINITIONS**

This individual has a disability because he/she has a physical or mental impairment (or combination of impairments) that seriously limits one or more functional capacities in terms of employment outcome. The individual with a significant disability can be expected to require two or more vocational rehabilitation services including guidance and counseling over an extended period of time, one of which can be expected to meet the following expanded definition.

Mental Restoration  Physical Restoration  Expanded Training  Intensive Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Technology  Personal Assistance Services  Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Consumer does not require an expanded service = **NON-SIGNIFICANT DISABILITY** (Go to Step IV)

**STEP III: MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITY**

The need for long-term support meets the definition of most significant disability regardless of how many areas of major functional capacities have limitations.

Long-term supports required. Specify:

**OR**

Has limitations in four or more major functional areas.

**STEP IV: PRIORITY CATEGORY**

After determining that the consumer is eligible for VR services, the priority category can now be chosen based on the assessment of not just the functional limitations but also the determination of the need for long-term services by the consumer. If the consumer is found to be out of selection, information and referral must be provided.

1-Most significant disability  2-Limited in 3 functional areas-SD  3-Limited in 2 functional areas-SD

4-Limited in one functional area-S  5-Non-significant disability

**STEP V: STATUS: ELIGIBLE/ACCEPTED, ELIGIBLE/OUT OF SELECTION, OR UNKNOWN**

Eligible/Accepted

Eligible/Out of Selection

**UNKNOWN:** Trial Work Experience Required (Check Policies and Procedures for Guidance)

The Kentucky Education Cabinet, Department for Workforce Investment, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, type of disability, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, pregnancy, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law.



- Preferred Language-pull in data object
- If not English, indicate the methodology utilized from a configurable pick list, including but not limited to Interpreter, Language Line, etc.
- Space for additional Free text Comment.

## Career Profile IPS Supported Employment/Education Referral

### Face Sheet

Date of referral: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)  
 Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)  
 Email: [Click here to enter text.](#)  
 Phone number/s: [Click here to enter text.](#)  
 Best way to reach: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Case Manager/therapist: [Click here to enter text.](#)

State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Referral sent to State Vocational Rehabilitation

Other healthcare/social service providers: [Click here to enter text.](#)

What is the person saying about work? Why does s/he want to work now? What type of job?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

.....

Is this person interested in gaining more education now to advance his/her career goals?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

.....

Please include some information about the person's illness (diagnosis, symptoms, etc.). How might the person's illness (and/or substance use) affect a job or return to school?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

.....

What are some of the person's strengths? (Experience, training, personality, supports, etc.)  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

.....

What job (type of job, hours, etc.) do you think would be a good match?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

.....

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Person making referral

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Title

## Career Profile

This form is to be completed by the employment/education specialist during the first few weeks of meeting with someone. Sources of information include: the person, the mental health treatment team, client records, and with permission, family members and previous employers. The profile should be updated with each new job and education experience using job start, job end, and education experience forms.

## Work Goal

What is your dream job? What kind of work have you always wanted to do?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What are your long-term career goals?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What type of job do you think you would like to have now?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What is it that appeals to you about that type of work?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What type of job(s) do you know that you would not want?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you know people who are working? What types of jobs? What do you think about those jobs?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Is there anything that worries you about going to work? Why do you want to work?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Education

Are you interested in going to school or attending vocational training now to advance your work career?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

### Education/learning history

Did you complete high school?

No

Yes

If no, would you be interested in earning your GED/high school equivalency diploma?

No

Yes

N/A

---

Did you participate in vocational training classes in high school?

No

Yes

---

Have you ever completed an apprenticeship (i.e., plumbing, welding, electrician, etc.)?

No

Yes

If so, what year? [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Did you complete any job related job-related training in the military?

No

Yes

N/A

Please describe the training, including years and any certificates earned. [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

**Other education or training programs**

N/A

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you have copies of the degrees, licenses, certificates that you have earned?

No

Yes

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Are you interested in earning a specific certificate, license, or degree for work?

No

Yes

[Click here to enter text.](#)

If the individual is not interested in additional schooling or technical training now, skip the next set of questions and ask about work history instead.

What type of job are you interested in obtaining?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know of a specific training/education program you would like to pursue?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What is it about that field that interests you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know about the availability of those jobs in this area? What is the occupational outlook for those jobs?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

When would you like to start an educational or training program?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

How long do you want to go to a school or training program? What is your timeframe for completing education or training?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Would you be interested in visiting some local programs (community college, four-year college, adult vocational training) to learn about different options for degrees and certificates?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Are you interested in joining a trade union (e.g., baker's, maintenance)? Do you know the requirements for joining? Would you like to visit the union office to learn more?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Are there any other job training or educational opportunities that you would like to learn more about?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

### **School Experiences**

Let's talk about some of your school experiences and how they were for you.

			Comments
Being called on in class	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Social situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Taking tests	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Learning from lecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Learning by reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Learning hands on	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Concentration	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Memory	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>

Using computers       Okay     Problem    [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Did you have an IEP (individual education plan) while you were in school? Did that include different strategies to help you learn? What were those?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Were you in any advanced classes? Which ones?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Has anyone ever told you that you had a learning disability? What do you know about that? What accommodations have helped you in the past?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What are your strengths related to being a student?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What languages do you know?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

### **Plans for School and Training**

What do you need in order to start school?

- |   |   |   |                                       |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to a computer                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer literacy                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet place to study       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transit card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Books/ supplies                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health support      | <input type="checkbox"/> Eldercare    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with transit route              | <input type="checkbox"/> Help studying                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with a study calendar | <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help navigating campus               | <input type="checkbox"/> More support from family/friends                 |   |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help talking to teachers/instructors | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> |   |                                       |

Comments: [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What are your resources for paying for school tuition? For books? For other school costs?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Have you ever received financial aid for school? Have you ever had a grant? What type? Have you ever defaulted on a grant or student loan?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you need any type of classroom accommodations?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What other types of supports may help you succeed in school or training?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Work Experience

### Most recent job

N/A – Person has no work experience

Job title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Employer: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Job duties: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Start Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)      End Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How many hours per week: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How did you find this job? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What did you like about job? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What did you dislike? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Reason for leaving job? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Other info about job: [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

### Next most recent job

N/A – Person has only had one job

Job title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Employer: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Job duties: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Start Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)      End Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How many hours per week: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How did you find this job? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What did you like about job? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What did you dislike? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? Click here to enter text.  
Reason for leaving job? Click here to enter text.  
Other info about job: Click here to enter text.

---

**Next most recent job**

N/A – Person has only had two jobs

Job title: Click here to enter text.  
Employer: Click here to enter text.  
Job duties: Click here to enter text.  
Start Date: Click here to enter text. End Date: Click here to enter text.  
How many hours per week: Click here to enter text.  
How did you find this job? Click here to enter text.  
What did you like about job? Click here to enter text.  
What did you dislike? Click here to enter text.  
What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? Click here to enter text.  
Reason for leaving job? Click here to enter text.  
Other info about job: Click here to enter text.

*Please use additional sheets for other jobs.*

---

**Military Experience**

Not applicable because person was not in the military

Branch: Click here to enter text.  
Dates: Click here to enter text.  
Training or work experience: Click here to enter text.  
Certificate or license: Click here to enter text.

---

**Cultural Background**

Use the following script to introduce the next set of questions to the person.



**“Our agency aims to work with people from different backgrounds and with diverse experiences. The next set of questions will help me understand your background and culture, which may help us in planning for jobs.”**

What is important to you in terms of your background and culture? (i.e., race, ethnicity, color, gender, economic status, etc.)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Which different languages do you speak? Which language do you prefer?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What special events or holidays do you celebrate? Are there family traditions that you still practice? How would you like your family involved as we move forward in the process of getting and keeping a job?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Is it important to you whether your work supervisor is male or female?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Have you ever felt discriminated against or treated unfairly when you were looking for work or on the job? Could you tell me about that?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Mental Health

Has anyone ever told you that you have a mental illness? If so, what did they say?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

How does your mental illness affect you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What are the first signs that you may be experiencing a symptom flare-up?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

How do you cope with your symptoms?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What medicines do you take and when do you take them?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

How do the medicines work for you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Physical Health

How is your physical health? Do you have any health problems?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you have any problems with the following:

Standing for long periods  No  Yes

Can you stand for more than an hour?  No  Yes

Sitting  No  Yes

How long can you sit? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Climbing stairs?  No  Yes

How many flights? How often? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Lifting  No  Yes

How much can you lift? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Endurance  No  Yes

How many hours could you work each day? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Each week? [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What is the best time of day for you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Cognitive Health

Do you have problems with memory?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Concentrating?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Doing things fast (psychomotor speed)?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

If so, what things have helped with these issues in the past?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Getting Ready for a Job

Do you have the clothes you will need for a job? For interviews?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you have an alarm clock or way to wake up for work?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Do you have two forms of identification? Picture ID, social security card...?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

How will you get to work?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Interpersonal Skills

Would you like a job that involved working with the public?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Where do you live and with whom do you live?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Who do you spend time with? How often do you see or talk to them?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Who can help us think about jobs you would enjoy?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appointment made with this person to discuss jobs.

If not, why? [Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Once you are employed, who would be a good person to support you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Anyone else?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Benefits

Do you receive any of the following benefits?

SSI       SSDI       Housing Subsidy       Food Stamps       TANF

- Retirement from previous job    VA benefits (combat related?  Yes)
- Spouse or dependent child receives benefits
- Medicaid    Medicare    Other benefits: [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Unsure which benefits s/he receives
- No benefits

Do you manage your own money?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

- Referral made to benefits planner.  
 If no referral, why not: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Disclosure**  
 (or use “Plan for Approaching Employers” Worksheet)

Please explain that each person using supported employment services can decide whether or not their specialist will contact employers on their behalf.

What could be some of the advantages of having an employment specialist contact employers on your behalf?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

What could be some of the disadvantages?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Are there any things that you would **not** want your employment specialist to share with an employer?  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know whether or not you would like your specialist to go ahead and contact employers on your behalf? (It is okay to change your mind at any time):  
[Click here to enter text.](#)

If you decided that the specialist should not contact employers, what things would you like him or her to do in order to help you find a job?

- Help with job leads       Help filling out applications       Help writing a resume
- Rides to job interviews     Practicing job interview questions and answers
- Help following up on applications       Other: [Click here to enter text.](#)

## Substance Use

How much alcohol do you drink?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How often?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Is there a particular time of day?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

What drugs do you, or have you, used?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How often?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

## Legal History

Have you ever been arrested?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Conviction 1:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Conviction 2:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Conviction 3:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Conviction 4:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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Conviction 5:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

---

Conviction 6:

Year:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sentence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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What problems, if any, were you having in your life at the time of the offenses?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have any pending legal charges? If so, what charge?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Parole Officer name:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

PO phone number:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have a copy of your rap sheet?

No

Yes

Do you want to get a copy of it?

No

Yes

### Daily Activity

What is a typical day like for you from the time you get up until you go to bed?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Are there places in your neighborhood that you like to go to?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you belong to clubs, groups, a church, etc.?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What hobbies or interests do you have?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What are your typical sleep hours?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

**Networking Contacts (Family, friends, previous employers, other)**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

**Information from Family, Previous Employers or Others**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# CAREER PROFILE TIP SHEET

Designed to make completing the profile more appealing. (Perfect to stick to the desktop)



## GETTING STARTED



### Begin by listening, learning, and building trust.

You are just getting to know each other. Instead of focusing on paperwork, review and memorize important questions to ask *before* meeting. If needed, bring a small pad to take notes and offer to share these with person. Listen for subtle tidbits of information related to employment/education to keep conversation focused. [Meet outside the office to learn the most!](#)

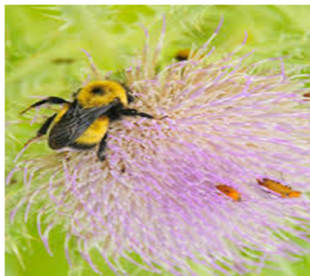
- Start where person is at and go at their pace.
- Listen with openness & curiosity to *person's story*.
- Use open-ended questions to discover details
  - Ask who, what, where, when, how (not why.)
- Use questions to guide, but avoid interrupting.
- Be hospitable – help person feel comfortable.
- Ideas on where to meet (ask person first):
  - Library, café, laundromat, park, book store, university, hotel lobby.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

Be okay not knowing everything at once – the details will come in time.

"HELP!  
I'LL NEVER GET  
THIS DONE!"

- Use existing information to populate form.
- Ask care managers, therapists, psychiatrists, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, peers, family members (with permission) for information.
  - If no team, then ask for permission to chat with people who know person.
- Schedule time each day to add information to profiles until complete – keep at it!
- Have a goal to learn at least three new things about person with each meeting.
- Keep profile alive by using it and adding new information as it's discovered over time.
  - Share additions with job seekers and put in clinical file.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

⇒ [www.ipsworks.org](http://www.ipsworks.org)

### BENEFITS OF PROFILE

- ⇒ Discovers passions and interests and strengths
- ⇒ Guides job choices and educational goals
- ⇒ Identifies disclosure preferences
- ⇒ Identifies supportive people to involve
- ⇒ Shows employment history
- ⇒ Illuminates supports needed
- ⇒ Informs useful job search and follow-along plans
- ⇒ Facilitates brainstorming of ideas in supervision

# BASIC TIPS TO GET STARTED

## QUESTIONS TO ENGAGE JOB SEEKER

How did you get here today?

So tell me about your morning.

What jazzes you about going to work/school?

How might being employed change your life?

What do people say you are good at?

What activity have you noticed makes you lose track of time?

What do you want life to look like in 3 years?

When was the last time you felt good? What would it take to reach that again?

With whom do you like to spend time?


What would be the smallest or easiest 1<sup>st</sup> step for you?

Imagine that you are *truly confident* that others will support you. What might you do?

What do you think you are good at? What makes you unique?

If you could talk to your future self, what would you say?

When do you feel most like your true self?

- **Complete profile** within **first few weeks** of meeting with new person.
- **Explain that the various questions** being asked are helpful for understanding the person's interests, strengths, uniqueness, culture, and experiences. Answers **help with planning together** for the best job or educational pursuits.
- **DISCLOSURE:**  **Remember to explain** that the person can decide whether or not the IPS specialist will contact employers on job seeker's behalf AND this **decision can be changed** at any time.

## Show Belief. Highlight Possibilities.

Develop your own creative questions that demonstrate belief in the person and in possibilities.



**Bring people into the future by asking questions that energize and inspire hope.**

Focusing on the past too much can hold people back and may get boring.



**Action steps increase hope, confidence, and engagement.**

Gather information while being active in the community.

Develop & review action steps at each meeting.

Meet as frequently as possible to keep momentum.

*Remember to record frequently and share with job seeker and team!*



## Possible Strategies for Collaboration Between IPS Programs and State Vocational Rehabilitation

### Monthly Meetings to Discuss Clients

- Helps to have supervisor present
- Can occur at either office

### MH Agency Offers Office Space to VR Counselor(s)

- Office may be used a few half days per month or more
- Helps VR counselor with “no-show” rate
- Helps IPS program and VR office develop relationships
- VR counselors need private space, copier access, etc.

### MH or IPS Specialist Takes Clients to VR Appointments

- Ensures that everyone is on the same page

### VR Counselor(s) Attend IPS Unit Meeting or MH Team Meeting Once Per Month

- Helps VR have access to people making treatment decisions
- Educates mental health about VR
- Opportunity to discuss ways to help clients

### VR Liaison is Assigned to IPS Program

- Most or all referrals go to liaison
- Liaison is someone who is interested in IPS programs
- Saves time in regards to coordinating the programs
- Helps with relationship building

## IPS Supported Employment and State Vocational Rehabilitation: A Crosswalk

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment is an evidence-based practice that helps people with mental health conditions work in competitive jobs related to their preferences. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a state/federal program that assists eligible individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment related to each person’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capacities, interests, and informed choice. Individuals who have access to both IPS and VR benefit from the expertise and resources of both systems. This document describes commonalities between the IPS practice principles and the VR system.

<b>IPS Supported Employment</b>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>
<p>1. <i>Competitive employment is the goal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum wage or higher. Wage and benefits are the same as others in similar jobs</li> <li>• Integrated job settings</li> <li>• Positions that are open to qualified candidates, regardless of disability status</li> </ul>	<p><i>Competitive Integrated employment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum wage or higher and same as others in similar jobs</li> <li>• Integrated job settings</li> <li>• Opportunities for advancement</li> <li>• Same benefits as others in similar jobs</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>IPS services are integrated with mental health treatment services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health practitioners &amp; IPS specialists meet weekly</li> <li>• IPS specialists collaborate with VR counselors, family/friends (with person’s permission)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Identification of needed service providers and supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VR counselors help identify comprehensive support services for people holding competitive jobs</li> <li>• VR counselors help remove barriers that prevent person from working</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Eligibility is based on client choice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPS developed for people with mental health conditions (including co-occurring substance use disorders)</li> <li>• Desire to work helps people overcome barriers to employment</li> <li>• Practitioners assume that people will benefit from IPS services</li> </ul>	<p><i>Eligibility determination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person must have documented disability/impairment that presents barriers/impediment to secure, retain, or advance in employment</li> <li>• VR counselor presumes that an applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of VR services</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>Individual preferences are honored</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are based on person’s preferences, skills, &amp; experiences</li> <li>• IPS specialist records job history, education, goals, supports, etc. in career profile (guides work plan)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Comprehensive assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VR counselor encourages &amp; facilitates exploration of the (eligible) person’s strengths, resources, capabilities, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, &amp; informed choice</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferences help determine type of job sought, education/ training programs, team supports, &amp; decisions about disclosing personal information at work.</li> </ul>	
<p>5. <i>Rapid job search: Contact with employers begins soon after a person expresses interest in working</i></p>	<p><i>Timely Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development within 90 days</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-vocational training &amp; skill assessments rarely utilized.</li> <li>• Person meets with hiring manager about employment within 30 days of IPS program entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Innovation &amp; Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) requires development of Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days of an eligibility determination</li> </ul>
<p>6. <i>IPS specialist builds relationships with employers</i></p>	<p><i>VR counselor assists IPS team with building employer relationships</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPS specialist facilitates multiple, in-person meetings with hiring managers/owners to learn about business needs</li> <li>• Visits are based on jobseekers' work preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares job leads, coordinate visits to employers, organize joint presentations to employers, coordinate activities to gain access to large companies, &amp; coordinate development of job search plans for shared IPS individuals</li> <li>• A designated business relations position (in many states) focuses on building relationships with employers in the community</li> </ul>
<p>7. <i>Individualized job supports</i></p>	<p><i>VR counselor arranges for extended services</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized follow-along supports for work/school</li> <li>• Continued for as long as the worker/student wants &amp; needs</li> <li>• Provided by IPS specialist, treatment team, family, friends, &amp; work colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing supports must be identified, as a part of supported employment Individualized Plan for Employment</li> <li>• Extended services provided by an entity other than VR program</li> <li>• Post-Employment Services may be provided within five years of case closure when job problems may result in job loss</li> </ul>
<p>8. <i>Personalized benefits counseling is provided</i></p>	<p><i>Personalized benefits counseling is provided</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPS specialist helps program participants access information from benefits planner about Social Security, Medicaid, etc., to make informed employment decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VR counselors may refer eligible person for work incentives planning to help them understand how earnings may impact benefits</li> </ul>



# Information on Evidence-based Supported Employment for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Evidence-based supported employment (SE) is a well-researched and field-tested approach to helping people who are recovering from mental illness. Supported employment works well in urban and rural communities. Regardless of the economy, people with mental illness are more likely to find jobs if helped by a supported employment program than any other type of vocational service.



**Better Outcomes:**  
**Research has demonstrated that on average 58% of people with severe mental illness become employed if they have access to evidence-based supported employment. Only 24% on average find work if they receive services from other types of vocational programs.**

## Motivation is an important predictor of success for individuals with severe mental illness.

In many SE programs, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are provided for the large majority of clients. VR counselors working with high fidelity SE programs report that the extra assistance provided by SE programs has been especially helpful to some people, for example, people who have psychotic symptoms or substance abuse problems. In this way, VR has been able to work with people that they may not have served in the past.

## Mental health and vocational services are integrated.

It is important for all of the people working with an individual client to share information and provide a consistent message to the person. Therefore, the "treatment team" meets weekly and may include a case manager, counselor, psychiatrist, employment specialist, or others. When VR counselors attend these meetings, they share their expertise, keep up-to-date on clients and become an integral part of the treatment team. VR counselors are encouraged to regularly attend meetings.

## Benefits planning is comprehensive and ongoing.

A person with comprehensive training provides clients with accurate information about work incentives and the impact of earned income upon all sources of income. Clients are offered ongoing help with benefits and asset development as their goals and jobs change over time.

## Client preferences are important.

Client preferences may be related to the type of work, job location, hours of work, disclosure

of disability, or other issues. Many people with severe mental illness choose to start with a part-time job and increase their work hours over time.

## Competitive employment is the goal.

Supported employment focuses on regular jobs in the community, not jobs created for people with disabilities. All jobs pay at least minimum wage.

## The job search is rapid.

Clients are not asked to participate in vocational evaluation, work adjustment programs or pre-vocational activities. Instead, the SE program helps clients begin a job search within a few weeks of the first appointment. VR counselors and SE programs work together to develop strategies that will help VR determine eligibility as quickly as possible.

## Follow-along supports are continual.

The SE program meets with clients frequently to help them succeed in their jobs and move ahead in the world of work. Although VR may close cases after 90 days, the SE program continues to provide ongoing follow-along services with help from case managers and counselors as long as the client desires.

## Clients are supported with job changes.

SE programs and VR counselors honor client choice with regard to leaving jobs, even if the person has a poor job history or other barriers to employment. If job loss occurs, the SE team works to help the person find another job. Whenever possible, VR assists the SE team with more than one job.

**Evidence-based supported employment is currently based on 15 randomized controlled studies and a specific fidelity scale to ensure program standards. This form of supported employment differs from the federal definition of supported employment that was originally created for people with developmental disabilities. Please see the resources noted at the bottom of this poster for more information.**



### For more information:

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center  
<http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc/>

Deborah R. Becker and Robert E. Drake, *A Working Life for People with Severe Mental Illness.*

New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003.

SAMHSA Supported Employment Toolkit

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/communitysupport/toolkits/employment/default.asp>

## IPS Supported Employment for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

### A Discussion Guide

This guide is intended to help trainers use the video, "IPS Supported Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation: A Discussion," as a training tool. For example, a trainer could show a section of the video and then lead a discussion about an IPS principle. Trainers might choose the discussion questions that seem most relevant for their state or region.

We recommend using the handout, "IPS Supported Employment for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors" along with the video and this discussion guide. The handout may be ordered from [www.dartmouthips.org](http://www.dartmouthips.org), select "Resources."

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center thanks Claire Beck (Missouri), Claire Courtney (Minnesota), and Freda King (South Carolina), for collaborating on developing this discussion guide.

### **IPS supported employment**

This document (and the video) refers to a specific type of supported employment, also referred to as Individual Placement and Support (IPS). IPS supported employment is a well-researched and well-defined approach to helping people with serious mental illness return to work. This practice is defined by the eight practice principles outlined in this document, and by the 25-item supported employment fidelity scale ([www.dartmouthips.org](http://www.dartmouthips.org)). <https://ipsworks.org>

There have been 22 randomized controlled trials (the gold standard in medical research) for IPS supported employment. In those trials, people who received IPS services were almost three times more likely to work in competitive employment than those who received other types of vocational services. Further, in a detailed analysis of four controlled trials of IPS, people worked four times as many hours, earned 3.7 times more wages, and found work more than two months sooner than people in the control groups.

### IPS Supported Employment Practice Principles

1. Every person who is interested in work is eligible for services regardless of symptoms, substance use disorders, treatment decisions, or any other issue.
2. Employment services are integrated with mental health treatment.
3. Employment specialists help people find regular jobs in the community (competitive employment).
4. Personalized benefits planning is provided.
5. The job search begins soon after a person expresses interest in working.
6. Employment specialists develop relationships with employers by learning about their business needs.
7. Job supports are continuous.
8. Client preferences for jobs, and preferences for service delivery, are honored.

## Competitive employment is the goal

- Key Learning Points
- Competitive jobs are those that any person can apply for, regardless of the person's disability status. People working in competitive jobs earn the same wage as their co-workers, and at least minimum wage. Competitive jobs do not have time limits imposed by an employment program.
  - Rationale: Most clients say that they want competitive work. In fact, many people choose to work so that they can feel that they are part of the community.

- Discussion Question
1. How does this principle fit with Vocational Rehabilitation's mission?

*Possible answer: The VR mission is assisting people with disabilities to work, and work is defined by VR as competitive employment. Current VR practice does not encourage the use of sheltered employment or transitional employment as a successful outcome.*

## Zero exclusion criteria

- Key Learning Points
- Any person who has severe mental illness and who wishes to work is eligible for IPS services. This includes people who may still be experiencing symptoms, who have active substance use disorders, who have decided not to use psychotropic medication, etc.
  - Rationale for this principle: Research trials have demonstrated that motivation to work is a significant predictor of success and sometimes outweighs other factors. People who experience symptoms or continue to use substances are capable of work with the right types of supports.

- Discussion Questions
1. What are VR client services guidelines about eligibility or job placement for people who have active substance use disorders? (Or the actual state VR policy?)

*Possible answer: The Federal Rehabilitation Act and its regulations does not state that people must achieve sobriety, complete 90 days of treatment, or be participating in a 12-step program in order to receive VR services, even to receive help with job placement. This is consistent with the assumption of ability to benefit, irrespective of severity of disability, included in the Rehabilitation Act.*

*Once the application is taken, counselors have the task of using existing data, or obtaining new data, to determine whether the individual is eligible for VR services. VR's criteria for eligibility is as follows: The*

*individual must have a physical or mental disability, the disability impedes employment, the individual wants to go to work, and the individual will benefit from a full range of VR services.*

2. What about safety?

*Possible answer: VR counselors should use their judgment to help people think about jobs that support sobriety from drugs and alcohol (i.e., where alcohol is not served) and jobs that don't include operating dangerous or heavy equipment, working from heights, ensuring public safety, working as a health provider, construction worker, etc.*

3. What is "harm reduction?" How is this related to recovery?

*Possible answer: There is not a single, correct path to recovery. Some people will begin to reduce their use of alcohol or drugs as a first step. In fact, the desire to work or go to school may provide some people with the motivation that they need to take steps. For example, a person might limit his drinking to the weekends in order to keep a job that he likes.*

4. What is recovery?

*Possible answer: For most people, recovery is a life-long process of learning to manage mental illness or substance use disorders so that they can pursue goals that are important to them. For example, a person might find that he is more likely to keep employment if he takes antipsychotic medication. But each person must discover what works for himself. None of us really has the answer for another person.*

5. If a person uses substances in a way that interferes with her employment plan (for example, loses a job after stopping medications), how can you frame the issue in relation to what is important to the person and avoid shaming the person?

*Possible answer: Welcome the person when he comes for his next appointment—make him glad that he came. Structure the conversation on the person's goal. For example, "I know that work is important to you. I want to help you with that goal. Now that you know a little bit more about what it will feel like to work, what can you do to ensure that drinking won't cause problems on your next job?" Motivational Interviewing has strategies that can help with this.  
[www.motivationalinterviewing.org](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org)*

6. What are some strategies for working with a person who has decided not to use medications (or not to use medications consistently)?

*Possible answer: Some people may be able to succeed without medication. Others may benefit from feedback from employers. For example, an employment specialist might set up a meeting with an employer to give the person feedback that his concentration is not adequate. Or, an employment specialist might tell an employer before he interviews the person about symptoms, "You may notice her mumbling to herself. She does that a lot. But she is very motivated to work and I think that you'll see she is able to focus on her job in spite of talking to herself."*

7. How can you work with someone who has received VR services in the past without a successful closure?

*Possible answer: One change in the person's life may be that she now has a team of people supporting her. Also, in IPS the employment specialist is working closely with her case manager and others who are helping the person. Counselors can also encourage the person to focus on those changes as one more tool that can promote success.*

## Work incentives planning

### Key Learning Points

- People in IPS supported employment programs should be offered accurate and comprehensive information about how their benefits would be affected by earned income. Further, they should receive information about Social Security work incentives.
- The people who provide this information should be well-trained and receive training updates on a regular basis.
- Rationale for this principle: People need facts that are specific to their own situations in order to make informed choices about how much they will work if they choose to stay on benefits. Others need to know about strategies for exiting the benefits system.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the current resources for benefits planning? Are these sufficient? Accurate?

*Trainers: Engage the group in a discussion about available benefits planning and how to access this service for clients.*

2. When should clients receive benefits planning?

*Possible answer: People need to learn how their benefits will be affected*



*before they go to work. They also need information as they make decisions about changes in their work income. Some people may also need to be able to speak to a benefits planner after they begin to see changes in their benefits.*

## **Integration of employment services and mental health treatment**

### **Key Learning Points**

- Employment specialists meet weekly with the mental health treatment team (case managers, counselors, housing specialists, nurses, and sometimes psychiatrists).
- VR counselors meet at least once a month with the IPS team to talk about shared cases. For example, they share updates on each person who has both VR and IPS services.
- Counselors who develop collaborative partnering relationships with employment specialists and treatment teams often report that working as a team enhances their ability to assist clients in reaching their employment goals while supporting recovery and symptom management.

Rationale for this item: Employment outcomes are better when programs use an integrated approach. Further, people receiving services report that they are confused or frustrated when mental health practitioners, employment specialists, and/or VR counselors give conflicting messages. Finally, VR counselors, treatment team members, and employment specialists need each other to remain positive, flexible and creative so that they can best help their shared clients.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What could be barriers to working with the IPS and mental health treatment teams?

*Trainers: Allow counselors to talk about the barriers such as having enough time, agency rules related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), feeling uncomfortable joining a new group of people, not being viewed as a mental health professional by team members, etc.*

2. What would it look like for you if you were integrated into an IPS program? What would your weekly schedule look like?

*Possible answer: Being integrated might include attending some IPS team meetings and/or some mental health treatment team meetings. It could also include spending a morning each week at the IPS offices meeting with clients, employment specialists, and case managers. This would also allow counselors to meet with clients the first time they meet with employment specialists (to facilitate this, counselors might ask the*

*IPS team to help schedule their morning). You might also have frequent emails and phone calls with employment specialists and treatment team members regarding shared clients. You can help the teams by answering questions about VR services, discussing solutions to help people with their employment goals, and even providing input for treatment plans.*

3. What do you think goes on in the mental health treatment team meetings? What would be your role in those meetings if you attended?

*Possible answer: The mental health treatment team meeting varies from agency to agency, but generally the supervisor and practitioners meet to plan services for clients. So, one team member might bring up a problem that a client is having, and the rest of the team would help him brainstorm possible solutions. The team might talk about strategies for symptom management and/or address issues related to housing, employment, finances, substance abuse, and so forth. Employment specialists also attend this meeting and often receive referrals during the meeting. In addition, this is the time that employment specialists ask mental health practitioners for help thinking of strategies to help people succeed, hearing about changes in the person's treatment, and helping the team celebrate successes.*

*VR counselors can serve as consultants to the team, and also as team members. For example, the VR counselor would likely provide information about employment and VR services, but would also help the team brainstorm solutions for people who have employment and education goals. VR counselors are knowledgeable about physical disabilities and can provide helpful information for those people who also have physical disabilities.*

4. What could the mental health team help you with? What can you ask of them?

*Possible answer: You can ask the team to help keep you up to date about the person's treatment, living situation, and so forth. In addition, the team may be able to help you get needed documentation about the person's disability and the impact of the person's mental illness on work. The team might have helpful information about the person's past efforts to work and may be able to help with the employment plan, for example, helping the person with laundry, opening a bank account for paychecks, obtaining photo identification, helping the person identify ways to develop friendships with co-workers, and so forth. These meetings are also an opportunity for you to stay informed about changes in the field of mental health treatment.*

## Rapid job search

### Key Learning Points

- Clients are not asked to participate in situational assessments, trial work experiences, job tryouts, job shadowing, traditional vocational evaluations, work adjustment programs or training programs that focus on good work behaviors prior to receiving help with job placement.
- The client and/or employment specialist begin making in-person contact with employers within 30 days of entry to the IPS program. (If a person isn't sure what type of work she would like, the contacts may be just to learn more about different jobs.)
- Rapid job search is not synonymous with rapid job placement.
- Rationale for this principle: When a person is meeting with a VR counselor for intake that is often the period of time when the person has peak motivation for going to work. Also, most people say that they would prefer to work directly on finding a competitive job, rather than participating in other activities first.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the rapid job search? What does that mean?

*Possible answer: For most people in IPS, this means that the employment specialist or client will have in-person contact with a hiring manager or business owner within 30 days of the client meeting with the employment specialist. A few people may not know what they want to do, and in those cases the employer contact may be to learn more about different types of jobs. Also, there may be a few people who aren't ready to search for jobs immediately, so the VR counselor and employment specialist would spend more time building a relationship with the person and hearing her thoughts about work.*

2. How can VR counselors work with a rapid job search?

*Possible answer: Rapid determination of eligibility and movement into job development service is an important part of rapid job search. It is helpful to work with the treatment team to gather medical and eligibility documentation at intake.*

3. How can VR counselors expedite the eligibility process if the person has more issues than mental illness?

*Possible answer: If a person has other issues, such as back problems or learning problems, make the person eligible using the information at hand. If you believe that you will need to obtain additional information*

*complete your VR assessment of needs and note these issues as needing ongoing assessment. This will allow you to proceed with plan development. If during the life of the case, the conditions present a problem then you can assist or intervene. In some states, counselors acknowledge the other disabling conditions and rule on them.*

4. What are the barriers to a rapid job search?

*Possible answer: One problem might be that the IPS team could begin job searching with the person before the plan is written. Because VR counselors should be involved in developing the plan, we recommend participating in IPS team meeting, or meeting with the IPS team at least monthly, so that you can know in advance about people who are getting ready for a referral to VR. Also, after you develop a relationship with the IPS team, you might even ask to be included in the first meeting with the employment specialist and client. Another option may be to have joint initial meetings or intake meetings with the employment specialist and the VR counselor.*

5. What happens if the person starts working before the counselor can open the case?

*Possible answer: Because people in the IPS program have severe mental illnesses, it is reasonable to assume that they will need ongoing support services to retain employment. The case can be opened if the counselor and the employment specialist determine that they will provide substantial services. In addition to meeting with the client, talk to the IPS team about the type of job supports they anticipate that the person may need.*

### **Systematic employer relationship building**

**Key Learning Points**

- Employment specialists are asked to make at least six in-person contacts with hiring managers or business owners each week, and to keep a record of these contacts.
- Employment specialists build relationships with employers by asking to schedule a 20-minute appointment to learn about the business, by coming back to learn about the employer's business and hiring preferences, and by maintaining employer relationships through in-person visits.
- Rationale: Employers prefer to work with employment specialists who understand their business needs.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you help the team with employer-relationship building?

*Possible answer: You might introduce the team to employers you know. Further, you might ask for reports on contact with employers made by the employment specialists as a part of the written monthly report to increase accountability for this process. And, you might talk to employment specialists about the relationships they are developing on a weekly basis.*

2. What can you do if a team is not producing many job starts?

*Possible answer: Consider talking to the IPS supervisor first to express your concern. Share specific information if you believe that employer contacts have not been sufficient. If the situation does not improve, ask to include the state/region IPS trainer and VR liaison in discussions with the supervisor.*

**Time-unlimited job supports**

Key Learning Points

- Supports should be individualized. Not everyone in the program should receive the same supports. And, just like other supported employment programs, IPS supported employment provides job supports. But after the job has been stable for about a year (on average), the client may transition from the IPS caseload and receive less intensive supports from the mental health practitioners.
- Rationale: Long-term job supports ensure that both the worker and employer (when clients self-disclose) have assistance until the person's job is stable. But in order to allow new people into the IPS program, employment specialists cannot be responsible for providing job supports forever. Further, many people do not need that level of service forever.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some examples? What do job supports look like?

*Possible answer: Supports can occur on the job but most often are around the job, including meetings or phone calls to discuss challenges at work. Sometimes it is as simple as encouragement, at other times it could involve problem solving, role-playing or discussing different approaches to interpersonal issues. Other examples are help learning a bus route, wake-up calls, meetings with family members to discuss the job, meetings with the person's supervisor to talk about the job, help asking for accommodations, help giving notice when a person wants to quit a job, and so forth.*

2. How can the mental health treatment team help with job supports?

*Possible answer: Job supports from the mental health team might include changes in medication to decrease side effects or to decrease symptoms, help with laundry or grooming, assistance reporting earnings to Social Security Administration, working with group home staff to make sure the person has a lunch to take to work, and so forth. In general, the mental health treatment team helps with activities that are not strictly vocational, so that the IPS team can focus on jobs.*

3. How are these different than natural supports?

*Possible answer: A natural support might be to find a buddy at work to help learn work rules and answer questions about job duties. Employment specialists can provide support by assisting clients in finding and using natural supports at work.*

4. How might VR counselors and employment specialists collaborate in planning individual job supports?

*Possible answer: Ideally, the VR counselor and employment specialist would meet together with the client to talk about possible job supports that are specific to the person's new job. They would also try to gather ideas from the mental health treatment team and, with permission, from the person's family. Ideas should be shared with the person served, and he or she will make the final decisions about the support plan.*

### Client preferences are honored

#### Key Learning Points

- The IPS principle of honoring client preferences is similar to VR's focus on informed choice. In IPS, client preferences for type of work, job schedule, job location, disclosure of a disability to employers, type of services provided, and so forth, are honored.
- Rationale for this principle: Using an individualized approach leads to success. People who find jobs that match their preferences stay at those jobs longer than those who do not find jobs related to their preferences.

#### Discussion Questions

1. One IPS principle is that people will receive employment services from a program that is integrated with their mental health services. But VR counselors need to let people choose where they will receive services. How can VR counselors honor both approaches?
2. *Possible answer: When informing clients of available employment*

*services, VR counselors should also inform clients that research has demonstrated that IPS is the only evidence-based practice for people with serious mental illness and that their chances of working are much higher if they have access to an IPS program. That being said, if there is a particular service that is not offered by the IPS team that the client would like, the VR counselor should go ahead and refer the person to that service and also document that the person made an informed choice to work with the alternate community rehabilitation provider. If a counselor primarily refers people from the mental health agency to an IPS program, it should not be a problem to refer one, or even a few people, to another service. Further, if an IPS team has been underperforming, a VR counselor might talk to the IPS supervisor to let him know that she will not be able to continue referring clients to the team if they are not able to increase successful outcomes. If your state/region has an IPS trainer and VR liaison to IPS supported employment, the VR counselor should involve them in this discussion and to help the team think about how they can improve their outcomes.*

**TIP 1: Normal Development**

Young adults are at a stage of developing self-identity. Young people want to try different experiences and may fluctuate in their desire to work or go to school. Employment/education specialists help them explore both options and continue to engage young people even during periods of uncertainty. Practitioners do not confuse ambivalence and developing an identity with lack of motivation. Peers with work or school experiences can help engage other young adults who are unsure about their goals.

**TIP 2: Strength-based Services**

Young adults typically see themselves as healthy and invincible rather than disabled. They are more likely to engage in services that focus on their strengths and opportunities rather than on diagnosis or disability. Employment/education specialists help people to consider short-term and long-term career goals. For some people, the focus is on educational goals that match their career goals. Employment/education specialists help young people explore career opportunities by asking questions such as:

- ◇ What would you like to be doing in two to three years?
- ◇ What is your dream job?
- ◇ Do you know of anyone that has gone to college, attended training programs or taken adult education courses?
- ◇ What are some of your interests and what do you enjoy?
- ◇ What are the things that we are working on now that you find helpful?
- ◇ What else could we be doing in that direction?

**TIP 3: Family Involvement**

With the young adult's permission, invite family members to some employment/education meetings. Family is defined by the young adult and can include friends, partners or other supporters. Family members contribute information about the individual's strengths, skills, hobbies and past education. Friends often have a strong influence in the person's life and share information from a young person's perspective. Ask the young adult, "Is there anyone else who has given you helpful ideas? Would you like to invite that person to a meeting?" Educate the family about career development. For example, explain that it is normal for young people to try different jobs. Some jobs may be short-term or brief, but are still learning experiences. Educate the family about how to support the young adult in his/her work and school experiences. Talk with the family about whether this approach challenges the family norms and culture.

**TIP 4: Community-based Services**

Young adults often shun traditional clinical settings. Create an environment that is more conducive to a younger population by displaying posters and materials that are marketed towards youth and equipping the space with computers. Consider creating separate waiting rooms for young people. Remember that community-based services are often more appealing to young adults than meeting in a clinic. Ask each person where she likes to spend time and offer to meet the young person there.



**TIP 5: Engagement and Use of Technology**

Many young adults prefer to communicate through texts, emails and instant messages rather than by phone. In addition, many job applications require online access. Social media, such as LinkedIn, provides employment connections that aid job searches. Review and revise agency policies about communicating with technology and ensure that computers used by the IPS program have access to job seeking sites.

**TIP 6: Benefits Counseling**

Securing disability benefits can lead to a path of long-term mental health treatment and poverty. Employment/education specialists help young adults consider jobs and careers as an alternative to disability benefits. Help young people consider the advantages and disadvantages of applying for disability benefits. Offer meetings with peers who can explain why they chose employment. Ultimately, honor each person's choice and continue to offer assistance with school and work.

**TIP 7: Work Exploration**

Young adults often have little or no employment history. Exploring the world of work through summer jobs, internships, AmeriCorps and additional schooling or certification programs is normal for young people. When young adults prefer help with permanent, competitive jobs, employment/education specialists follow their lead and do not require or encourage non-competitive positions. When a person expresses interest in an internship, the employment/education specialist helps to

explore available positions and focuses on learning whether the internship will help the person gain skills and experience related to her career goals. *Note: Internships are different than volunteer jobs available to any community member.*

**TIP 8: Language Matters**

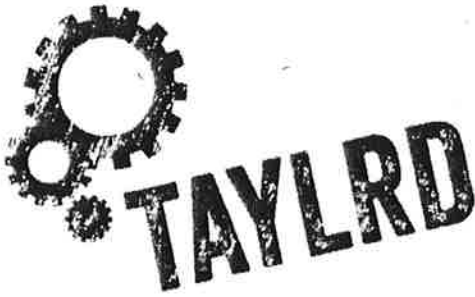
Young adults are more likely to avoid programs that use disability-related language. For example, names such as office for student disability services or rehabilitation services are sometimes discouraging. When connecting young people with these services, prepare the young person for the language and

perhaps modify the process. For example, a vocational rehabilitation counselor reports, "I don't require that young adults go through Vocational Rehabilitation's group orientation. Instead, I meet with each person individually to introduce the services that we provide. I attend the mental health treatment team meetings and I spend time getting to know each person so I can learn what their strengths and interests are in order to make a good job match." — *Molly Joubert, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Oregon*

[www.ipsworks.org](http://www.ipsworks.org)

\* IPS is an acronym for Individual Placement and Support, the evidence-based approach to supported employment for people with mental health challenges.

This document was developed by members of the IPS Learning Community, July 2015.



**Award Amount:**  
\$1 million per year for up to 5 years  
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**TAYLRD (Transition Age Youth Launching Realized Dreams)**, will improve access to treatment and support services for youth and young adults between 16 and 25 years old that either have, or are at risk of developing serious behavioral health (mental health and/or substance abuse) conditions; hereafter referred to as transition age youth (TAY). Kentucky has chosen two very distinct community mental health centers as the hubs for this project. **Pathways** is located in a ten county area of the Appalachian Region and **Seven Counties Services (SCS)** comprises seven counties in north central Kentucky.

TAYLRD will support the implementation of a TAY guided specialized array and continuum of behavioral health care which will include awareness efforts for community partners, youth, young adults and their families; outreach and engagement of youth and young adults; screening, assessment and referrals to appropriate evidence-supported treatments; and coordination of care. Kentucky will model this project after the nationally recognized Youth M.O.V.E. Oregon and the youth guided Drop-In Centers that have been developed through this program.

These Centers will include both formal and informal services and supports that interest young people such as:

- Peer support;
- Employment support and career planning,
- Education support,
- Medication management,
- Age specific, developmentally appropriate behavioral health services
- Coordination of care,
- Life skills and health care navigation.

Referrals to specialty behavioral health services through local providers will also be available. The Drop-In Centers will operate at a separate location from the general community mental health center, and will work closely with behavioral health services, particularly if crisis services are needed. A variety of evidence supported programming such as Motivational Interviewing, Mental Health First Aid, Individual Placement and Support Model of Supported Employment, the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, Person-centered Planning/Wraparound and Trauma-Informed Care will be provided within these sites to increase youth and young adults in successful outcomes.

### Key Goals and Activities

- (1) Enhance infrastructure to support implementation, expansion and sustainability of TAY supports and services across agencies (State level)
- (2) Promote public awareness of signs and symptoms for serious behavioral health concerns and developmentally appropriate responses (State and Local level)
- (3) Increase outreach and engagement to youth and young adults who either have or are at risk of developing behavioral health issues and their family members (State and Local level)
- (4) Improve access to a culturally and linguistically competent, youth and young adult driven array of effective clinical and supportive interventions (Local level).
- (5) Develop a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process to be integrated with CQI Committees with impact on transition age youth across partner agencies (State and Local level).

Supported with funds from SAMHSA grant #@ 5 SM061899-02

**Janice Johnston**  
Transition Age Youth Liaison  
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**KY Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID)/Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)**

**Early Interventions for First Episode Psychosis  
Helping Others Pursue Excellence (iHOPE)  
Summary – March 2017**

**KENTUCKY’S MISSION**

To significantly increase access to specialized evidence-based services and supports, including outreach services, to youth and young adults (15-30 years old) with, or at risk of, First Episode Psychosis and their families. Statewide implementation is expected within 6 years (by SFY 2020)

**BACKGROUND**

On January 17, 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law H.R. 3547, the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014.” This legislation provides funds to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support the development of early psychosis treatment programs across the United States. A 10% set-aside has been allocated to SAMHSA’s Mental Health Block Grant program to support this work.

**OVERVIEW**

Each year in Kentucky, approximately nine hundred 18-24 year olds with schizophrenia or other related illnesses are admitted to one of the state operated psychiatric facilities. With a peak onset occurring between 15-25 years of age, psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia can significantly disrupt a young person’s social, academic, and vocational development and initiate a course of accumulating disability. Young people who are experiencing first episode psychosis and their families, are often frightened and confused, and struggle to understand what is happening to them. (Heinssen, Goldstein and Azrin, 2014)

Research has shown that team based first episode psychosis (FEP) treatment programs that ensure rapid access to care, represent worthwhile treatment models for improving symptoms, reducing relapse episodes, and preventing deterioration and disability among individuals affected by psychosis (Heinssen, Goldstein and Azrin, 2014). These programs are already well established in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Several guidance documents have been released related to best practices for this population (see References at the end of this application for further information).

**DEFINITIONS**

**At Risk of First Episode Psychosis:** Individuals who may have the following new symptoms may be at a higher risk of First Episode Psychosis (this is not an inclusive list): significant drop in grades/job performance, suspiciousness/uneasiness with others, decline in self-care or personal hygiene, increased sensitivity to sights or sounds, mistaking noises for voices, increased isolation or withdrawal, disorganized thinking, difficulty thinking clearly, family history of psychotic disorders ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)).

**First Episode Psychosis:** A psychotic episode that occurs for the first time. Psychosis is defined as a loss of contact with reality. It typically involves hallucinations and/or delusions. For the person experiencing the psychotic episode, the hallucinations or delusions are very real to them.

**Psychotic Disorders:** Disorders, as identified in the DSM 5, that include psychosis within the listed categories of symptoms such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, schizophreniform disorder, delusional disorder, other specified schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorder, or unspecified schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorder.

## Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC)

**COORDINATED SPECIALTY CARE (CSC)** is a team-based model that is offered during or shortly after the first episode of psychosis and is effective for improving clinical and functional outcomes.

The **KEY COMPONENTS OF CSC** include the following and are aimed at bridging gaps between child, adolescent, and adult behavioral health programs and are highly coordinated with physical health care:

- Outreach services,
- Medication management with low doses of atypical antipsychotic medications,
- Peer support services,
- Case management,
- Cognitive behavioral therapy,
- Family education and support,
- Employment and education support, and
- Occupational therapy.

### **Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) (Oregon):**

- The first statewide effort in the United States to provide systematic early psychosis intervention for adolescents and young adults.
- There are established EASA programs or programs being implemented in licensed public mental health centers serving 32 of Oregon's 36 counties, reaching 94 percent of Oregon's population.
- They provide national technical assistance various states

### **IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE**

- The Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) is providing consultation and technical assistance around the implementation of Coordinated Specialty Care. Components of Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenic Episode (RAISE) and OnTrack NY are also being utilized.
- Round 1 CMHCs (Mountain and Cumberland River) completed six months of planning starting July 2015. Service provision began in January 2016.
- Round 2 CMHCs (Four Rivers and LifeSkills) as well as TAYLRD sites (Pathways and Seven Counties Services) began implementation in July 2016. Service provision began in January 2017.
- Round 3 CMHCs (Bluegrass and Communicare) will begin implementation in July 2017 and service provision in January 2018.
- Dr. Allen Brenzel provides a Prescriber training to all CMHCs implementing iHOPE as needed.
- iHOPE Programs are receiving face to face training and phone consultation from EASA on an ongoing basis. Several programs have travelled to Oregon to receive additional training as well as visit several EASA Programs.
- A 2 day Structured Interview for Psychosis-Risk Syndromes Training (SIPS) Training was held in June 2016 for agencies across the state. This training was led by Dr. Barbara Walsh from Yale University.
- A 3 day Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis Training was held in August 2016. The lead trainers were Dr. Doug Turkington from Newcastle University, United Kingdom and Dr. Jess Wright, University of Louisville. Follow up coaching and training sessions are being coordinated over the next year.
- All regions that do not have an iHOPE Program are required by CMHC Contract to identify an Early Intervention for First Episode Psychosis Key Contact for children's services and one for adult services.

### **MORE INFORMATION:**

[Janice.johnston@ky.gov](mailto:Janice.johnston@ky.gov) or 502.782.6170

## **Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) - Overview**

### **Funding Source:**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA),  
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)

**Funding Amount:** \$1.8 million per year for up to 3 years

**Purpose of Grant:** To enhance the infrastructure of treatment service systems to increase capacity and provide accessible, effective, comprehensive, coordinated/integrated, and evidence-based treatment services, permanent supportive housing, peer supports, and other recovery support services to:

- Individuals who experience chronic homelessness and have substance use disorders, serious mental illnesses (SMI), or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders; and/or
- Veterans who experience homelessness/chronic homelessness and have substance use disorders, SMI, or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.

This grant seeks to:

- 1) improve statewide strategies to address planning and coordination of behavioral health and primary care services, and permanent housing to reduce homelessness;
- 2) increase the number of individuals, residing in permanent housing, who receive behavioral health treatment and recovery support services; and
- 3) increase the number of individuals placed in permanent housing and enrolled in Medicaid and other mainstream benefits (e.g., SSI/SSDI, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]).

Additional requirements:

The grant requires the establishment of an Interagency Council on Homelessness, which already exists in Kentucky, along with a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, and two updates of the plan. Grant funds may be used for any enhancement required of the council or plan.

Service provision:

- Outreach and other engagement strategies to enroll clients;
- Direct treatment for the population(s) of focus;
- Engage and enroll the population(s) of focus into Medicaid and other mainstream benefit programs (e.g., SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, etc.);
- Trauma-informed services to include an emphasis on implementation of trauma-informed approaches;
- Hire a supported employment specialist to enhance state and community capacity to provide and expand evidence-based supported employment programs for the population(s) of focus;
- Hire a full-time SOAR Specialist to increase access to the disability income benefit programs for the population(s) of focus;
- Hire peer recovery support specialist(s) to deliver peer recovery support services designed and delivered by people with lived experience in recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorders;
- Access to recovery support services designed to improve access to and retention in services and to continue treatment gains;
- Placement in permanent housing for enrolled individuals.

**Regions to receive funding:**

The largest populations of chronically homeless persons and homeless veterans are in the Louisville, Lexington, and Northern Kentucky areas. Concentrating on these areas, funds will be contracted to:

- Seven Counties Services;
- Bluegrass;
- Northkey; and
- The Welcome House of Northern KY.

Providers will provide the treatment services needed, evidenced-based practices identified in the RFA, and have the capacity to house those served. The Welcome House of Northern KY has an existing SOAR Outreach Team that can provide the required SOAR services.

**Evidence Based Practices:**

- Housing First, for individuals who are homeless and have severe psychiatric disabilities and co-occurring substance use disorders. The program addresses homeless individuals' needs from a participant perspective, encouraging them to define their own needs and goals, and provides immediate housing (in the form of apartments located in scattered sites) without any prerequisites for psychiatric treatment or sobriety.
- Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT);
- Assertive Community Treatment, a service delivery model in which a team of professionals assumes direct responsibility for providing the specific mix of services needed by a participant, for as long as they are needed. The team ensures that services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is a program designed to increase access to SSI/SSDI for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

**Goals:**

- 1) Improve the Kentucky Homeless services system by updating the state's plan to end homelessness and thereby improve statewide strategies to address planning and coordination of behavioral health, primary care services, and access to permanent housing to reduce homelessness.
- 2) Increase the number of persons screened and referred to behavioral health care from Kentucky metropolitan area clinics, Veterans services organizations, and health care providers who are homeless and have SMI or SUD or both.
- 3) Increase the number of individuals residing in permanent housing, who receive behavioral health treatment and recovery support services by establishing additional Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams with supportive services focused upon the homeless gaining housing stability.
- 4) Increase the number of individuals placed in permanent housing who are enrolled in Medicaid and other mainstream benefits which support housing and income stability to prevent homelessness.
- 5) Evaluate the effectiveness of CABHI Kentucky using culturally competent and culturally sensitive procedures by conducting process and outcome measurements which provide ongoing guidance to the CABHI Kentucky Steering Committee so course corrections can be made as necessary.

**Project Contacts:** Thomas B. Beatty, Adam Trosper



## CABHI Grant Fact Page

(Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals)

### Funding:

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

CSAT (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment)

CMHS (Center for Mental Health Services)

### Purpose:

Provide support for people to have permanent housing.

### Who do we serve?

1. People who experience chronic homelessness, AND have a substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, or both;

OR

2. Are veterans experiencing homelessness OR chronic homelessness AND have a substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, or both.

### What is "chronic homelessness"?

1. Being homeless (on the street or in an emergency shelter) for a year or more;

OR

2. Being homeless on and off for 3 years or more.

### What can I expect?

You can expect to receive services based on your individual needs, such as:

- Help to get records and documentation you may need to get housing
- Help to complete applications for housing and vouchers
- Help to find an apartment that meets your budget and needs
- Help to find a job if you want
- Help to apply for benefits if you want
- People who are also in recovery who can provide support to you
- Treatment to meet your individual needs
- To work with people who are understanding, respectful and supportive

## **What Family Advocates to Do to Promote IPS Supported Employment and NAMI**

**December 18, 2015**

- Bring community awareness and education to reduce stigma
- Encourage clients and family members to attend NAMI
- Educate NAMI members and community about IPS
- Encourage NAMI members to become a Family Advocate
- NAMI affiliates need to invite employment specialists to speak at a meeting to explain the program plus benefits to clients and employers
- Promote IPS on affiliate social media
- Provide IPS handouts at NAMI displays
- Work with IPS supervisor to write a news article for local papers distributed within county health center areas
- Participate with local Chamber of Commerce – networking with local employers
- Work with IPS team to submit success stories to NAMI KY for newsletters –
- Family advocates try to meet with IPS Employment Specialist supervisor regularly to discuss how to better collaborate
- Educate IPS staff on NAMI and how to better promote NAMI
- Presentations at local mental health agencies
- NAMI family advocate can promote public and community awareness of mental illness like other illnesses for greater acceptance



# IPS SUPERVISOR



## **IPS Trainer’s Guide to “IPS Supported Employment: A Practical Guide.”**

This guide is intended to help trainers use the book as a training tool. For example, a trainer could ask the IPS supported employment team to read a chapter and then meet with the team to lead a discussion and engage the group in activities related to the chapter. Trainers may choose the discussion questions and activities that seem most relevant for a particular site.

IPS supervisors may also use this guide to help their team learn more about the evidence-based practice of IPS supported employment.

## Chapter 1: Overview of IPS Supported Employment

### Key Learning Points:

- Research evidence supports the IPS approach. Research shows that IPS principles and the IPS fidelity scale lead to better employment outcomes.
- Practitioners are hopeful.
- Services are individualized.
- IPS uses seven guiding principles:
  - Zero exclusion criteria
  - Integration of employment and mental health services
  - Competitive employment is the goal
  - Benefits counseling is offered to all
  - Rapid job search
  - Follow-along services are continuous
  - Client preferences are important

### Discussion Questions:

#### 1. What is an evidence-based practice?

*Possible answers: Evidence-based practices help practitioners apply scientific evidence to their work. There have been multiple research studies that have consistently demonstrated superior outcomes for IPS. Programs are not designed based on the things that practitioners and administrators hope will result in good outcomes.*

*Further, the fidelity scale and seven guiding principles define the practice so that a program in Chicago will look like a program in Anchorage. This is important so that both programs will achieve good outcomes.*

*The outcome that IPS achieves is higher rates of competitive employment for adults with severe mental illness.*

#### 2. How is it possible to individualize services while providing the evidence-based practice of IPS supported employment?

*Possible answers; Job finding, job retention and career development are all based upon each person's preferences for type of job and type of supports provided. Further, practitioners think about each person's work or education history, current symptoms, strengths and supports while helping the person develop an individualized plan. When looking at job search, job support and career development plans, it should be possible for practitioners to identify their clients even if the names are removed.*

3. IPS supported employment is open to any person who wishes to work. Why is that?

*Possible answer: During the research studies, many people were able to work in spite of substance use problems, symptoms of mental illness, irregular attendance at mental health appointments, inconsistent use of medications, poor presentation (physical or social), and other factors. A desire to work appears to help people overcome even significant barriers to employment.*

4. Can anyone think of a time when a client achieved a goal that no one on the team thought was possible?

5. How does work fit into recovery?

*Possible answer: Many people report that work was a critical component of their recovery because it helped them to feel independent, feel better about themselves, and feel connected to their communities and other people. Some people also said that it was important to have something to do during the day and somewhere to go. Others like feeling productive.*

6. Do clients at the agency use any non-competitive work programs (either programs at the agency or in the community)? How do those programs affect the principle about competitive jobs? Or the principle about rapid job search?

Activities: **Activity One:**

Have the group break into pairs. Give the pairs 5 or 7 minutes to talk about their very first job. When the large group gets together again, ask if a few people are willing to share a description of their first job. Would they still want to be doing this job? Why does the group think it is important to focus on client preferences? To help people with career development?

**Activity Two:**

Break the group up into small teams of 3 or 4 people. Ask them to discuss the ways that mental health and employment services are currently integrated at their agency. Is there room for improvement? Ask the group to design some action steps to improve integration.

**Activity Three:**

How does the IPS team currently collaborate with VR? Do they have regular, scheduled meetings to discuss people served by both agencies? Could there be any disadvantages to doing that? What would be the advantages be?

## Chapter 2: Skills for Engaging People

### Chapter Topics:

- Active listening skills:
  - o Open-ended questions
  - o Reflections
  - o Summary statements
  - o Expressing empathy
- Other interviewing skills
  - o Avoiding advice
  - o Emphasizing strengths
  - o Avoiding arguments
- Maintaining focus
- Role of employment specialist versus mental health practitioner

### Discussion Questions:

1. How is the role of the employment specialist different from that of a mental health practitioner? For example, should the employment specialist ever talk about a person's substance use?

*Possible answer: Employment specialists do talk about substance use. For example, they help people plan for a job so that the person is very likely to go to work sober. However, they would not suggest strategies to reduce or avoid substance use that the mental health team has not already discussed with the person. The same is true for symptoms. If a person is having difficulty managing symptoms at work, the employment specialist might ask a question like, "How have you managed hearing voices in the past?" but would also go to the mental health team to let them know about the hallucinations and to let them make treatment suggestions to the person.*

2. "Maintaining focus" means that the employment specialist and client focus appointments on the person's employment goals. A little casual conversation can be okay if it helps develop the relationship, but can you think of examples of "losing focus?"

*Possible answer: A general rule of thumb is that appointments are not meant to be helpful to employment specialists. So, an example of losing focus might be asking a client if it is okay to stop in a store at the mall to return a purchase. Another example could be talking about the employment specialist's plans for the weekend (other than a brief answer if asked by the client).*

3. What is meant by “avoiding arguments”?

*Possible answer: In this context, an “argument” doesn’t necessarily refer to a verbal altercation. It may mean that someone quietly disagrees with the employment specialist. Or, it may mean that a person verbally agrees, but feels ambivalent about the plan. “Arguments” tend to happen when employment specialists push for the strategy that they think is best. Instead, it is better to ask the person about his reasons for wanting to do things a different way. The employment specialist might also ask if s/he could share some information about ways that other people have approached a particular problem. Ultimately, the employment specialist should follow the person’s lead. IPS supported employment tries to empower people by valuing their approaches and individual way of doing things. If time goes by and the person seems to be having trouble reaching his or her goals, the employment specialist can ask again if the person would be interested in talking about a different approach.*

4. What is meant by “avoiding advice?” Isn’t that the point of having an employment specialist—to get good advice?

*Possible answer: Sharing information about jobs is fine, but too much advice can be overbearing or annoying. For example, instead of telling a person how to solve a problem, an employment specialist could ask the person what various solutions to the problem might be, and what the advantages and disadvantages to each solution might be. This will also help the person feel less dependent on the employment specialist over time.*

Activities: **Activity One**

Review open-ended questions with the group. Demonstrate open-ended questions by talking to someone in the group for a minute about his or her plans for the day. “What activities do you have planned in the community?” “Which things on your schedule are you looking forward to doing?” “What are your plans for lunch?” Ask the group to split into pairs. One person should be the “interviewer” who tries to learn about the other person’s work history by using only open-ended questions. After 5 minutes, ask the pairs to switch roles. When the large group gets back together, ask if they were able to avoid close-ended questions. Ask for examples of open-ended questions that they used.

**Activity Two**

Review reflections with the group. Demonstrate a reflection by asking someone in the group to tell you why they enjoy their

current job. Ask the group to split into pairs. One person should be the “interviewer” who will begin by asking the person how his or her day went yesterday. The interviewer will try to respond with as many reflections as possible. After a few minutes, ask the pairs to switch roles. When the large group gets back together, ask if interviewers were able to come up with reflections. Ask for examples of reflections used by the interviewers.

### **Activity Three**

Explain summary statements. For example, after a person speaks for a while; the practitioner can reflect back a short summary of the person’s key points. You can read the following example:

Employer: I need to hire a delivery person who can lift at least 50 pounds and has a valid driver’s license with no more than two points.

Specialist: What else?

Employer: The person has to be able to find his or her way around the area because he probably won’t go to the same address twice. And he needs to be personable—to get along with the customers and try to make them happy.

Specialist: What type of work experience should the person have?

Employer: Delivery experience is not required. If the person has the other requirements, I’m willing to be flexible about specific types of experience.

Specialist: So you need a person who can lift 50 pounds, has fewer than 2 points on his license, can find his way around the area and is focused on good customer service. (*Summary statement*) Is that right?

Now ask the group to break into pairs again. Have one person take the role of employer while the other takes the role of employment specialist. Ask the employer to begin describing the type of person that s/he needs to hire. The task of the specialist is to ask open-ended questions, use reflections, and when s/he believes the employer is done, finish with a summary statement. Ask the pairs to switch roles when they have finished one role-play.



## Chapter 3: Developing the Employment Plan

- Chapter Topics:
1. Creating a Career Profile (formerly “Vocational Profile”):
    - o Information from multiple sources
    - o Process of building a relationship versus filling in a form
    - o Conducted in the community
  - Discussing Disclosure
  - Including the Family
  - Maintaining Engagement
  - Work-based Assessment

- Discussion Questions:
1. What are some of the different sources of information that can be used to complete the career profile?

*Possible answer: Mental health team, clinical records, family members (with permission), previous employers (with permission), criminal background checks on Internet (with permission), and the person who is receiving services.*

2. Why should an employment specialist ask for permission to obtain information from various sources (see above)?

*Possible answer: To gain a deeper understanding of the person’s strengths, experiences and possible problems. Also so that you don’t have to question the person to death in order to finish the profile.*

3. How can you work on the career profile without making it feel like another form to complete?

*Possible answer: Don’t bring the form to each appointment. Rather spend time talking to the person about his or her employment, education, military and criminal history...and add to the form back at the office. Focus on giving the person eye contact, asking follow-up questions and using interview skills from Chapter 3. Use a conversational tone. You might ask if you can take a few notes, but try to focus on the person.*

4. What are some possible advantages to involving families in the employment plan?

*Possible answer: Families can provide good information about the person and also can encourage the person in his or her employment goals by celebrating successes. Some families may have job leads or may be able to help with things like clothes and transportation. If family members don’t agree with the employment plan, then it is crucial to meet with them so that you can ask for their support, or ask them to avoid doing things that*

*might obstruct the plan.*

5. What things do employment specialists need to be aware of when working with families?

*Possible answer; Ultimately the specialist must follow her client's preferences, even when she thinks that the family has helpful suggestions. That's one reason to make sure that the client is involved in all family meetings. Also, the employment plan should not become a source of conflict for the family. So, the specialist should not ask the family to nag the person to go to appointments or follow-through on other activities. Some families may need information about how work will affect the person's benefits.*

Activities: **Activity One:**

Ask the group to brainstorm a list of strategies to engage people who are missing appointments. For example, visiting the person in the community. Then ask the group to order the list from most effective to least effective.

**Activity Two:**

Ask the group to brainstorm a list of the type of information that they need to know about a person before helping that person find a job. For example, the person's job preferences and work history. Then ask the IPS team if there is anything they would like to add to the career profile used by the team.

**Activity Three:**

Ask the group to break into pairs. Ask one person to be the employment specialist and the other to be the client. Tell the employment specialist that s/he should help the person think through the pros and cons of using disclosure. Stress that the pros and cons should come from the client's perspective. Bring the group back together. Ask the clients if they could tell what their specialist's opinions about disclosure were (not preferable). Ask the specialists what strategies they used to help clients think about the possible pros and cons.

## Chapter 4: Job Development

### Key Learning Points:

- Build relationships with employers using multiple visits
  - o First visit: ask for an appointment
  - o Second visit: learn about the employer
  - o Third visit: might be to talk about a job seeker who is a good match for the employer or to continue building a relationship with the employer
- Follow up on all applications and interviews
- Helping people with criminal histories
  - o Help people meet face-to-face with employers
  - o Help people practice how to talk about criminal history and efforts to move forward.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What type of research do you do, or could you do, to learn about an employer before going into the field? Why do it?

*Possible answer: Extensive research is not necessary and you may not do it for each and every employer. However, you should at least know the good or service that the business produces. Further, it helps to know the mission of the business. And if you can quickly find out something about changes in the business from a website, that can help, as well. Doing this shows employers that you are taking the partnership seriously. Just like a job seeker, you are working hard to earn their trust in you.*

2. What are some strategies that people can use to follow up on job applications?

*Possible answer: Going to the business in person is an excellent strategy. The job seeker (with or without the employment specialist present) can ask to speak to the manager and say something like, "My name is John Smith. I wanted to let you know that I applied online last Monday for a counter position. I've worked for another car rental business in the past and really enjoy dealing with the public." Phone calls are another option, though probably less effective.*

3. What are some of the critical steps to helping a person with a criminal history find employment?

*Possible answer: It's crucial for the person to make face-to-face contact with the employer. It's also important for the person to practice what s/he will say about his/her criminal history: 1) to be upfront about past convictions or charges, 2) to take responsibility, 3) to explain how his/her life has changed, and 4) to describe the reasons that s/he would be a good employee.*

*References are also helpful.*

Activities:

**Activity One:**

Talk to the group about the third employer visit. If they have someone who would be a good match for the visit, how would they proceed with the employer? If they didn't have someone who would be a good match, how could they manage to keep making face-to-face contact with the employer? Have them brainstorm a list. For example:

- o introduce another employment specialist who does have a person who would be a good match
- o ask for a tour
- o ask employer to provide mock interview for a person who has been out of workforce for awhile
- o ask to meet next level of management or owner
- o stop by with information about the IPS program, for example, share good news about an increase in the number of people finding jobs
- o ask employer to visit steering committee to share business perspective
- o stop by with thank-you note
- o be a customer (go there for lunch)
- o stop by to say "hello" and ask how things are going

**Activity Two:**

Prior to the meeting, ask employment specialists to bring their employer contact logs for the past week. Talk to the employment specialists about the employer contacts that they made the previous week. What situations did they run into? How might they follow up on employer visits? Are they following up on employer visits on a routine basis? Ask them to look at their logs for last week—how many visits were return visits?

**Activity Three:**

Go out together in pairs and practice making first and second employer visits (1.5 to 2 hours). Be sure to include the supervisor in this activity. Meet back again at the agency as a group. Let each pair talk about their experiences. Share ideas for how to follow up with employers. Demonstrate how to fill in logs. Ask which contacts go on the logs (contact with hiring person to make an appointment or learn about the business) and which don't (no contact with person who is involved in hiring).

## Chapter 5: Job Supports and Career Development

### Key Learning Points:

- Job support plans are based upon information from the person's work history, strengths, supports, symptoms, the job obtained, preferences and other factors.
- Using the information above, employment specialists think about the person's strengths and also try to anticipate problems when designing job supports with their clients.
- Career development (help with job changes, school and technical training) is part of providing job supports.
- When a person loses a job, for whatever reason, this is viewed as a positive learning experience.
- Clients transfer off the IPS caseload after working steadily and reporting satisfaction with their jobs. On average, transfers to not occur before one year of working.
- Supported education is part of IPS supported employment and should be provided by a member of the IPS team.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the purpose of written job support plans?  
*Possible answer: Writing the plan down helps both the client and employment specialist think about supports that would be helpful in advance of the person needing supports. Further, it helps the client know what to expect and also provides an opportunity for the client to express his preferences about the type of supports he will receive. The written plan also let's the person know that follow-along supports are important—not just a “check-in service” as Nicole stated in her quote.*

2. How would you know if a follow-along plan was individualized?  
*Possible answer: One way would be to look at the person's career profile (or talk to the person) to see if the supports were based upon the person's strengths, needs, preferences and work/education history. If the plan involves getting together with the person to talk about the job, the plan should identify the purpose of the meetings. For example, if a person has had difficulty getting along with co-workers in the past, the meetings could be to talk about co-workers and*

*brainstorm ways to have good working relationships. If the career profile noted that a person lost his last job because he was often late for work, the follow-along plan might include wake-up calls or other supports to help the person get to work on time. Even if the name of the person was removed from the plan, the employment specialist should be able to identify whose plan it is because each plan should be tailored a little differently.*

3. What should an employment specialist do if one of her clients is fired for calling off work too many times?

*Possible answer: He should think about the job with the client, mental health team and, with permission, family members. Perhaps the job was too many hours each week or too many days? Perhaps the person was calling off because she didn't really like the job or because it was an early morning job and she wasn't an early morning person? Could different job supports have made the difference? The employment specialist and client look for lessons learned so that they can begin looking for another competitive job that will be a better match for the person. The IPS team and mental health team also try to learn from the experience by trying to think about what they might do differently next time to help the person with a better job match or better job supports. Then the IPS specialist helps the person look for a job right away without placing any conditions on the job search.*

4. What is the difference between an education or training program that is designed for people with disabilities or one that is open to the public? Which type do IPS programs utilize?

*Possible answer: IPS programs use local community colleges, four-year colleges, GED programs, and technical training programs that are available to people in the community who may, or may not, have a disability. IPS programs don't use vocational training programs such as work adjustment programs or programs that are only available for people with disabilities.*

## Chapter 6: Helping People Who Have Co-Occurring Disorders

### Key Learning Points:

- IPS programs welcome people who want to work, whether or not they have problems with substance use disorders. Clients are not asked to achieve sobriety or engage in treatment before receiving assistance with competitive jobs or school.
- People with substance use disorders can be just as successful at work as those who don't have a co-occurring disorder.
- It is important for specialists to include information about the substance use in the career profile. For example, time of day that the person tends to use, type of substances, things that can lead to increased use, whether or not the person is working on recovery from substance abuse...
- Employment specialists need to find jobs that support recovery. For example, jobs where alcohol is not sold or served. Some people may need to avoid places that sell over-the-counter medication or places where co-workers use substances.
- The mental health team and employment specialist should help the person develop a money management plan.
- It's important for the mental health team and employment specialist to work together closely.
- Practitioners should emphasize strengths and foster hope to help the person with his or her recovery.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What should an employment specialist do if one of her clients loses a job due to alcohol use?

*In IPS, each job is viewed as a positive learning experience. So, in this situation, the specialist may learn that her client needs a job during a different time of day or may need help budgeting his paycheck. Her client might also decide that when he gets another job he will try to cut back on drinking or to avoid drinking before work. But the employment specialist wouldn't put any conditions on helping the person with the next job. For example, she wouldn't tell the person that she would only help with another job search if he agreed to go to treatment groups or if he signed a contract saying he would not drink before work. Instead, she would try to help the person think about another job and strategies to get to work sober. She might also talk to the mental health team about ideas for helping the person go to work sober. Finally, she would also help the person begin looking for another job right away.*

2. What should the team do if a person gets a job and then uses the extra income to increase his substance use?

*The IPS team needs to remember that they can't make choices for the person and that some people learn best by experience. For example, if the person comes close to losing her job, she may decide to cut back on using substances. Or if the person loses the job, she may decide to accept help managing her paycheck the next time that she gets a job. One thing the employment specialist can do is talk to the mental health team to see if they know of any ideas to help the person. The employment specialist can also remind the person of the reasons that she wanted to work and the positive changes that work has made in her life. The specialist can provide information that the person might be in danger of losing her job, but must provide this information in a non-judgmental manner.*

3. Won't employment specialists burn bridges with employers if they help people get jobs in spite of substance use problems?

*Employers hire people who don't work out all of the time, including people who don't work out because of problems with drugs or alcohol. An occasional employer may become angry, but most will understand that it isn't possible to predict with 100% accuracy how a person will perform on the job. What is important to most employers is that the employment specialist is available to provide support and assistance if there is trouble. That means that employment specialists should stay in regular contact with employers once they have permission from their client. The contact might just consist of short monthly phone calls or visits, but employers will appreciate the effort and be more likely to work with the program again even if one worker isn't successful. Finally, if a person is fired for any reason including substance related problems, the employment specialist should make contact with the employer right away to express his regret.*

Activities: **Activity One**

Ask the team to share stories about people who have been able to work in spite of substance use problems. For each story, what were the person's strengths? How was the person able to work in spite of ongoing substance abuse problems? Did work have a positive impact on the person's life?

**Activity Two**

Ask employment specialists to make a list of jobs in the community that do not support recovery. For example, places



that sell alcohol, workplaces that are known to have a lot of substance abuse, areas of town where drugs are commonly sold on street corners...

### **Activity Three**

Share the following vignette with the team and ask them to answer the questions that follow:

An employment specialist (Esteban) brought up one of his clients in a team meeting. Apparently, his client (Beth) had been working as a stocker in a retail store for about a year, when her mother died unexpectedly. Within two months, Beth left work early on three occasions. Beth's supervisor called Esteban and the three of them got together to talk about the problem. During the meeting, Beth admitted that she left work because she was high. The employer regretfully fired Beth because of a drug-free workplace policy.

Esteban asked Beth to agree that she would go to AA groups and refrain from using drugs and alcohol if he helped her look for another job. She agreed. They were able to arrange an interview scheduled on a Monday morning, but over the weekend, Beth was hospitalized for psychiatric symptoms that seemed to have been precipitated by drug use.

- ⇒ How might Esteban (employment specialist) be feeling at this point? *(Possible answers: Frustrated? Angry? Disappointed?)*
- ⇒ How might Beth be feeling? *(Possible answers: Ashamed about her drug use? Worried that she disappointed her employment specialist? Disappointed about missing the interview?)*
- ⇒ What needs to happen for things to begin moving forward again? *(Possible answers: It might help for Esteban to talk to his team or supervisor about his feelings. In order for things to move forward, he needs to realize that relapses are a common part of recovery from drugs and alcohol. It's important for him to help Beth overcome her shame so that she can focus on next steps. For instance, he could remind her that it was great that she got the interview and that she's been a good worker in the past. He should also offer to help her resume her job search right away and he could talk to the mental health team to see if they have any ideas to help her gain some control over her drug use.)*
- ⇒ What could Esteban have done differently after Beth lost her job? *(Possible answers: He should have refrained from*

*placing conditions on the job search. Instead, he could have asked the mental health team to help Beth think of a plan to deal with her drug problem since that is really outside the scope of his expertise as an employment specialist. The conditions were also problematic because he was leading Beth to agree to things that might not have been her goals.)*

## Chapter 7: Collaboration with Other Professionals

### Key Learning Points:

- The mental health treatment team refers to a group of practitioners with various training and roles. For example, case managers, counselors, nurses, employment specialists, housing specialists, therapists, substance abuse specialists, medication prescribers, or others.
- These teams ensure that client services are integrated.
- In IPS supported employment, employment specialists attend these team meetings at least once each week to discuss clients. They participate throughout the meeting to talk about people on their caseload, ask for help from the team, and also to suggest work for clients who have not yet been referred to IPS.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important that employment services and mental health services are integrated?  
*Possible answer: So that every member of the team is supporting the goals that are most important to that client. For example, if a client wanted to work, it would be important for each team member to share hopeful messages about work and to be talking to the person about his work goals. Further, treatment decisions should be made in accordance with the work goal—for example, the medication prescriber might try to change medications so that the person would feel less drowsy on the job. Another example might be a person who had a goal of seeing her children as much as possible. The employment specialist might help this person find a job that would not conflict with her visiting schedule with her children.*
2. What is meant by “shared-decision making”?  
*Possible answer: Practitioners on the team share observations and opinions when discussing a client situation and attempt to come to an agreement regarding options to discuss with the client. No one on the team has the final decision-making authority other than the client. An exception would be a decision related to a person’s safety or welfare, and in that case the team leader or psychiatrist might make a decision about how to proceed.*

3. How do members of the IPS team connect with medication prescribers? Is this sufficient? Could employment specialists share information with medication prescribers in other, more effective, ways?
  - How do team members currently participate in mental health treatment team meetings?
    1. Do employment specialists participate in the entire meeting?
    2. Do mental health practitioners help with the employment plan? For example, do they ever help with job supports?
    3. Can employment specialists bring up anyone they wish to discuss?
    4. Does the team celebrate success when a person becomes employed, finishes a quarter of classes, etc?

Activities: **Activity 1**

Discuss the following scenario with the team: A client (Clara) has been successfully driving a taxi for 9 months, though recently reported to her employment specialist that she has been having visual hallucinations, including seeing houses in the middle of the road. She does not want to talk to her employer about the problem because she is worried that he will fire her if he knows that she has a mental illness. Her employment specialist has not had contact with the employer.

- What should the employment specialist do after hearing about the hallucinations? *(Answer: Immediately alert the mental health team, including the mental health supervisor, because this is a safety issue. The specialist should not wait for the next team meeting.)*
- What is the role of the employment specialist versus other team members, such as a case manager or counselor? *(The employment specialist should work in conjunction with the mental health team. They might meet together with Clara to suggest that she asks for time off work until her symptoms abate. The mental health practitioners could help Clara monitor her symptoms and decide when it is safe to go back to work. The employment specialist can help Clara think of ways to ask for time off work without sharing personal information about hallucinations.)*

**Activity 2:** Ask the IPS team members to provide some examples of times that mental health and employment services

were well integrated for a person on the caseload.

Also, ask for examples of times when services were not well integrated. What could they do differently next time? Is there something the supervisor could do to help if a similar situation comes up again?

Tips for Employer Relationship Building:  
A Guide for IPS Supported Employment Supervisors



*Developed by:*

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June 2012

## Introduction

This booklet is intended to augment job development training for IPS supported employment programs. The premise of the training is that employment specialists should take time to learn about the needs and preferences of employers, before asking employers to meet a job candidate. In this approach, the employer is viewed as a customer. So, although the employment specialist may go to an employer with a job candidate in mind, he might ultimately decide that the candidate is not a good fit for that particular employer.

Another important component of this type of job development is that the employment specialist makes multiple in-person visits to develop relationships with employers. Just as many people find jobs through networking, the employment specialist develops a network of employers that she can share with her clients. Further, the repeat visits demonstrate that the employment specialist is dependable and interested in a long-term relationship.

So, the first step would be for the specialist to go in-person to introduce herself to an employer and ask for a short appointment to come back to learn about the business. When she returns for the appointment, she'll focus on learning about the business and the employer's view about the type of candidates that he would like to meet. She will refrain from asking about job openings or conducting a presentation about her program. She will likely follow-up by sending or dropping off a thank-you note for the employer's time, and then would take time to reflect on the stage of the relationship. Is it time to begin discussing a candidate? Does the relationship need further work? Does it appear that she and the employer will be able to provide something useful for each other going forward? An employment specialist may decide to maintain the relationship even if the employer isn't hiring, or even if she doesn't have the right candidate for the job at that moment.

## Introductory Statement for Job Development (“First Cup”)

- Your name
- Your employer
- What you do
- The purpose of your visit

“Hello. My name is Buzz Aldrin and I work for Job Opportunities here in town. I’m an employment specialist and my job is to introduce employers to people who want to work, and have the skills those employers need. Part of my job is to learn about local businesses. I am not necessarily looking for a job for someone today, but would like to schedule a 20-minute appointment with you to learn more about what you do here and the types of people who tend to be successful here.”

“Hello. My name is Chelsea Clinton and I work for Mental Health Agency here in town. I’m an employment specialist and I help people who have been out of work to re-engage in the workforce. Part of my job is to learn from employers about their businesses and hiring preferences. Would it be possible to schedule a 15-minute appointment to come back and learn more about \_\_\_\_\_ (name of business)?”

Your introductory statement:

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## Sample Questions to Learn about an Employer's Needs

### Questions about the business:

- Why do you like working for \_\_\_\_\_ (name of business)?
- What are your goals for (the business or department)?
- What is your vision for your company over the next year?
- What sets your company apart from others?
- As the manager for \_\_\_\_\_, what are you most proud of?
- Is there a time of year when your business is busiest?

### Questions about the right job candidates:

- What type of person tends to be successful here?
- What qualities do you look for when you are interviewing job candidates?
- What are some of your hiring headaches?
- Describe the qualities of a person who would love to work here?

### Questions about positions:

- Please describe your workforce.
- I see that you have \_\_\_\_\_ positions. What other positions do you have that I may not know about?
- What is a typical day like for a \_\_\_\_\_ (name of position)?
- What are some of the challenges that people have had in these positions?
- Do some positions have more turnover than others?

### Questions about the hiring process:

- What is your hiring process?
- So, people should start with an online application. But you mentioned that you need people who are self-starters with outgoing personalities. If you had a friend who matched that description how would you advise your friend to go about applying for work here?
- How have you found good job candidates in the past?

### Ineffective questions:

- Are you hiring?
- Do you anticipate job openings in the future?
- Are you laying off?
- What do you do here?
- Do you hire people with criminal histories?
- Do you hire people who have substance use disorders?
- What do you do here? (Learn this about the company before the appointment.)

## Questions You Have Found Helpful

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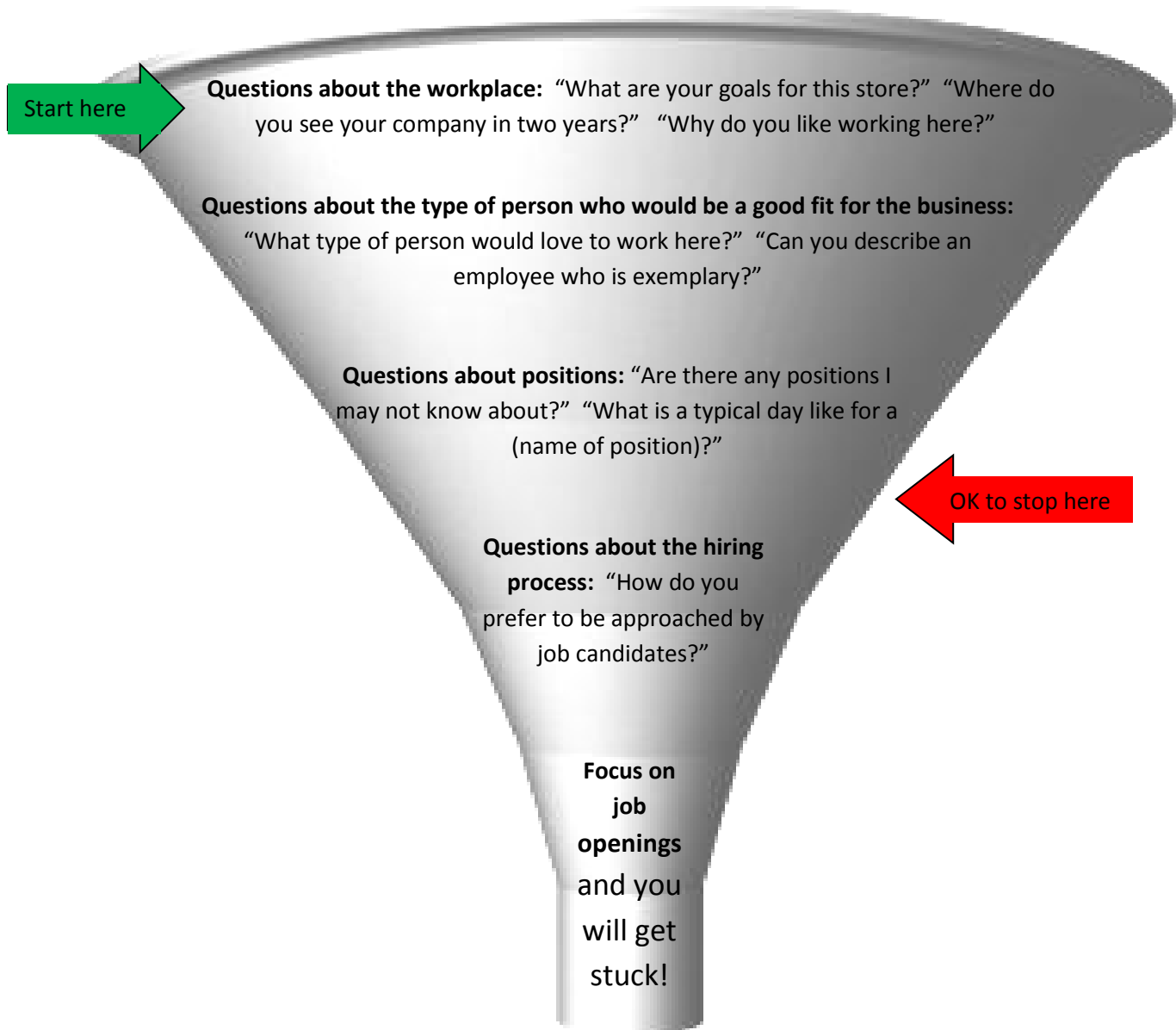
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9.

10.

## Learning About the Employer (“Second Cup”)

The focus is to listen and try to understand the workplace from the employer’s point of view. Be curious. Ask open-ended questions, use reflections, etc. You will know that the interview is going well if the employer is doing most of the talking.



# Top 5 mistakes to avoid during meetings to learn about an employer

## 1. Asking about job openings

*Learn about the employer's business needs and build a relationship before asking about job openings or talking about a job seeker.*

## 2. Interrupting the employer

*Whatever the employer is talking about is what he or she thinks is important. So, listen! Be curious.*

## 3. Asking if the employer is open to hiring people with criminal histories

*If you ask this, employers may assume that everyone you work with has a criminal history. And, even if you do work exclusively with people who have legal histories, this is not the first bit of information that you want employers to know about the people you represent.*

## 4. Speaking at length about your program

*The goal is for the employer to do most of the talking. Answer questions about your program, if asked, and then return to learning about the employer.*

## 5. Neglecting to prepare for the meeting

*Demonstrate that you are willing to work at this relationship. Know the basic goods or services produced by the company. Consider looking up the company's mission statement. Have some questions prepared. Bring your business card, program brochure, and appointment book. Wear business casual or better—no jeans, t-shirts with logos, or athletic shoes.*



## After Meeting with the Employer

### 1. Write a thank-you note.

After you meet with an employer to learn more about the business, your first order of business is to send (or hand deliver) a thank-you note. Handwrite a couple of lines on a plain note card to let the employer know that you appreciate her time and that you enjoyed learning about the business. Consider keeping thank-you note cards in your car.

### 2. Reflect on the stage of the relationship.

Spend a few minutes thinking about your new relationship with the employer. Does she appear eager to work with you? Interested, but unsure about your program? Remember that you don't want to move faster than the employer. For example, you wouldn't want to return to talk about a job seeker if the employer is still unsure about working with you.

### 3. Plan your next step.

If the employer appears interested, but not committed to the idea of working with you, then you might think about how to deepen your relationship with the employer. For example, if there is more that you would like to know about the employer, you might return to ask if you can take a tour of the business or if you can ask a few more questions about the business. You might also ask for an introduction to another manager or the owner. Another strategy to learn more about the business would be to ask if you can return to observe workers during a busy period to learn more about their jobs.

If the employer seems like she might be interested, but it looks like she will not be hiring any time soon, she still may be able to help you by introducing you to other employers. For example, she might introduce you to some of her suppliers, or she may be willing to participate in a steering committee meeting to educate members about employer needs. Or she might be willing to help a client with a mock interview. These steps can help further your relationship with the employer.

If the employer appears interested in meeting people from your program now, or even at a later time when he expects to be hiring, return to talk about a person who might be a good fit for that business. "John, I've had time to consider your need to find people who are avid readers and would enjoy working with customers. I believe I do know someone similar to the person you described. Would you like to hear a little bit about her?" If you know the employer is not hiring, ask if he would be open to allowing the candidate to visit the workplace to learn more about that type of position—a 30-minute visit to observe workers and ask a few questions.

## Sample Thank-You Note

August 1, 2001

Allison,

Thank-you for meeting with me yesterday. I enjoyed learning about Chili by the Lake and appreciate your offer to introduce me to the kitchen manager. I look forward to meeting Carl next week.

George

## Maintaining Employer Relationships Over Time ("Third Cup" and more)



Stay in touch with the employer every four to six weeks. Each time the employer sees you again, it reinforces the notion that you are interested in a long-term relationship and that you are reliable—you keep showing up! Further, don't rely on busy employers to remember to call you when they have a job opening. Visit regularly so that you will hear about openings before employers advertise those jobs.

Keep a list of 12-15 employers with whom you are building long-term relationships. Next to each employer, jot down the date of your most recent visit so that you can remember when you should return.

- Return to share good news about your program. For example, an article in the paper about your program or a record number of job starts in the last quarter.
- Return to let the employer know that you are working with someone who is interested in \_\_\_\_\_ work. Ask if the employer would be open to allowing the person to visit in order to observe and ask questions about that type of position.
- Return to congratulate the employer about an article that you read about his business.
- Ask for a tour of the business.
- Ask to come in for an hour to observe workers at their jobs. This will help you better understand the workflow and the challenges for people in those positions.
- Stop by to give the employer the name and phone number of another employer who has worked with you (a reference).
- Return to ask the employer if she would be willing to provide someone with feedback about his interviewing skills or feedback about a resume.
- Return to ask the employer if he would be interested in attending a steering committee meeting to help members understand the needs of local employers.
- Stop by to say hello and to ask the employer how business is going.
- Return to let the employer know that a job seeker you know has submitted an application.
- Drop off a holiday card.

- Drop off information about the Work Opportunities Tax Credit or other hiring incentive.
- Return to share printed materials about your program, such as a brochure designed especially for employers.
- Return after a job candidate interviews for a position to ask the employer for her impressions about the candidate.
- Drop off thank-you notes for anything the employer has done to help you, for example, spending time to educate you about the business, reviewing a person's resume, visiting a steering committee meeting, etc.
- Ask the employer to introduce you to some of her suppliers.
- Ask to meet managers in different departments of the business.
- Return to let the employer know that you do know a candidate who would be a good fit for the business. "John, I know it's important to you to find employees who want to work here because they are interested in books, and also people who are friendly and outgoing. I do know someone who fits that description. Would you like to hear a little bit about her?"

### Your Strategies to Sustain Employer Relationships:

1.

2.

3.



## Tips for Keeping Track of Important Employer Information

Think about this: each manager or business owner has her own preferences about who she wants to hire, right? A manager at one retail store might stress the need for someone who knows about the product being sold, while a manager at a similar store may prefer to hire someone who has good customer service skills and a flexible schedule. Some hiring managers may even be willing to share information about the questions they ask during interviews and how they expect a good candidate to respond.



If you are out in the community talking to six employers a week, it won't be long before it becomes impossible to remember all of this information. But you want to be able to tell your clients about those interview questions. Or, when you go back to talk about a job candidate, you want to be able to use the same words the employer used when describing a good candidate, "Jack, I've had time to think about your need to find candidates who are outgoing, reliable, and good team players. I think I do know someone who fits that description..."

### So, how can you keep all the information?

- Take a few notes while the employer is talking. Be careful not to lose focus on the conversation—just jot down a few important ideas or phrases that you want to remember. As soon as the meeting is over, go to your car and add to your notes.
- Keep employer contact logs handy. For example, keep some in your car and keep some on your desk. You might also keep some in your appointment book so that you always have them handy. If you keep electronic logs, save the form on your desktop.
- If you are out of logs, call your desk phone and leave a message about some of the information that you want to remember to record later.
- Keep a folder on each long-term employer relationship in your car so that you can add to it over time.

A sample employer contact log follows. Remember, if it is a first contact just to make an appointment, the middle section of the log will be blank. You don't always have to fill in the entire log.

### Sample Employer Contact Log

Date of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  has hiring responsibility

- Purpose of the Contacts:  To secure an appointment  
 To learn about the employer  
 Talk about a candidate  
 Ongoing relationship  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Information learned about the employer's business and hiring preferences (or other notes):

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Next step (include date):

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Employment specialist signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Supervisor Tips for Mentoring Employment Specialists



### Employer Relationship Building: Getting It Off the Ground

**Set the tone.** Explain that change is necessary to keep moving forward. Be supportive if there is resistance but do not give up on the new approach (as a supervisor it is important to model how change is positive). For example, you can say “We are going to implement this new method of job development because it is more effective. It may seem hard at first, but what’s really great is that after you use it for awhile, I think that you will find you like it more than what we currently do.”

- If some staff feel like this approach is how they have always done things, it may be that they would benefit from more information about your expectations for the new method of job development. These specialists may need extra help, including field mentoring, to learn the new about this style of relationship building. The most significant impact a supervisor can have is to demonstrate the new practice, observe the employment specialist trying it out, and provide feedback.
- Make sure to let any new specialists know that meeting with employers is an essential job duty. Go out with new employees during their first week on the job as a way to demonstrate this point and offer support.

**Follow up every week.** As soon as you set the new expectation, **follow-up** to ensure specialists are working on employer relationships. If a few weeks go by and staff notice that you are not paying attention, they will assume it is fine to go back to old practices. Further, staff will need help during this early period. They will encounter situations that they did not expect, or may just need your help to develop confidence for the new methods.

- Set goals individually and as a team as to number of employers to contact each week.
- Review these performance goals weekly in individual and group supervision (useful feedback is essential for feeling successful). Discuss strategies as a group.

**Help employment specialists develop confidence.** For example, you could designate an afternoon each week when specialists (and you) go out in pairs to make employer contacts and then come back to talk about how it went.

- Do not let people cancel to do other things. Stress the importance of learning as a team. After a month, you might schedule the team outings twice a month, then monthly, and eventually you team-based job development is no longer necessary.

**Provide public recognition of employment specialists who are doing well.** Some examples of public recognition might be a star on an office door, special mention during a team meeting, or a group email. The recognition could be for being very persistent until a relationship was finally developed, developing a new relationship that will be valuable to the team (e.g., a large company or hospital), making an unusually high number of employer contacts, or helping another team member with a relationship.

- Social recognition goes a long way and costs nothing - so use it frequently.

## Guidelines for Supervising Job Development

**Collect and review employer contact logs on a weekly basis.** This will help in two ways. First, it will ensure that employment specialists do not fall behind in making contacts since the logs are always due soon. It will also ensure that employment specialists fill the logs out soon after their appointments with employers. This is important because employers often provide detailed information, which may be forgotten without a written record.

### Tips:

- Be sure that employment specialists only record contacts with people who have hiring authority. Remind them that this is about building relationships, so while a cashier or administrative assistant may have helpful information, that interaction will not further the relationship with the person who hires.
- Encourage specialists to record important information such as the name of their contact, date, information about the business, and details about the type of job seekers the employer would like to meet.
- Ask specialists why keeping a log is important. Help each specialist develop a routine for recording information that meets his or her individual style.

**Discuss employer contacts with specialists.** This is an opportunity to teach. Ask questions, such as the following:

- What was the purpose of the contact?
- How did you prepare?
- Describe the meeting. What do you think made the meeting go well (or not well)? Was a particular question helpful or unhelpful? Was there a point at which the employer appeared particularly interested in the conversation? Did the employer do most of the talking?
- What is this employer looking for in an employee? What kinds of job candidates is she hoping to meet?
- How could you see this employer helping over time (e.g. hiring, informational interviews, referrals to suppliers and business peers)?
- What are your plans to follow-up?
- Have you sent a thank-you note?
- Where is your relationship with this employer?

### Tips:

- Strongly encourage specialists to take their time building relationships before asking about job openings. For example, always offer to make an appointment to come back and learn about the employer. Spend the appointment learning how the business operates, the type of job candidate the employer would like to meet, etc., rather than focusing on job openings or “selling” the IPS program.
- Help specialists plan to follow up in a timely manner. For example, take a thank-you note within a few days. Or, if the employer did spontaneously mention a job opening that is a good fit for a job seeker in IPS, return within a day or two. For example, “I’ve had time to consider the qualities that you are looking for in job candidates and I believe that I do know a person who would be a good fit for your business. Would you like to hear about her?”

**Ask employment specialists to keep a list to 12-15 employer relationships that they will nurture over time.** During supervision, go through this list just as you would go through a caseload list. For each employer you might ask:

- When was the last time that you had contact with the employer? What happened?
- Where is your relationship with the employer now?
- Are there other people at the company whom you would like to meet?
- Is there more that you would like to learn about this employer?
- What are your plans to work on this relationship? When will you have your next contact? What will be the focus of the next contact?

### Tips:

- Persistence is critical. The two magic words for supervising job development are, “Go back.” By going back in person, employment specialists demonstrate that they are reliable—they are not going to disappear once a person is hired. They also demonstrate that they are committed to the relationship and willing to work hard to earn the employer’s trust.
- Help specialists plan for repeat visits. What will be the purpose of the visit? What will they say when they see the employer? Will they ask to meet another manager? Will they ask for an introduction to another employer in the area? Do they have new (and genuine) questions to ask?
- Help specialists think about what they are bringing to the employer that is of value to her, and what the employer is bringing to the IPS team that is of value to the team. If time goes by and it does not appear that the relationship has potential to be valuable to both parties, encourage the employment specialist to take this employer off the list. Remind specialists that this relationship needs to benefit *both* parties and that the employment specialist is responsible for ensuring that this is the case.

**Go into the field with employment specialists to practice job development.** Even if you are not experienced in this area, going out with specialists will earn you credibility as you demonstrate that you are willing to do job development. Also, make time to accompany people who have been doing this work for awhile, in addition to going out with new specialists. We all benefit from coaching. Going out with skilled job developers will also help you share their strategies with the rest of the team. To help you structure field mentoring and plan to improve particular skills, consider using a field mentoring checklist such as the one found at <https://www.ipsworks.org/>, select “resources” and then “supervisor tools.”

## Question Guide for IPS Supported Employment Supervisors

Below are some common situations that come up during IPS supervision and suggestions for questions that supervisors can ask to try to get a sense for what is happening, or to help employment specialists plan services.

### **Someone is not consistently engaged in the program:**

*The employment specialist may feel frustrated. Your task is to help her see things from the client's point of view and to reinforce anything she is doing that would increase her client's interest in getting together with her.*

- What have the two of you done during your last few appointments? (If they have not been going out together to look for jobs or whatever would be directly related to the person's goal, encourage that they do so that the person feels like the focus of the meetings is on his goals.)
- Do you schedule regular, weekly appointments?
- Do you think he has trouble remembering your appointments? Is ambivalent about work? Has competing priorities? Dislikes job hunting?
- What does the mental health team think is interfering with appointments?
- What does he say about work?
- When you do see him, what do you say about missed appointments? (Encourage the specialist to be very careful to avoid anything that might sound like a rebuke. Instead, the approach should be to tell the client that she is happy to see him again—people are more likely to go to appointments with practitioners who are hopeful and positive.)
- Where do you meet him? Are the appointments at a convenient time and location for him?

### **Someone has been looking for work without success:**

- When was the last time that he applied for a job? And how did you follow up on the job application?
- Is he okay with disclosure? If so...When did you last visit an employer on his behalf? What happened? How often are you meeting with employers for him?
- What did the two of you do the last time that you got together?
- What is the plan—how often do you job search together? What does he do to find work in between appointments? What do you do to help him find work in between appointments? Is all of this in the written plan?
- *Supervisor: you may also think about reviewing this person's chart to get a sense of how steady the job search has been and whether or not the employment specialist needs help.*



### **Somebody gets a job:**

*As a supervisor, your focus is to celebrate with the employment specialist, but also to encourage the specialist to plan job supports, rather than taking a wait and see approach. You might also encourage the specialist to offer extra supports at the start of a job and then back off if the person does well.*

- Celebrate
- What will he be doing?
- Why do you think this is a good job fit?
- What problems might you anticipate? (If employment specialist says none, dig deeper. For example, What do you know about his job history? Why have previous jobs ended? Is he currently having any symptoms? Is substance use a problem?...)
- When is his start date? When do you plan to see him? (If the specialist says she will call him, encourage face-to-face contact soon after the job start.)
- How does he feel about disclosure? (If employment specialist will have contact with employer, you might ask, "What day will you contact the employer? How often will you contact the employer over the first few weeks?" Encourage the specialist to make contact by the end of the second day. )

### **Someone loses or quits a job unexpectedly**

- Celebrate. It's great that he had another job experience.
- What did your client say about the job end?
- What do you think happened?
- Were you able to get any feedback from his employer?
- What more do you know about your client? What were his strengths on the job? What supports seemed to help him? What problems did he have?
- What type of job might be a better fit?
- What might you do differently after observing this work experience?
- Have you made plans to start the next job search with him?

Client Specific Data for Supported Employment Specialist \_\_\_\_\_ ( enter name of specialist) \_\_\_\_\_  
**Roster of Active Clients**

	<i>Client Initials or Client ID# &amp; Age</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Diagnosis</i>	<i>Date Client referred to IPS SE</i>	<i>First Employment Specialist Appointment w/Client</i>	<i>Date Referred to OVR</i>	<i>PECP Report Date</i>	<i>First Contact with Employer re: Competitive Job</i>	<i>Job Dev. Start Date</i>	<i>Job Start Date</i>	<i>Job End Date</i>	<i>Job Title</i>	<i>Employer Name</i>	<i>Wages Per Hour</i>	<i>Did you help this person find a job in the last 3 months? Y= yes N=no</i>
1.															
2.															
3.															
4.															
5.															
6.															
7.															
8.															
9.															
10.															
11.															
12.															
13.															
14.															
15.															
16.															
17.															
18.															
19.															
20.															

\*legend\* 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Diagnosis



### Data Collection and Quality Improvement Processes for Good IPS Fidelity

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Fidelity Item</b>	<b>Data Collection or Quality Improvement Process</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment:</b> Employment services documentation is integrated into mental health treatment records.	Minimally, the Career Profile (formerly known as the Vocational Profile), progress notes and employment plan are part of the mental health treatment record.	For each person served by the IPS program
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Role of the IPS Supervisor:</b> Supervisor collects client outcomes, reviews outcomes with staff, and helps them develop goals for improvement.	Examples of data collected by supervisor include number of job starts for the program and for individual employment specialists as well as number and percent of people working on the team caseload and individual caseloads.	Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agency focus on competitive employment:</b> Rate of competitive employment for all persons with serious mental illness served by the agency, which includes people who are not served by the IPS program.	Mental health agency leaders collect employment data and share outcomes with clinical supervisors and practitioners. Typically, they count any person who worked during the quarter, even if the person only worked one day.	Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agency focus on competitive employment:</b> Agency intake includes questions about employment.	When people first begin receiving services at the agency they are asked about their interest in employment. Work history information is not sufficient. Sample questions: What are your thoughts about working? Would you like to learn whether your disability benefits would be affected by a job? Would you like to learn about a program that helps people return to work? Answers are documented in agency intake or initial assessment.	For each person with serious mental illness who receives services at the mental health agency

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agency focus on competitive employment:</b> People are asked about interest in work on an ongoing basis.	Questions about interest in employment (see above) are included in the annual assessment or treatment plan.	Annually or more often
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Executive team support for supported employment:</b> Quality assurance review of IPS supported employment fidelity	The agency quality assurance process reviews the overall IPS fidelity score or scores for specific fidelity items in order to increase fidelity.	Every six months until good fidelity is obtained, annually thereafter
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing work-based assessment:</b> Employment specialists spend a few weeks learning about each person’s work goals, education and work experiences, etc. They document this information in the Career Profile (formerly known as the Vocational Profile).	The Career Profile is updated with each job start, job end and education experience. A sample profile and forms for updating the profile are at <a href="https://www.ipsworks.org">https://www.ipsworks.org</a> .  Information for the form comes from the job seeker or student, mental health practitioners, mental health records, and (with permission) family members.	For each person served by the IPS program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rapid job search:</b> Number of days from first IPS appointment to first face-to-face employer contact by employment specialist and/or client	Some supervisors track this by asking for information during the weekly vocational unit meeting: “Who met with a new client for the first time this week?” “Which clients started a job search this week by either you and/or them having contact with an employer?”	For each client in the IPS program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Individualized job search:</b> Employment specialists and clients co-develop individualized, written employment plans.	Employment plans are individualized (pertain to each person’s preferences and needs regarding a job) and specific (spell out the steps to find a job and who will complete each step).	For each person served by the IPS program.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Job development—Frequent employer contact:</b> Employment specialists have six in-person contacts with employers (related to job development) each week.	Employment specialists document employer contacts on logs that are submitted to their supervisor weekly. The logs indicate whether the specialist met with someone who had hiring authority. Also, logs indicate that the activity was related to helping someone find a job, rather than providing job supports or another purpose.	Weekly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Diversity of jobs and diversity of employers:</b> Supervisors maintain a list of job starts that includes job titles.	Many IPS programs use Job Start Forms to update the Career Profile ( <a href="https://www.ipsworks.org">https://www.ipsworks.org</a> ). Employment specialists provide a copy to the supervisor when one of their clients gets a job. Supervisors track the first date of employment, job title and name of employer. If the business is a franchise (such as a fast food restaurant or grocery store chain) supervisors might also indicate when clients are working at separate stores.	For each job start
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Individualized follow-along supports:</b> Employment specialists and clients co-develop individualized, written employment plans.	Written job support plans are individualized to each person’s preferences for supports and needs (i.e., based on work history, current issues, etc.). The plans indicate what services will be provided and how often.	For each person served by the IPS program.
<b>Recommended but not required:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Role of the IPS supervisor:</b> Mentoring (working side-by-side with employment specialists) for developing employer	Sample field mentoring forms for job development are at <a href="https://www.ipsworks.org">https://www.ipsworks.org</a> .	For each new specialist and for those who want to

	relationships		improve their job development skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Work incentives planning:</b> Documentation provided by a trained benefits planner regarding a person's individualized situation is included in the employment record.	Employment specialists request a copy of the report provided to the client, provided that it is individualized and not merely a print out of Social Security rules.	For each person who receives work incentives planning (benefits planning)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disclosure:</b> Employment specialists discuss each person's preferences regarding disclosure of a disability to employers.	Forms to document these discussions include the Career Profile and Disclosure Worksheet, <a href="https://www.ipsworks.org">https://www.ipsworks.org</a>	For each job search

**Field Mentoring Checklist for Job Development**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Employment Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**BEFORE GOING OUT TO CONTACT EMPLOYERS:**

I. What happened when (employment specialist) followed up with employers from last field mentoring day?

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II. Today we will focus on refining or developing the following skills:

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**AFTER VISTING EMPLOYERS:**

I. Our successes:

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II. What we would do differently next time:

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**Field Mentoring Checklist for IPS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Employment Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**What skill was the focus of field mentoring? (For job development, see Field Mentoring Checklist for Job Development)**

- Engaging clients
- Conducting the career profile/developing the employment plan
- Facilitating family meetings
- Providing job supports
- Education supports
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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a. Strengths observed:

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b. Obstacles encountered:

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## IPS Supported Employment Unit Meeting

Typically, IPS group supervision begins with celebrations. To help specialists stay positive, the supervisor asks them to talk about what is going well. Either each employment specialist reports on one success from the previous week, or the supervisor asks volunteers to share something positive.

Next, the supervisor reviews assignments from the last week's meeting. Employment specialists are busy and their schedules change frequently. Knowing that the meeting will begin by reviewing last week's assignments helps people focus on their assigned work.

Supervisors are responsible for a well-organized meeting so that all participants contribute and receive help from others. They ask each team member for the names of one or two people to discuss. The supervisor then adds one or two names of people that he is concerned about or has not heard about lately. The supervisor jots down names so that he can move the meeting along and everyone's clients are discussed. The focus of the meeting is on persons served by the program and employer relationships. If it is necessary to review some administrative details (i.e., productivity, documentation, etc.) they are added to the end of the agenda so that the time spent on those areas is limited.

The length of the vocational unit meeting depends on the number of employment specialists on the team. A team of five employment specialists or more would require a 90-minute meeting. A team of three employment specialists could review what was needed in one hour. If there are 9-10 employment specialists, they should be divided into two teams that meet separately each week, and all together once each month. When it is necessary to divide the specialists into two teams, the supervisor should take into consideration mental health team assignments. If any specialists share a mental health team, put both into the same IPS team.

### Sample IPS Meeting Agenda for a 90-Minute Meeting

- I. Celebrations (10 minutes)
  - Each employment specialist shares one positive event from the past week
- II. Review of assignments from last week (5 minutes)
- III. Client discussions (40 minutes—some discussions will be longer than others)
  - Three people identified by employment specialists
  - One person who will start work later in the week (discussion of possible job supports)
  - Two people identified by the supervisor to discuss (because they have been job searching for four months without success)
- IV. Employer relationships (20 minutes)
  - Each employment specialists discusses an employer relationship and asks for ideas to move the relationship forward
  - Employment specialists describe notable employer contacts from the last week and share job leads
- V. Administrative issues (10 minutes)

## SAMPLE IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT UNIT MEETING AGENDA

Participants: IPS supervisor, all employment specialists

### I. Celebrations (10 minutes)

*Team members share good news. For example: someone applied for a job independently, someone passed the GED test, a transportation problem is solved...*

### II. Job Leads (10 minutes)

*Team members talk about significant employer interactions from the previous week. The purpose may be to share a lead that a specialist can't use or to let other team members know that he is working with a particular employer so others on the team should coordinate with him before approaching that employer.*

### III. Client Situations (40 minutes)

*The team spends time talking about individual clients, using a solution-focused approach. The team might discuss 6-8 people during this time. Some conversations may focus on people or situations that the team knows well, while other more in-depth conversations benefit from a structured format, such as the one below:*

- 1. Statement of what help the employment specialist would like from the group (e.g., ideas for motivational strategies for someone who is not taking part in the job search).*
- 2. Brief summary of the client's situation and goals.*
- 3. Statement of what has been tried previously.*
- 4. List of positive attributes of the client and support network.*
- 5. Group discussion of ideas.*
- 6. Next steps identified*

*Employment specialists may ask to discuss people who are having difficulties meeting their goals and the supervisor may come prepared with the names of a few people s/he would like to discuss. For example, the supervisor may wish to discuss new job starts during the meeting as a way to help the team think about individualized job supports. The supervisor may also choose to speak about a few people who have been looking for work for an extended period of time to see if the team can think of strategies to move the job search forward.*

### Additional Information About Unit Meetings:

⇒ For teams with more than four employment specialists, 60-minute meetings will not be long enough to allow all team members to actively participate.

- ⇒ Supervisors should take notes during the meeting. S/he should also touch base with specialists during the week to ensure that they were able to follow through on plans made in the meeting.
- ⇒ Administrative issues should not be a major focus of the meetings. Supervisors should try to restrict administrative announcements to the first 5 minutes of the meeting.
- ⇒ The team may wish to invite VR liaisons to the unit meeting once a month. If VR counselors are able to join the team in this way, those meetings will focus on people being served by both systems, as well as discussions about people who may be ready for a VR referral.

# Case Consultation Presentation Form

Group Supervision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Client/Consumer I need to talk about:**

**Copies Distributed to Team Members of:**

- Vocational Profile
- Employment Plan
- Job Matching/Development Worksheet
- Follow-along Support Plan

**Synopsis of Situation:**

**What I need help with:**

- Engaging with a client
- Identifying client's strengths, preferences, work goal
- Ideas for helping client to identify goals or tasks toward their work goal
- Ideas for helping client achieve their goals or tasks
- Ideas Generated/Strategies for Job Development
- Identifying and/or obtaining resources
- Review follow-along support plan and generate ideas for increased support
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Ideas Generated:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_



## IPS Steering Committees

Steering committees, also referred to as stakeholder or leaderships groups, help plan and monitor IPS supported employment implementation and sustainment.

### **Purpose:**

Steering committees keep agency staff members focused on IPS implementation. Supervisors and administrators are busy and it is possible that good intentions are forgotten in the rush of daily work. Knowing that a group of stakeholders will soon convene to discuss program implementation incentivizes people to follow through with activities that help the IPS program. Another function of steering committees is to keep stakeholder groups, such as clients, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and family members, informed about the new practice. Finally, stakeholders provide valuable ideas and feedback to help the agency provide services in an effective manner.

### **Members:**

Steering committees strive to include a diverse range of stakeholders that may change over time depending upon the needs of the program. Participants may include:

- Agency administrators
- Family members and/or family advocacy groups
- Clients and/or peer advocacy groups
- IPS supervisor
- Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor and/or counselors
- Clinical director or a mental health supervisor
- Local chamber of commerce or economic development group
- Others (transportation providers, local college representative, ...)

Many steering committees also include employers, though employers are busy and need to know that their time is used well. One solution is to invite an employer who would not attend every meeting, but only those meetings in which her expertise was required. Another solution is to include a family member who is also a business owner or manager and can contribute from both perspectives. Each steering committee member should understand his/her role on the committee. People who do not feel useful on the committee will likely lose interest and stop participating.

### **Frequency of Meetings:**

Initially steering committee meetings should meet at least once each quarter. After the program achieves good fidelity, the group may decide to meet just twice each year. Steering committees continue to meet even after the program is well established because steering committees can help sustain the program.

Internal workgroups (usually a few people from the agency) should also meet on a monthly basis while the program is in start-up phase. These workgroups are usually comprised of three or four people who know the agency well and have the authority to make changes, for example, the quality assurance director, the clinical director and the IPS supervisor.

### **Educating Committee Members:**

The first task for each committee is to ensure that all members understand basic information about IPS, including the eight practice principles. Resources to educate steering committees can be downloaded from <http://www.IPSworks.org> . A video entitled “Introduction to Supported Employment” provides information about IPS principles along with the stories of people who have returned to work (see About IPS).

### **Activities:**

During implementation steering committees:

- Learn about IPS supported employment
- Examine the agency and system of care for policies or practices that conflict with IPS
- Review current employment outcomes, if available
- Build consensus for IPS by asking working people to share their stories and by talking about the relationship between work and recovery
- Discuss plans for IPS implementation, for example, begin reviewing the IPS supported employment fidelity scale to determine areas where change is needed

After the first IPS supported employment fidelity review, steering committees review the fidelity report and discuss which items to focus on first. For example, to improve fidelity to Zero Exclusion Criteria, committee members would brainstorm ideas to help people access IPS. They might discuss training so that mental health practitioners would understand that people can work successfully in spite of psychiatric symptoms, housing problems, substance abuse disorders, etc. If the group wants to improve Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation they might brainstorm ideas for the IPS team to meet with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors on a monthly, or more frequent, basis.

Over time the committee would continue to work on improving and sustaining good fidelity. They would monitor employment outcomes and discuss strategies to increase the number of working people in the IPS program or in the entire agency. Group members also talk about issues related to sustaining the program, such as funding, or issues related to expanding the program so that more people can go to work.

## Pre-Implementation IPS Steering Committee

### Sample Meeting Agenda

Participants: Nicole Avery, Mental Health Agency Director  
Pete Grant, Mental Health Agency Clinical Director  
Bill Amos, Mental Health Board Member  
Sherry Dyer, Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor  
Chris Turner, Vocational Rehabilitation Area Manager  
Ron Driesen, Consumer-Operated Center Director  
Carol Allen, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

I Introductions 10 minutes

II Purpose of the Committee—Nicole 10 minutes

- How we can help more clients work?
- Agency's recent efforts to implement recovery philosophy
- Employment rate at mental health center is 12% even though many clients want to work.

III Vocational Rehabilitation Perspective—Chris 10 minutes

- People with mental illness comprise a high percentage of Vocational Rehabilitation clients
- Vocational Rehabilitation success rate with this group is relatively low—how can we improve that rate?

III IPS Supported Employment—Ron 30 minutes

- Evidence-based practice
- Description of the model—8 practice principles

IV Group Discussion 30 minutes

- Does this model sound like a good fit?
- Are there revenue sources for at least two employment specialist positions?
- How would we learn more?
- Next steps

Meeting schedule: Once each month

## Early Implementation IPS Supported Employment Steering Committee

### Sample Meeting Agenda

#### Committee Members:

Juanita Arnett, IPS supported employment supervisor  
Carol Waters, employment specialist  
Gerald Net, IPS supported employment client  
Ed Jorgenson, IPS supported employment client  
Amy Anderson, mental health director  
Cleveland Baker, employer and family member  
Adam Sneed, family member  
Becky Adler, Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor  
Sandra Miller, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor

#### Agenda Items:

##### I Fidelity Report

- Initial fidelity review was conducted on July 1. Please see attached handouts.
  - Integration of rehabilitation with mental health services
    - What is “shared decision making”? How can we facilitate this?
  - Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation:
    - Can we begin meeting monthly? Where would we meet? Who would attend?
  - Individualized job search
    - Discussion of strategies to learn about more employers.
  - Ongoing work-based assessment
    - Group to discuss elimination of vocational evaluation program.

Meeting Schedule: Once a month

## Mid-Implementation IPS Steering Committee

### Meeting Agenda

#### Committee Members:

Jon Factor, IPS supervisor  
Liz Baker, clinical director, mental health center  
Ken Fish, quality assurance director, mental health center  
Trish Johnson, supervisor, Vocational Rehabilitation  
Pam Hartman, counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation  
Blanche Door, mental health board member  
Tom Leed, IPS consumer  
Nancy Otterman, IPS consumer  
Adam Morgan, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
George Smith, family member  
Craig Chester, Apple County Chamber of Commerce

#### I Fidelity Action Plan

- Group to review most recent additions to plan.

#### II Chamber of Commerce Newsletter

- Craig has offered to put an article about the IPS program in the chamber newsletter. Group to talk about key points for the article.

#### III Ongoing Education about IPS Supported Employment

- Jon and Liz have developed training for new case managers about IPS.

#### IV Promoting a Work Culture in the Mental Health Agency

- Nancy is willing to attend a case management meeting to talk about her experiences going back to work.
- Vocational Rehabilitation participation in mental health treatment team meetings?

Meeting Schedule: Every other month

## **Sustaining IPS Program Steering Committee**

### Sample Meeting Agenda

#### Participants:

Pat Greer, mental health agency, chief operating officer  
John Adkins, mental health agency, clinical director  
Loretta Walker, IPS supervisor  
Dale Rawlings, mental health agency, chief financial officer  
Sue Snyder, Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor  
Jim Johnson, National Alliance for Mental Illness  
Tony LeRose, family member  
Laura LeRose, family member  
Debra Bright, IPS client  
Janet Allerby, IPS client  
Nancy Jorgeson, IPS client  
Ed Goetz, IPS client  
Joe Escher, employment specialist

#### I Employment Specialists Caseloads

- Employment specialist caseloads are at 32 people which has a negative impact on outcomes
- Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and case managers, would like to make more referrals
- Is there revenue to support another position?

#### II Agency Rate of Employment

- Agency is ready to begin measuring employment for all consumers with severe mental illness
- Discussion of how employment outcomes will be used in supervision
- Feedback from group

#### IV Promoting a Culture that Supports Work

- How can we recognize practitioners, administrators, and others who are champions for IPS and competitive employment?

#### V Review of Fidelity Action Plan

- Discussion of items with a rating of “4.” How can we improve?
- Loretta to begin drafting fidelity action plan from this discussion

Meeting schedule: Once each quarter

IPS

# EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST



Tips for Employer Relationship Building:  
A Guide for IPS Supported Employment Specialists



*Developed by:*

*Sarah Swanson, Dartmouth PRC; Jerry Wood, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Vermont;  
Laura Flint, Vermont Department of Mental Health*



## Introduction

This booklet is intended to augment job development training for IPS supported employment programs. The premise of the training is that employment specialists should take time to learn about the needs and preferences of employers, before asking employers to meet a job candidate. In this approach, the employer is viewed as a customer. So, although the employment specialist may go to an employer with a job candidate in mind, he might ultimately decide that the candidate is not a good fit for that particular employer.

Another important component of this type of job development is that the employment specialist makes multiple in-person visits to develop relationships with employers. Just as many people find jobs through networking, the employment specialist develops a network of employers that she can share with her clients. Further, the repeat visits demonstrate that the employment specialist is dependable and interested in a long-term relationship.

So, the first step would be for the specialist to go in-person to introduce herself to an employer and ask for a short appointment to come back to learn about the business. When she returns for the appointment, she'll focus on learning about the business and the employer's view about the type of candidates that he would like to meet. She will refrain from asking about job openings or conducting a presentation about her program. She will likely follow-up by sending or dropping off a thank-you note for the employer's time, and then would take time to reflect on the stage of the relationship. Is it time to begin discussing a candidate? Does the relationship need further work? Does it appear that she and the employer will be able to provide something useful for each other going forward? An employment specialist may decide to maintain the relationship even if the employer isn't hiring, or even if she doesn't have the right candidate for the job at that moment.



Sample Questions  
To learn about an employer's needs

**Questions about the business:**

- Why do you like working for \_\_\_\_\_ (name of business)?
- What are your goals for (the business or department)?
- What is your vision for your company over the next year?
- What sets your company apart from others?
- As the manager for \_\_\_\_\_, what are you most proud of?
- Is there a time of year when your business is busiest?

**Questions about the right job candidates:**

- What type of person tends to be successful here?
- What qualities do you look for when you are interviewing job candidates?
- What are some of your hiring headaches?
- Describe the qualities of a person who would love to work here?

**Questions about positions:**

- Please describe your workforce.
- I see that you have \_\_\_\_\_ positions. What other positions do you have that I may not know about?
- What is a typical day like for a \_\_\_\_\_ (name of position)?
- What are some of the challenges that people have had in these positions?
- Do some positions have more turnover than others?

**Questions about the hiring process:**

- What is your hiring process?
- So, people should start with an online application. But you mentioned that you need people who are self-starters with outgoing personalities. If you had a friend who matched that description how would you advise your friend to go about applying for work here?
- How have you found good job candidates in the past?

**Ineffective questions:**

- Are you hiring?
- Do you anticipate job openings in the future?
- Are you laying off?
- What do you do here?
- Do you hire people with criminal histories?
- Do you hire people who have substance use disorders?
- What do you do here? (Learn this about the company before the appointment.)

## Questions You Have Found Helpful

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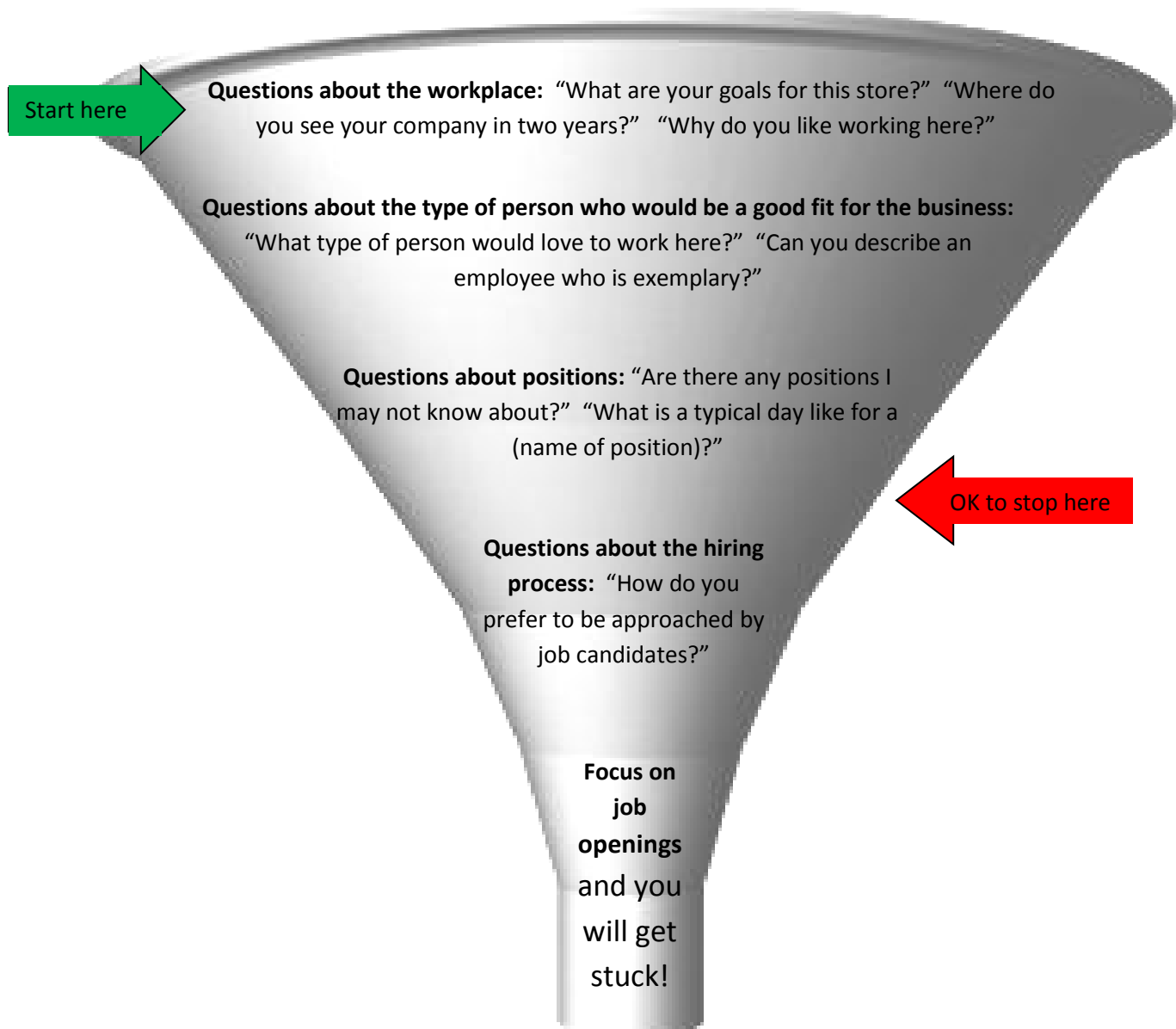
8.

9.

10.

## How to Structure a Meeting to Learn about an Employer (“Second Cup”)

The focus is to listen and try to understand the workplace from the employer’s point of view. Be curious. Ask open-ended questions, use reflections, etc. You will know that the interview is going well if the employer is doing most of the talking.



# Top 5 mistakes to avoid during meetings to learn about an employer

## 1. Asking about job openings

*Learn about the employer's business needs and build a relationship before asking about job openings or talking about a job seeker.*

## 2. Interrupting the employer

*Whatever the employer is talking about is what he or she thinks is important. So, listen! Be curious.*

## 3. Asking if the employer is open to hiring people with criminal histories

*If you ask this, employers may assume that everyone you work with has a criminal history. And, even if you do work exclusively with people who have legal histories, this is not the first bit of information that you want employers to know about the people you represent.*

## 4. Speaking at length about your program

*The goal is for the employer to do most of the talking. Answer questions about your program, if asked, and then return to learning about the employer.*

## 5. Neglecting to prepare for the meeting

*Demonstrate that you are willing to work at this relationship. Know the basic goods or services produced by the company. Consider looking up the company's mission statement. Have some questions prepared. Bring your business card, program brochure, and appointment book. Wear business casual or better—no jeans, t-shirts with logos, or athletic shoes.*



## After Meeting with the Employer

### 1. Write a thank-you note.

After you meet with an employer to learn more about the business, your first order of business is to send (or hand deliver) a thank-you note. Handwrite a couple of lines on a plain note card to let the employer know that you appreciate her time and that you enjoyed learning about the business. Consider keeping thank-you note cards in your car.

### 2. Reflect on the stage of the relationship.

Spend a few minutes thinking about your new relationship with the employer. Does she appear eager to work with you? Interested, but unsure about your program? Remember that you don't want to move faster than the employer. For example, you wouldn't want to return to talk about a job seeker if the employer is still unsure about working with you.

### 3. Plan your next step.

If the employer appears interested, but not committed to the idea of working with you, then you might think about how to deepen your relationship with the employer. For example, if there is more that you would like to know about the employer, you might return to ask if you can take a tour of the business or if you can ask a few more questions about the business. You might also ask for an introduction to another manager or the owner. Another strategy to learn more about the business would be to ask if you can return to observe workers during a busy period to learn more about their jobs.

If the employer seems like she might be interested, but it looks like she will not be hiring any time soon, she still may be able to help you by introducing you to other employers. For example, she might introduce you to some of her suppliers, or she may be willing to participate in a steering committee meeting to educate members about employer needs. Or she might be willing to help a client with a mock interview. These steps can help further your relationship with the employer.

If the employer appears interested in meeting people from your program now, or even at a later time when he expects to be hiring, return to talk about a person who might be a good fit for that business. "John, I've had time to consider your need to find people who are avid readers and would enjoy working with customers. I believe I do know someone similar to the person you described. Would you like to hear a little bit about her?" If you know the employer is not hiring, ask if he would be open to allowing the candidate to visit the workplace to learn more about that type of position—a 30-minute visit to observe workers and ask a few questions.

## Sample Thank-You Note

August 1, 2001

Allison,

Thank-you for meeting with me yesterday. I enjoyed learning about Chili by the Lake and appreciate your offer to introduce me to the kitchen manager. I look forward to meeting Carl next week.

George



## Maintaining Employer Relationships Over Time ("Third Cup" and more)



Stay in touch with the employer every four to six weeks. Each time the employer sees you again, it reinforces the notion that you are interested in a long-term relationship and that you are reliable—you keep showing up! Further, don't rely on busy employers to remember to call you when they have a job opening. Visit regularly so that you will hear about openings before employers advertise those jobs.

Keep a list of 12-15 employers with whom you are building long-term relationships. Next to each employer, jot down the date of your most recent visit so that you can remember when you should return.

- Return to share good news about your program. For example, an article in the paper about your program or a record number of job starts in the last quarter.
- Return to let the employer know that you are working with someone who is interested in \_\_\_\_\_ work. Ask if the employer would be open to allowing the person to visit in order to observe and ask questions about that type of position.
- Return to congratulate the employer about an article that you read about his business.
- Ask for a tour of the business.
- Ask to come in for an hour to observe workers at their jobs. This will help you better understand the workflow and the challenges for people in those positions.
- Stop by to give the employer the name and phone number of another employer who has worked with you (a reference).
- Return to ask the employer if she would be willing to provide someone with feedback about his interviewing skills or feedback about a resume.
- Return to ask the employer if he would be interested in attending a steering committee meeting to help members understand the needs of local employers.
- Stop by to say hello and to ask the employer how business is going.
- Return to let the employer know that a job seeker you know has submitted an application.
- Drop off a holiday card.
- Drop off information about the Work Opportunities Tax Credit or other hiring incentive.

- Return to share printed materials about your program, such as a brochure designed especially for employers.
- Return after a job candidate interviews for a position to ask the employer for her impressions about the candidate.
- Drop off thank-you notes for anything the employer has done to help you, for example, spending time to educate you about the business, reviewing a person’s resume, visiting a steering committee meeting, etc.
- Ask the employer to introduce you to some of her suppliers.
- Ask to meet managers in different departments of the business.
- Return to let the employer know that you do know a candidate who would be a good fit for the business. “John, I know it’s important to you to find employees who want to work here because they are interested in books, and also people who are friendly and outgoing. I do know someone who fits that description. Would you like to hear a little bit about her?”

### Your Strategies to Sustain Employer Relationships:

1.

2.

3.

## Tips for Keeping Track of Important Employer Information

Think about this: each manager or business owner has her own preferences about who she wants to hire, right? A manager at one retail store might stress the need for someone who knows about the product being sold, while a manager at a similar store may prefer to hire someone who has good customer service skills and a flexible schedule. Some hiring managers may even be willing to share information about the questions they ask during interviews and how they expect a good candidate to respond.



If you are out in the community talking to six employers a week, it won't be long before it becomes impossible to remember all of this information. But you want to be able to tell your clients about those interview questions. Or, when you go back to talk about a job candidate, you want to be able to use the same words the employer used when describing a good candidate, "Jack, I've had time to think about your need to find candidates who are outgoing, reliable, and good team players. I think I do know someone who fits that description..."

### So, how can you keep all the information?

- Take a few notes while the employer is talking. Be careful not to lose focus on the conversation—just jot down a few important ideas or phrases that you want to remember. As soon as the meeting is over, go to your car and add to your notes.
- Keep employer contact logs handy. For example, keep some in your car and keep some on your desk. You might also keep some in your appointment book so that you always have them handy. If you keep electronic logs, save the form on your desktop.
- If you are out of logs, call your desk phone and leave a message about some of the information that you want to remember to record later.
- Keep a folder on each long-term employer relationship in your car so that you can add to it over time.

A sample employer contact log follows. Remember, if it is a first contact just to make an appointment, the middle section of the log will be blank. You don't always have to fill in the entire log.

## Sample Employer Contact Log

Date of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  has hiring responsibility

Purpose of the Contacts:  To secure an appointment

To learn about the employer

Talk about a candidate

Ongoing relationship

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Information learned about the employer's business and hiring preferences (or other notes):

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Next step (include date):

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Employment specialist signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **IPS Supported Employment in Rural and Frontier Areas**

To develop this document, IPS trainers from multiple states shared potential advantages for rural IPS programs, challenges faced in frontier and rural areas, and examples of how problems have been resolved.

### **Potential Advantages for IPS Programs in Rural Areas**

- Employment outcomes were not significantly different between urban and rural U.S. programs in the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program, also known as the IPS Learning Collaborative (Haslett, Drake, Bond, Becker, & McHugo, 2011). IPS programs in small communities were also able to achieve high IPS supported employment fidelity scores rates comparable to programs in large communities (Luciano, Drake, Bond, & Becker, 2014).
- The way that programs respond to challenges may overcome issues related to service provision in rural or frontier areas. A strong commitment to the IPS approach, and responding to barriers with creativity and energy can make a difference.
- Small mental health centers sometimes have better integration of employment and mental health services because staff at the agency all know one another.
- Small agencies often have less hierarchy so upper management is likely to understand how the IPS program works and has more contact with IPS staff. In some cases, the agency executive director attends some team meetings.
- Many employment specialists in rural areas have prior relationships with employers. Connections through family members and friends are also prevalent and enhance job development.
- It is sometimes easier for small agencies to make organizational changes while implementing IPS.
- Relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation<sup>1</sup> counselors may be stronger in rural areas because there are fewer counselors to know.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Rural and frontier communities often have limited public transportation or a lack of public transportation. Examples of how some IPS staff increased transportation options:

- Agency staff advocated with the local bus company for extended service. Bus company managers agreed to longer schedules and service on Saturdays.
- Vocational Rehabilitation counselors have sometimes helped with taxi and other transportation costs, usually on a short-term basis.

<sup>1</sup> Vocational Rehabilitation is an agency in the US that helps people with disabilities gain, maintain or advance in employment.

- Agency staff partnered with an organization that provides senior services. The senior center staff agreed that their transportation service would pick up workers who lived on the senior transportation routes.
- An agency subcontracted with Head Start<sup>2</sup> to use their busses and drivers during the time that the children were at the Head Start program.
- Employment specialists knew of a particular employer who could not hire enough workers who could get to the business. A group of employment specialists approached the employer to suggest that the business develop its own transportation service that would help many of the employees, including those from IPS programs. The employer agreed and purchased buses. The system is a bit challenging for part-time workers, but helpful to many people.
- United Way<sup>3</sup> has helped with transportation funding in some areas.
- Working people have posted notices in workplace break rooms offering for gas money in exchange for rides to work.
- Independent Living Centers<sup>4</sup> have helped coordinate transportation for people in some states. Those organizations have also been a resource for employment specialists to learn about other services in the area.

There are fewer businesses in rural areas. Strategies that employment specialists have used to maximize the opportunities that are available include:

- Exploring seasonal work with farmers.
- Learning about veterinary services that are unique to rural areas.
- Helping job seekers investigate options to commute by train to jobs in urban areas.
- Staying in touch with local employers and local leaders because many job openings are not advertised—word of mouth is used more than in urban areas. Employment specialists network, read local newspapers to learn about changes in the business community, join Chambers of Commerce, participate in local service organizations, ask for tours of businesses, and visit with people in informal settings.
- Visiting every business in the area, regardless of the size of the business.
- Learning about businesses that are not typical storefront businesses, for example, businesses that operate out of people’s homes.
- Developing trust with employers, and being accountable to employers, which may be more important than in urban areas. Employment specialists follow through with agreements and avoid overpromising what they can do.
- Job creating—working with an employer to develop a new position.

<sup>2</sup> Head Start is a pre-school program for young children in the U.S.

<sup>3</sup> United Way of America focuses on projects in education, income, and health. It provides funding for some non-profit organizations.

<sup>4</sup> Independent Living Centers are “consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, nonprofit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities.”

- Considering work-at-home positions for companies that are not local. An example is calling to schedule appointments for a doctor. (Some state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors can share lists of employers who provide credible work-from-home positions.)
- Using self-employment, for example, a man in the Smokey Mountains builds and sells furniture independently.
- Building relationships with staff at temporary agencies. Temporary positions are often links to permanent factory jobs.
- Interacting with employers in a professional manner, even when prior, personal relationships exist.

Negative perceptions about a job seeker or the IPS program can be difficult to change.

- If a job seeker has an unfavorable reputation in the area, she may have difficulty finding work. The key is to introduce the job seeker to employers so they can develop their own impressions of the person. Employment specialists ask employers to give the job seeker a tour of their businesses, mock interviews, or allow a job seeker to briefly shadow workers to learn about a specific position. When an employer has a preconceived idea about a job seeker, the employment specialist is patient and persistent—he continues to visit that employer. He shares what he knows about the person’s strengths.
- If an IPS program has a poor reputation with employers, staff must change perceptions about the program. Strategies include asking reporters to meet working people and include positive stories about IPS in the media, ensuring that the agency board of directors hears from working people and asking board members to be ambassadors to the employer community, and involving prominent employers on the IPS steering committee.

Lack of a vocational unit either because the IPS team only has one employment specialist or because specialists work in separate locations. Strategies to build a vocational unit include:

- Expand the program beyond one employment specialist position. As more people return to work, share that news with clients and celebrate with mental health practitioners to increase referrals to the program.
- If employment specialists work in geographically distant locations, meet by teleconference, Webinar, Skype, Google+, etc. three times each month. Meet in person once each month.
- Even when an IPS program covers several counties (employment specialists work from different locations), encourage employment specialists to help each other, for example, by taking a job seeker to a job interview.
- Ask mental health practitioners to provide backup for the employment specialists, especially when that does not include working with employers.
- Connect a single employment specialist to another employment team in the area. One example is of employment specialists at a peer-operated center who attends

weekly meetings with an IPS team at the local mental health center. They share job leads and suggestions to help people served by both programs.

- Develop a regularly scheduled meeting for all local job developers, including those from other types of employment programs. This provides support for job development, though not necessarily for the IPS approach.

Turnover interrupts employment services if there is only one employment specialist. Ideas to improve continuity of services:

- Encourage management to create a second employment specialist position, even if it is part time.
- Ask the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and mental health practitioners to provide services while the position is vacant.

Meeting productivity requirements can be difficult because extra driving time is necessary in rural and frontier areas. Examples of how some employment specialists and managers have dealt with this problem include:

- A program leader asked a church to provide office space to an employment specialist so she would not have to drive back to the agency between appointments. The specialist is able to complete paperwork, make phone calls, and meet clients at the church.
- Employment specialists schedule successive client appointments and employer contacts in one geographic area.
- Employment specialists track when job seekers are scheduled to come to the agency for mental health appointments. Employment specialists usually meet people in the community, but when they know their client is coming to the agency, they schedule job developing with the person since she will be in town that day.
- Agency managers adjust productivity expectations for employment specialists because they spend at least 65 percent of their work week in the community. Another reason for the adjustment is that meeting with employers may involve driving to businesses where the employer is not available, or only available for a few minutes.

## References

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Luciano, A., Bond, G.R., Drake, R.E., & Becker, D.R. (2013). Is High Fidelity to Supported Employment Equally Attainable in Small and Large Communities? *Community Mental Health Journal, 50*(1), 46-50.



## Helping People with Criminal Histories Find Work

### Tips for Employment Specialists

- Begin building relationships with employers by learning about their business and workforce needs. At some point, return to talk about a job seeker who has skills and strengths that match the needs of that employer. Ask if the employer would be interested in meeting the person. If the employer agrees to meet, come back with your client to help her talk about the reasons she would be a good employee, and also to help the job seeker explain her criminal history. Many employers would prefer to hire people without criminal histories, but may decide to hire an individual who takes responsibility for her actions, is trying to turn her life around, and has the skills and qualifications to do the job. It is best to bring up the criminal history while the job seeker is meeting face-to-face with an employer. This gives the employer an opportunity to see that the job seeker is sincere about making changes in her life.
- If you already have a good relationship with an employer (for example, the employer has hired one of your clients in the past) you might do things differently. With client permission, you might talk to the employer yourself about the job seeker's strengths, his criminal history, and the reasons you believe the person will be a good employee. Describe how the person has been working to change his life and explain how the person's skills and abilities will be an asset to the company. For example, "Rick has a conviction for possession of drugs with intent to sell. However, he has been in treatment for eight months and is very committed to changing his life. In regard to a job, Rick is someone who always shows up. He really wants to work and I know that you have expressed interest in meeting people who are very reliable. Would you be interested in meeting with Rick?"
- As you get to know individual employers, keep track of their policies about hiring people with felonies. Remember to differentiate between hard policies and opinions, because opinions can change as employers react to individual job seekers. Rely on things you learn from talking directly to employers, rather than lists of "felony-friendly employers" that may be circling around your community.
- Work hard to help the job seeker make face-to-face contact with employers. "Give the job seeker a face." It is essential that the job seeker use this meeting to engage with the employer and begin building a relationship of his or her own with the employer.
- Help the person think of examples that illustrate their skills or how they have changed. Don't rely on global examples. For instance, rather than saying, "I can multitask", try "On my last job, I was responsible for answering the phone, helping people who walked in the front door, and entering information into the computer. During busy times, I juggled all of these responsibilities at once." Rather than, "I

have changed my life”, try “I’ve learned that there are consequences for the things I do and I am trying to make better choices. For example, I am not spending time with people who get in trouble—instead I have been going to GED classes three days a week. Getting a job is another part of my recovery.” Both employment specialists and mental health practitioners can help clients think about the strengths and skills that they can bring to the workplace.

- Help the person practice the way that she or he explains the conviction(s). Be direct. Give the facts but keep it brief. Essential elements of this script should include:

1. *A brief statement about the conviction.*

The idea is to avoid sounding evasive. “In 2002, I was convicted of breaking and entering.”

2. *A statement that shows that the person takes ownership for her actions.*

“It was a mistake.” “I regret that decision.” “I made a poor choice.”

3. *An explanation of things the person has done to change his life.*

“I’m in counseling.” “I’m in AA now and I’m helping people in my group.”

“I’m working on my GED because I want to better myself.” “I’m volunteering because I want to give back to my community.” “I’ve learned that I ...”

4. *An explanation of how the person would be a good employee.*

“I am very reliable. For example, I have been volunteering at my church and I have never missed a day.” “In my previous jobs I have always been on time and my employers thought I was a good team player.”

*An example of how to put it all together:*

“Two years ago I had a drug problem and made some bad choices. As a result, I was convicted of theft. I no longer want to live that kind of lifestyle. I’m working on changing my life. For example, I’m involved in treatment and I have been sober for six months. Going back to work is part of moving my life forward and I will be a good employee because I have experience as an assembler...”

- Help the person deal with feelings of hopelessness and shame by building a list of strengths and abilities. Another strategy would be to help the person develop a list of positive affirmations. Use a paradigm shift. For example, rather than “you were homeless”, ask the person how they survived on the streets. What strengths did they use to get by?
- Help the person feel confident about his or her strengths so that he can sound believable when describing the reasons that he would be a good fit for the business. Rehearse talking about strengths with the person. Allow the person to use his or her own words.

- Think about vocabulary. Are you or the person using words such as “felon”, “ex-convict”, “ex-offender” or “client”? Instead talk about a qualified job seeker who has made changes in his or her life.
- Help the job seeker focus on his or her tone of voice. For example, speaking clearly and using a matter-of-fact tone, rather than an angry tone.
- Help people obtain letters of recommendation. Parole or probation officers, mental health practitioners, clergy, volunteer supervisors, GED instructors, college professors, past employers, and employment specialists can be good sources. Consider helping the person to gather letters of references, certificates of treatment completion, awards, work samples, and other material into a self-promotional portfolio.
- Practice job interviews with the person. Video. Role-play.
- Help the person to follow up on all job applications and interviews to show enthusiasm for working. For example, help the person write thank-you notes for job interviews.
- Be familiar with Work Opportunities Tax Credit ([www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax](http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax)) and federal bonding program ([www.bonds4jobs.com](http://www.bonds4jobs.com)) before offering these incentives to employers. The websites include information that you can share with employers.
- If someone does not respond well to your suggestions, enlist the help of others such as mentors or parole officers with whom the person can identify. Ask those people to provide feedback to job seekers, if needed. For example, feedback about demeanor, body language or dress.
- Align yourself with your client. Focus on your client’s goals. “I want to help you with your goal. Some employers may have stigma about legal histories, but that isn’t your barrier—it belongs to those employers. We’ll find an employer who is right for you.”
- Consider checking the person’s references (with permission). Call references to see if they really will say positive things about the person. “I’m working with Bob. He’s applying for jobs and I noticed that you are listed as a reference. What would you say about Bob as a potential employee?”
- Be respectful of client preferences by supporting long-term employment goals and asking about short-term goals. If a person is unable to find work in his area of interest, then help the person explore additional job options.
- If the person is not using disclosure, offer to help the person draft a letter of explanation that will accompany all job applications. Also encourage these job

seekers to try to make direct contact with employers to explain how they are changing their lives. The letter should include the following elements:

- A brief statement about the conviction
- A statement that shows that the person takes ownership for their actions. “It was a mistake.” “I regret that decision.” “I made a poor choice.”
- An explanation of ways that the person has changed his or her life since then. “I’m in counseling.” “I’m in AA now and I’m helping people in my group.” “I’m working on my GED because I want to better myself.” “I’m volunteering because I want to give back to my community.”
- Explanation of how the person would be a good employee.

# “Nobody would hire me if they knew”

**A worksheet** for people who want to find good jobs in spite of a criminal history.

It can be difficult to look a prospective employer in the eye and talk about a criminal history. However, many employers are willing to hire people with felonies and misdemeanors if they are honest and upfront about their past. People who have found jobs in spite of felonies, agree with this perspective:

*“I found out that telling the truth about my criminal history made it easier for me to interview for a job because then I didn't have to make up other lies to avoid the truth.”*

### **The way that you talk about your legal record can make the difference.**

In order to hire, employers say that they need to believe that the person has changed his or her life for the better. There are four things that you should

remember when talking to employers about your record:

1. **Be honest and upfront.** Look the employer in the eye and tell them about your conviction(s). For example, a person might say: “In 2007, I was convicted of theft and drug possession.”
2. **Let the employer know that you are willing to take responsibility** for what you did, but keep it brief. For example, “I regret the things I did.”
3. **Explain how your life is different now.** For example, “I’m in counseling now so I have support”, “I’ve been sober for six months”, “I’m going to GED classes because I want to focus on getting ahead”, “I’ve been going to church because religion helps me stay focused on the right choices”, “I’ve been volunteering at the food pantry because I want to give back to my community.”

4. **Talk to the employer about the reasons that you would be a good employee.** “I have experience as an assembler and I am very reliable. At my last job, I only missed one day of work in 11 months.”

*“In my experience, it’s important to come clean, admit to your mistakes and then tell the employer what you have learned from the experience and why you will behave differently in the future.”*

Begin by thinking about the work experience and job skills that you have to offer an employer. For example, experience in food service, a welding certificate, or experience working with customers.

List your job skills and work experiences below. (If you had any training or work experience in prison, include that as well.)

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Now think about your good qualities as a person—characteristics that an employer would like. For example, has anyone ever told you that you get along well with others? That you are reliable? That you stay calm in stressful situations? List your strengths below:

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**Read the following examples to see how you might explain your history:**

*Example One:*

“I have a charge of possession of drugs on my record. I have made some bad choices in my life. I’ve successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program and I am currently working with an employment specialist to help me to find part-time employment. I would never use drugs that would affect my ability to do my job. I have experience working with the public and previous employers told me that I have great customer service skills.”

*Example Two:*

“I have a sexual assault charge on my record. I know that what I did was wrong. I used poor judgment and made a life-changing mistake. I understand now how to make better choices and not repeat the same mistakes. I am eager to start a new job and continue down a more positive path. My family is supportive, I am an active member of my church and I am engaged in mental health treatment. I would be a good employee because I am extremely reliable and I have experience driving a forklift.”

*Example Three:*

“When I was younger I was arrested for burglary. I am extremely remorseful and I understand that I made a poor choice. I am a changed person. I have grown and I have not committed any crimes since then. I am currently a volunteer at the local soup kitchen and I am very involved in my community. I am a hard worker. I’ve always been a person who wanted to work and I never complain on the job.”

**Finally, write the statement that you will use to talk to employers about your past.**

It will help if you practice saying your statement out loud until you can say it with confidence. You can also review your statement before going to meet with employers.

State your conviction(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Express regret/take responsibility for past choices. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Explain how your life is different now. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tell the employer why you will be a good employee. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Think about people who know you and can vouch for you.**

For example, your employment specialist, VR counselor, probation or parole officer, AA sponsor, clergy, GED instructor, volunteer supervisor or past employer. Consider asking those people to write a

letter explaining that they know you and believe that you are a person of good character—that you have changed your life for the better. Bring copies of these letters when you meet with employers.

**Finally, stay positive.**

It may not happen overnight, but people with all sorts of convictions and multiple convictions have been able to get back to work. You can, too.

stay positive

## Sample Advocacy Statements for Job Developers

*If you are working with a job seeker who is not animated and does not talk much, you might say something like:*

“When you meet Allison, you’ll notice that she is a very quiet person, but she is definitely excited about the possibility of working here. She is very eager to work and she identified stocking as the type of work that she would like most.”

“Hi, I just wanted to touch base with you about John’s interview yesterday. I know that he didn’t talk much, and I worried that you might think that he isn’t interested in the job. I wanted to let you know that he was nervous because he wants the job so much. I think that is why he had a hard time talking with you.”

*Employer says to have the person submit an application and she will call people for interviews. You know that your client doesn’t have much of a work history.*

“You might not be tempted to interview him based on his job application because he doesn’t have much work history. But you’ve also been telling me that you want to hire people who are going to show up and be invested in doing a good job. And I can tell you that’s the kind of person he is. He is highly motivated to work. I think that working here would be tremendously meaningful to him.”

*You went with a job seeker to hand in a job application. The two of you were able to meet the manager, but this was not an employer with whom you had a prior relationship. With permission from your client, you might go back to meet the employer and say something like:*

“Hi, Nilda. I came by on Monday with Heidi who was applying for a receptionist position. I was in the neighborhood this morning and thought I would stop by to explain my role as Heidi’s employment specialist. Is this a good time for you?... My job is to help people re-enter the workforce. I help people apply for jobs, but I also spend time in the community meeting with employers to learn about their businesses. For instance, it helps to learn about the type of person each employer feels is a good fit for his or her business, the employer’s hiring preferences, and so forth. In fact, I was hoping that I might be able to schedule a 15-minute appointment to learn more about your business and what is most important to you in a job candidate.”

*Your client interviews for a job without you, though you know the employer and helped to set up the job interview. Your client reports that he did not bring up his legal history during the interview.*

“Hi, Hector. Is this a good time for you? I wanted to stop by to find out how the interview went with Edward....You know, he called me afterwards because he had planned to talk to you about something in his legal history but he said that during the interview, he was just too nervous to start the conversation. I wonder if I could bring him by some day for a few minutes so that he can explain what happened and what he is doing with his life now.”

*Person has auditory hallucinations and responds to her voices frequently.*

“Charles, when you meet Ava you might notice that she mumbles to herself. That’s one reason that Ava and I thought working in receiving would be a good fit. I just wanted you to know about that and to know that it won’t stop her from doing a good job. Even though she may talk to herself off and on during the day, you’ll see that she will just keep on working.”

*The employer wants to know why your client needs help applying for jobs. With permission from your client you might say something like:*

“I work with people who have had mental health problems, for example, depression or anxiety. But it is actually hard to describe the people I work with because each person is so different and has different skills and experiences. For example, one person is a bookkeeper at a car dealership, another is washing dishes in a diner and another is working in a childcare center. Each person is doing his job as well as his co-workers and also feels grateful to be working again.”

*If the employer(above) continues to ask for specific information about your client:*

“You seem to be concerned about whether someone who has had mental health difficulties would do a good job for your company. Can you tell me a little bit more about your concerns?”

“This is a little more personal information than I was prepared to give about Sandy, but how about if I bring Sandy in to meet you and the three of us could discuss this together? That way she can answer your questions directly.”



## **Supported Employment**

### **IPS Employer Contacts**

What Counts as an employer contact?

- Scheduling an appt with employer-in person-talking with person of hiring authority
- Gaining and documenting information learned about the business (informational interview) What qualities do you look for in a potential candidate? What does a typical day look like for .....Types of positions and skills for each)
- Documenting what you learned about the jobs/employer
- Inquire about employer needs
- Asking what they look for in applicants
- Advocating and/or educating about SE program
- Advocating for consumer and sitting in on interviews.

What does not count as an employer contact?

- ONLY asking about job openings or if they are hiring
- Telephone calls
- Observation of consumer already working.
- Home Visits
- Turning in applications/doing online applications, paperwork drop without talking to employer.



Employment specialist: Allison Ortiz for client: Kelly R.

Business/location: Sal's Diner

Date of contact: 2/15/20xx

Name of contact person: Chris Hanover

Does this person have hiring responsibilities?  Yes  No  Unsure

Purpose of the contact: To learn about the business—especially food prep positions.

Information learned about business or other notes: He looks for someone who walks in "with a smile on their face." Good team players are really important. Usually wants people who can perform more than one position, but willing to make accommodation. Food prep involves a lot of work on the salad bar—usually in the morning through the lunch hour. Also making ice tea, baking frozen pies, dishing out servings of pudding... Speed is helpful but sounds like the most important thing to him is someone who is reliable and able to get along with others in the kitchen. Business is slow now but usually picks up in March.

Outcome/plan to follow up: Send thank-you note tomorrow. Stop back next week to talk about Kelly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date reviewed

## PLAN FOR APPROACHING EMPLOYERS

Some people who use supported employment services ask their employment specialist to talk to employers on their behalf. For instance, if a person was interested in factory jobs, the employment specialist might go out to meet some managers of factories to learn more about their jobs and to talk about the reasons that the person would be a good worker. When employment specialists talk to employers, they usually tell the employer that they work for an employment program at a mental health center. Sometimes this strategy helps people find work a little more quickly or helps people find a very specific type of job. Further, if a person gets hired, the employment specialist can help talk to the employer if there is ever a problem.

Other people who use supported employment services do not give the employment specialist permission to talk to employers on their behalf. Instead they may ask for help with job leads, filling out applications, practicing interviewing skills or other things that can help them find a job. People use this strategy when they don't want employers to know they are working with a supported employment program. Many people find that they are successful with jobs by using this approach.

Either option is fine. You should pick the strategy that feels most comfortable to you. It's also ok to change your mind at any time during the job search or after you are hired.

It's important for you and your employment specialist to talk about the possible pros and cons introducing the employment specialist to employers. The reasons that some people would not want to use this approach include:

- Some people are fearful that employers won't hire them if their disability is known. It's true that there is stigma about mental illness and that some employers probably do discriminate. It's also true that some employers are interested in working with programs like supported employment.
- Some people don't mind if their supervisor knows they are working with a program, but they wouldn't want their co-workers to find out. The employment specialist could ask your supervisor to keep this information confidential, but there aren't any guarantees that the information won't slip out.
- Some people say that they don't want to use disclosure because they are working on recovery and want to take on more responsibility, such as dealing with a supervisor, themselves.
- Some people just don't feel that this type of help is necessary. They feel pretty sure that they can be successful with a job without the employment specialist talking to employers.

The reasons that a person might want the employment specialist to talk to employers could include:

- To get extra help with a job search. Employment specialists can talk to employers about the reasons that you would be a good employee, can find out more about the available jobs and can try to set up interviews with employers.
- To get extra feedback about your work performance. Some employers don't give their employees much feedback about their work performance. Extra feedback can help a worker improve his or her performance and succeed at work.
- To ask the boss for help with a job problem. For example, if you took a job and then found out that the hours were too much for you, your employment specialist could ask the employer to decrease your hours. The employer might say no, but there is a possibility that the employer would agree. Your employment specialist can give you other examples.

You probably have your own personal feelings about disclosure. Try working on the table below with your employment specialist.

Possible Advantages of Disclosure	Possible Disadvantages of Disclosure

When employment specialists talk to employers, it is usually possible for them to keep some things private. For example, some people don't want their employment specialist to share information like diagnosis or medications. Talk this over with your employment specialist and write down the things that you wouldn't want the specialist to share with an employer.

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If you think that you might want your employment specialist to speak with employers, the two of you should discuss what he or she might say. For example, if a person thought he might be anxious at first, the employment specialist could say, "He might have a little difficulty with concentration at first because he is anxious about doing a good job. However, after a couple of weeks, I'm sure that he will be accustomed to the job and his concentration will be fine." You and your employment specialist should **stop here** and talk about some of the things that he or she might say to employers.

For now, what is your preference about approaching employers?

- I don't want my employment specialist to talk to employers.
- I am not sure right now and I would like some more time to think about this and receive some more information.
- I don't want my employment specialist to share information about me with employers. However, if my employment specialist is talking to an employer who has the type of jobs that I like and s/he hears about a good job lead, I'd like to hear about that. Maybe I'll decide to disclose for that employer.
- It's fine with me if my employment specialist talks to employers on my behalf.

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Client

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Date

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Employment specialist

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Date

**Information Sheet\***  
**Employment Supports for Clients with**  
**Co-Occurring Mental Illness and Substance Abuse**

The Myths	The Facts
Work is too stressful for clients with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse.	As with other members of our society, work improves self-esteem, adds a sense of purpose, and contributes towards recovery in positive ways for many people with dual disorders.
Clients with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse benefit from extensive pre-vocational assessments and work readiness programs before further employment options are pursued.	The best predictors of work success for persons with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse are a client's: 1) expressed interest in working, and 2) previous employment history. Substance abuse is not a consistent predictor of work success or failure.
Clients with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse are more successful in sheltered vocational programs where they can be monitored and have their problems addressed by program staff.	With appropriate supports when needed, clients report greater job satisfaction and success in competitive employment of their own choosing.
Clients with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse will do poorly no matter what.	The majority of clients with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse will get into recovery when offered high-quality integrated dual diagnosis treatment.
Clients who are able to recover from a substance use disorder are always at significant risk for relapse.	Relapse of a substance use disorder is always a possibility, but employment may protect clients from relapse. Employment is associated with continued recovery, and relapse is associated with unemployment, housing instability, and loss of social supports.
Clients with substance abuse problems don't want to work.	Like other people, many clients with substance abuse are interested in working and find work to be a good reason to cut back or stop their substance abuse.
Clients who abuse substances lack good work skills.	Many clients with substance abuse have a variety of interests, employment histories, and job skills that are valuable on the job.
Whenever a urine drug screen is positive, the client has been using recently.	Different drugs stay in the body for different periods of time. Additionally, substances can build up in the body if used regularly. --Alcohol is usually excreted at the speed of about 1 hour for each drink. --Cocaine is excreted pretty rapidly - usually within a day. --Cannabis is excreted more slowly because THC, the active form of the substance, is stored in body fat and slowly excreted. Regular, heavy cannabis users can have positive urines for 6 weeks after becoming abstinent. Depending on amount and regularity of cannabis use, users can have positive urines for as brief as a few hours to 6 weeks.
A positive drug screen indicates recent use and a negative screen indicates non-use.	The truth is more complicated. Different drugs stay in the body and appear in the urine for different time intervals. Some tests include only a few drugs and omit all others. Some tests are much more accurate (and expensive) than others. Talk to someone at your local laboratory to understand the limits of testing.
Clients who relapse with substance abuse are poor candidates for supported employment.	For many clients with substance abuse, relapse is part of the long-term course of recovery. Rates of employment for clients with dual disorders are similar to the rates for clients with a single disorder of mental illness. Supported employment may be part of a client's recovery process.

\*Prepared by the Dartmouth Evidence-Based Practices Center

## **Examples of Follow Along Supports**

### **Help with transportation**

Rides to work to help with anxiety  
Help with travel training (bus system)  
Help looking into alternative forms of transportation (senior ride programs, bicycles, family assistance, paying gas money to a co-worker, getting a car fixed, etc.).

### **Help with social skills on the job**

Working through job problems related to social skills  
Coaching the person on how to start conversations with co-workers, how to deal with co-workers going out for a beer, what to do when there is a party at work...  
Social skills training (case manager or counselor).

### **Interventions with employers**

Explaining systems or behaviors related to symptoms  
Asking for accommodations, job carves, etc...  
Asking for feedback about person's performance (meeting with employers and clients).

### **Dress and grooming**

Helping someone find appropriate clothes for work (could be case manager or ES)  
Verbal encouragement to adjust dress and grooming  
Quick meetings before work to ensure person will meet standards of the workplace  
Help ensure that person has clean clothes and grooming supplies on an ongoing basis (mental health team).

### **Assistance with job changes**

Help to leave jobs based on client preference  
Help finding new jobs  
Help with career development: thinking about new jobs, help obtaining new job skills, technical schools, college, GED or other certificate bearing education programs.

### **Support and Problem Solving**

Regular meetings away from the job site  
Observing the person at work (to determine reasons for slow work, etc.)  
Morning phone calls (to provide encouragement, to help the person get organized for the day...)  
Phone calls during work breaks (or meeting during lunch hour – could be at a location near the work site)  
Groups for working people (peer support)



### **Help managing benefits**

Help accessing benefits information prior to beginning a job  
Monthly meetings to review earnings and changes in benefits  
Monthly meetings to help person send in pay stubs  
Verbal reminders to report earnings  
Help accessing benefits counselor when earnings change  
Help with PASS plans

### **Money management**

Help opening a bank account  
Shopping on payday to control spending on substances  
Help setting up direct deposit or getting paycheck to payee (especially if someone has a substance use disorder)  
Help setting up a savings account so person can use pay for a specific purpose

### **Medication adjustments**

Case manager and employment specialist can work with medication prescriber if symptoms or side effects are a problem on the job.

### **On the job coaching**

### **Help reading/understanding orientation materials or union materials**

### **Family support and education**

### **Help with attendance**

Assistance setting up a calendar with the work schedule  
Reminders to look at work schedule  
Wake up calls

**When planning job supports, don't forget to think about the person's strengths.**

### Follow Along Supports and Career Development

One of the key principles of supported employment is the provision of supports to help people be successful with their jobs and advance their careers after securing employment. Follow along supports can be provided by a wide range of people including employment specialists, peers, case managers, psychiatrists, family members and other supportive people or organization. Follow along supports can also take many forms such as an in-person meeting, a phone call, or a visit to the person’s workplace with permission.

This document lists some areas to consider in planning and providing follow along supports. In each area, list some forms of follow along supports that may be provided and who may also provide those supports. Some examples are provided to get started.

Preparing for the First Day of Work	
Support Area	Provider (s) of Support

First Day of Work	
Support Area	Provider (s) of Support

Transportation	
Support Area	Provider (s) of Support

Communication with supervisor at work	
Support area	Provider (s) of Support

Benefits	

Support Area	Provider(s) of Support

Support Area	Provider(S) of Support

## IPS Services Transition Plan

You have decided to discontinue IPS services. But remember that you are welcome to return to IPS if you think you would benefit from job supports or career development in the future. This guide is meant to support your decision and help you to plan ongoing supports.

**What are your future plans? What is your short-term goal? What is your long-term goal?**

**If you had to make a big decision today who would you call? Who have you called in the past?**

**Who can help with your career goals?**

	Y or N	Name of Support(s) Preferred	Contact Information
My case manager			
My therapist			
My family			
My friend			
My significant other			
Clergy			
Benefits Planner			
Other			

**Should we schedule a meeting with any of your supports to discuss the transition?**

**If you are employed, how often do you want someone to check in with you about your job? Who should check in with you?**

**If you are leaving IPS unemployed, when would be a good time to ask you about returning to IPS for help with employment or education? Who should contact you?**

**How would you like to be contacted?**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> In-person (community) | <input type="radio"/> In-person (job site) | <input type="radio"/> In-person (agency) |
| <input type="radio"/> Phone call            | <input type="radio"/> Text                 | <input type="radio"/> Email              |

**What are some tools/coping strategies you use or have used in the past on the job to manage stress?**

**How would you know if you started to feel dissatisfied with your job or that you were having other problems?**

**What are some reasons to re-connect to IPS in the future?** (Help leaving current job, help finding a new job, help advocating for a promotion or raise, assistance with training or education, benefits planning, etc.)

*Remember, that increases in pay/work hours may affect your benefits. And if you quit working that can also affect your entitlements. If you experience a change in wages, contact a benefits planner to learn more.*

**Benefits planner contact information:** \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature/date: \_\_\_\_\_

IPS specialist signature/date: \_\_\_\_\_ Other signature/date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Provides confidence that staff have the necessary skills to perform high quality work and are committed to best practice.

### For Individuals with Disabilities

Assures job seekers that staff providing assistance are knowledgeable, highly skilled, and competent.



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## quick look

### About Us

Having a job represents much more than earning a salary. Employment, including the kind of work one performs, influences one's personal identity, sense of belonging, and place in the world. Furthermore, employment represents one primary way of expressing the inherent human need to contribute – doing something that matters. Yet all too often the significance of employment for people with disabilities has been unrecognized, ignored, or minimized.

Supported employment is designed to promote personalized employment opportunities for people with disabilities when they need support to:

- Discover personal interests and contributions,
- Find or negotiate a job that fits things people like to do and do well,
- Become established as valued employees; and
- Pursue job advancements.

Kentucky 's Supported Employment Training Project provides support for professionals who in turn support people with disabilities with finding good jobs. Our work through the [Human Development Institute](#) at the [University of Kentucky](#), is sponsored by the [Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) and the [Kentucky Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities](#). Please contact [mtyree@uky.edu](mailto:mtyree@uky.edu) to make suggestions or request additional information. Many documents on this site are only available in PDF format.

■ [SETP Web Page - Information for Job Seekers & Families](#)

■ [David Pitonyak - Beyond Behaviors Aug. 28th, Lexington](#)

■ [Customized Employment Info \(ODEP\)](#)

■ [Customized Employment in Kentucky \(YouTube\)](#)



# FIDELITY PREPARTION AND ACTION PLANNING



A useful guide for all things Fidelity! Can be ordered: <https://www.ipsworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ips-materials-order-form-101316.pdf>

# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW MANUAL

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Please note: Per the Fidelity Reviewer Training in April 2017, the scale has not been updated per the manual. The manual guidance is to be considered primary. If you have questions, contact your UK State Trainer or the ECU Institute Fidelity Reviewers.

### SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE\*

1/7/08

Rater:

Site:

Date:

Total Score:

**Directions:** Circle one anchor number for each criterion.

Criterion

Data  
Source\*\*

Anchor

**Staffing**

1. Caseload size: Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients.

MIS,  
DOC, INT

- 1= Ratio of 41 or more clients per employment specialist.
- 2= Ratio of 31-40 clients per employment specialist.
- 3= Ratio of 26-30 clients per employment specialist.
- 4= Ratio of 21-25 clients per employment specialist.
- 5= Ratio of 20 or fewer clients per employment specialist.

2. Employment services staff: Employment specialists provide only employment services.

MIS, DOC  
INT

- 1= Employment specialists provide employment services less than 60% of the time.
- 2= Employment specialists provide employment services 60 - 74% of the time.
- 3= Employment specialists provide employment services 75 - 89% of the time.
- 4= Employment specialists provide employment services 90 - 95% of the time.
- 5= Employment specialists provide employment services 96% or more of the time.

3. Vocational generalists: Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another MH practitioner. (Note: It is not expected that each employment specialist will provide benefits counseling to their clients. Referrals to a highly trained benefits counselor are in keeping with high fidelity, see Item # 1 in “Services”.)

MIS, DOC,  
INT, OBS

- 1= Employment specialist only provides vocational referral service to vendors and other programs.
- 2= Employment specialist maintains caseload but refers clients to other programs for vocational services.
- 3= Employment specialist provides one to four phases of the employment service (e.g. intake, engagement, assessment, job development, job placement, job coaching, and follow along supports).
- 4= Employment specialist provides five phases of employment service but not the entire service.
- 5= Employment specialist carries out all six phases of employment service (e.g. program intake, engagement, assessment, job development/job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports).

## ORGANIZATION

1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru team assignment: Employment specialists are part of up to 2 mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.

MIS, DOC,  
INT, OBS

- 1= Employment specialists are part of a vocational program that functions separately from the mental health treatment.
- 2= Employment specialists are attached to three or more mental health treatment teams. OR Clients are served by individual mental health practitioners who are not organized into teams. OR Employment specialists are attached to one or two teams from which less than 50% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 3= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which at least 50 - 74% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 4= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which at least 75 - 89% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 5= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which 90 - 100% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.

2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru frequent team member contact:

MIS, DOC  
INT, OBS

Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not replaced by administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services are integrated in a single client chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

1= One or none is present.

2= Two are present

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

All five key components are present.

- Employment specialist attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings.
- Employment specialist participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.
- Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/profile, employment plan, progress notes) is integrated into client's mental health treatment record.
- Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members.
- Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

3. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors: The employment specialists and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.

DOC, INT  
OBS, ISP

1= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) less than quarterly to discuss shared clients and referrals. OR Employment specialists and VR counselors do not communicate.

2= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) at least quarterly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

3= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in-person) monthly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

4= Employment specialists and VR counselors have scheduled, face-to-face

meetings at least quarterly, OR have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) weekly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

5= Employment specialists and VR counselors have scheduled, face-to-face meetings at least monthly and have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) weekly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

4. Vocational unit: At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseload when needed.

MIS, INT,  
OBS

1= Employment specialists are not part of a vocational unit.

2= Employment specialists have the same supervisor but do not meet as a group. They do not provide back-up services for each other's caseload.

3= Employment specialists have the same supervisor and discuss clients between each other on a weekly basis. They provide back-up services for each other's caseloads as needed. OR, If a program is in a rural area where employment specialists are geographically separate with one employment specialist at each site, the employment specialists meet 2-3 times monthly with their supervisor by teleconference.

4= At least 2 employment specialists and a team leader form an employment unit with 2-3 regularly scheduled meetings per month for client-based group supervision in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared and discuss clients between each other. They provide coverage for each other's caseloads when needed. OR, If a program is in a rural area where employment specialists are geographically separate with one employment specialist at each site, the employment specialists meet 2-3 times per month with their supervisor in person or by teleconference and mental health practitioners are available to help the employment specialist with activities such as taking someone to work or picking up job applications.

5= At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader form an employment unit with weekly client-based group supervision based on the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseloads when needed.

5. Role of employment supervisor: Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists' skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five key roles of the employment supervisor are present.

MIS, INT,  
DOC, OBS

1= One or none is present.

2= Two are present.

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

Five key roles of the employment supervisor:

- One full-time equivalent (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to SE supervision half time.)
- Supervisor conducts weekly supported employment supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients in their work lives.
- Supervisor communicates with mental health treatment team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem solve programmatic issues (such as referral process, or transfer of follow-along to mental health workers) and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervisor accompanies employment specialists, who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.
- Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

6. Zero exclusion criteria: All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.

DOC, INT  
OBS

- 1= There is a formal policy to exclude clients due to lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.) by employment staff, case managers, or other practitioners.
- 2= Most clients are unable to access supported employment services due to perceived lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.).
- 3= Some clients are unable to access supported employment services due to perceived lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.).
- 4= No evidence of exclusion, formal or informal. Referrals are not solicited by a wide variety of sources. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held.
- 5= All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services. Mental health practitioners encourage clients to consider employment, and referrals for supported employment are solicited by many sources. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held.

7. Agency focus on competitive employment: Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leadership and staff.

DOC, INT,  
OBS

- 1= One or none is present.
- 2= Two are present.
- 3= Three are present.
- 4= Four are present.
- 5= Five are present.

Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies:

- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.



8. Executive team support for SE: Agency executive team members (e.g., CEO/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, QA Director, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director, Medical Director, Human Resource Director) assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present. DOC, INT, OBS

- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.
- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.
- Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

1= One is present.

2= Two are present.

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

- Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of evidence-based supported employment.
- Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.
- At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. Steering committee is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. Committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.

- The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.). This item is not delegated to another administrator.
- SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

## SERVICES

1. Work incentives planning: All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

- DOC, INT  
OBS, ISP
- 1= Work incentives planning is not readily available or easily accessible to most clients served by the agency.
  - 2= Employment specialist gives client contact information about where to access information about work incentives planning.
  - 3= Employment specialist discusses with each client changes in benefits based on work status.
  - 4= Employment specialist or other MH practitioner offer clients assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning by a person trained in work incentives planning prior to client starting a job.
  - 5= Employment specialist or other MH practitioner offer clients assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning by a specially trained work incentives planner prior to starting a job. They also facilitate access to work incentives planning when clients need to make decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

2. Disclosure: Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.

DOC, INT  
OBS

1= None is present.

2= One is present.

3= Two are present.

4= Three are present.

5= Four are present.

- Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.
- Employment specialists offer to discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure relates to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.
- Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a psychiatric disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offers examples of what could be said to employers.
- Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job.)

3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment: Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc, is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

1= Vocational evaluation is conducted prior to job placement with emphasis on office-based assessments, standardized tests, intelligence tests, work samples.

2= Vocational assessment may occur through a stepwise approach that includes: prevocational work experiences (e.g., work units in a day program), volunteer jobs, or set aside jobs (e.g., NISH jobs agency-run businesses, sheltered workshop jobs, affirmative businesses, enclaves).

3= Employment specialists assist clients in finding competitive jobs directly without systematically reviewing interests, experiences, strengths,

the client's permission, from family members and previous employers.

etc. and do not routinely analyze job loss (or job problems) for lessons learned.

- 4= Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions in which interests and strengths are explored. Employment specialists help clients learn from each job experience and also work with the treatment team to analyze job loss, job problems and job successes. They do not document these lessons learned in the vocational profile, OR The vocational profile is not updated on a regular basis.
- 5= Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and information is documented on a vocational profile form that includes preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc. The vocational profile form is used to identify job types and work environments. It is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with the client's permission, from family members and previous employers. Employment specialists help clients learn from each job experience and also work with the treatment team to analyze job loss, job problems and job successes.

4. Rapid job search for competitive job: Initial employment assessment and first face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after program entry.

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

- 1= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average 271 days or more (> 9 mos.) after program entry.
- 2= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 151 and 270 days (5-9 mos.) after program entry.
- 3= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 61 and 150 days (2-5 mos.) after program entry.
- 4= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 31 and 60 days (1-2 mos.) after program entry.
- 5= The program tracks employer contacts and the first face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average within 30 days (one month) after program entry.

5. Individualized job search: Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences (relating to what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, ability, symptomatology, health, etc.) rather than the job market (i.e., those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.

DOC, INT  
OBS, ISP

- 1= Less than 25% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc. rather than the job market.
- 2= 25-49% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market.
- 3= 50-74% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market.
- 4= 75-89% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market and are consistent with the current employment plan.
- 5= Employment specialist makes employer contacts based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, lessons learned from previous jobs etc., 90-100% of the time rather than the job market and are consistent with the current employment/job search plan. When clients have limited work experience, employment specialists provide information about a range of job options in the community.

6. Job development - Frequent employer contact: Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each then calculate average and use the closest scale point.) An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.

DOC, INT

- 1= Employment specialist makes less than 2 face-to-face employer contacts that are client-specific per week.
- 2= Employment specialist makes 2 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, OR Does not have a process for tracking.
- 3= Employment specialist makes 4 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a monthly basis.
- 4= Employment specialist makes 5 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.

7. Job development - Quality of employer contact:  
 Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.)

DOC, INT,  
 OBS

5= Employment specialist makes 6 or more face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client specific, or 2 employer contacts times the number of people looking for work when there are less than 3 people looking for work on their caseload (e.g., new program). In addition, employment specialist uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.

- 1= Employment specialist meets employer when helping client to turn in job applications, OR Employment specialist rarely makes employer contacts.
- 2= Employment specialist contacts employers to ask about job openings and then shares these “leads” with clients.
- 3= Employment specialist follows up on advertised job openings by introducing self, describing program, and asking employer to interview client.
- 4= Employment specialist meets with employers in person whether or not there is a job opening, advocates for clients by describing strengths and asks employers to interview clients.
- 5= Employment specialist builds relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer.

8. Diversity of job types: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs.

DOC, INT,  
 OBS, ISP

- 1= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs less than 50% of the time.
- 2= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 50-59% of the time.
- 3= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 60-69% of the time.
- 4= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 70-84% of the time.

9. Diversity of employers: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

5= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 85-100% of the time.

1= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with the different employers less than 50% of the time.

2= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with the same employers 50-59% of the time.

3= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 60-69% of the time.

4= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 70-84% of the time.

5= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 85-100% of the time.

10. Competitive jobs: Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional employment positions). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for and are not set aside for people with disabilities. (Seasonal jobs and jobs from temporary agencies that other community members use are counted as competitive jobs.)

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

1= Employment specialists provide options for permanent, competitive jobs less than 64% of the time, OR There are fewer than 10 current jobs.

2= Employment specialists provide options for permanent, competitive jobs about 65- 74% of the time.

3= Employment specialists provide options for permanent competitive jobs about 75-84% of the time.

4= Employment specialists provide options for permanent competitive jobs about 85-94% of the time.

5= 95% or more competitive jobs held by clients are permanent.

11. Individualized follow-along supports:

Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g., medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e., natural supports), and employment specialist. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job, accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development, i.e., assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties.

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

- 1= Most clients do not receive supports after starting a job.
- 2= About half of the working clients receive a narrow range of supports provided primarily by the employment specialist.
- 3= Most working clients receive a narrow range of supports that are provided primarily by the employment specialist.
- 4= Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Employment specialists provide employer supports at the client's request.
- 5= Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. The employment specialist helps people move onto more preferable jobs and also helps people with school or certified training programs. The site provides examples of different types of support including enhanced supports by treatment team members.

12. Time-unlimited follow-along supports:

Employment specialists have face-to-face contact within 1 week before starting a job, within 3 days after starting a job, weekly for the first month, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily, and desired by clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within 3 days of learning about the job loss.

DOC, INT,  
OBS, ISP

- 1= Employment specialist does not meet face-to-face with the client after the first month of starting a job.
- 2= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with less than half of the working clients for at least 4 months after starting a job.
- 3= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with at least half of the working clients for at least 4 months after starting a job.
- 4= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with working clients weekly for the first month after starting a job, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily, and desired by clients.
- 5= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact within 1 week before starting a job, within 3 days after starting a job, weekly for the first month, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily and desired by clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports, from a mental health worker following steady employment clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment.



Employment specialist contacts clients within 3 days of hearing about the job loss.

13. Community-based services: Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists. (Rate each employment specialist based upon their total weekly scheduled work hours then, calculate the average and use the closest scale point.)

DOC, INT  
OBS

- 1= Employment specialist spends 30% time or less in the scheduled work hours in the community.
- 2= Employment specialist spends 30 - 39% time of total scheduled work hours in the community.
- 3= Employment specialist spends 40 -49% of total scheduled work hours in the then community.
- 4= Employment specialist spends 50 - 64% of total scheduled work hours in the community.
- 5= Employment specialist spends 65% or more of total scheduled work hours in the community.

14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team: Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. Multiple home/community visits. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. Connect with family, when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue SE services, the team stops outreach.

MIS, DOC,  
INT, OBS

- 1= Evidence that 2 or less strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 2= Evidence that 3 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 3= Evidence that 4 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 4= Evidence that 5 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 5= Evidence that all 6 strategies for engagement and outreach are used: i) Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. ii) Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. iii) Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. iv) Multiple home/community visits. v) Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. vi) Connect with family, when applicable.

\*Data sources:

- MIS Management Information System
- DOC Document review: clinical records, agency policy and procedures
- INT Interviews with clients, employment specialists, mental health staff,  
VR counselors, families, employers
- OBS Observation (e.g., team meeting, shadowing employment specialists)
- ISP Individualized Service Plan

2/14/96  
6/20/01, Updated  
1/7/08, Revised

Supported Employment Fidelity Scale Score Sheet

<b>Staffing</b>		
1.	Caseload size	Score:
2.	Employment services staff	Score:
3.	Vocational generalists	Score:
<b>Organization</b>		
1.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru team assignment	Score:
2.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru frequent team member contact	Score:
3.	Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors	Score:
4.	Vocational unit	Score:
5.	Role of employment supervisor	Score:
6.	Zero exclusion criteria	Score:
7.	Agency focus on competitive employment	Score:
8.	Executive team support for SE	Score:
<b>Services</b>		
1.	Work incentives planning	Score:
2.	Disclosure	Score:
3.	Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	Score:
4.	Rapid search for competitive job	Score:
5.	Individualized job search	Score:
6.	Job development—Frequent employer contact	Score:
7.	Job development—Quality of employer contact	Score:
8.	Diversity of job types	Score:
9.	Diversity of employers	Score:
10.	Competitive jobs	Score:
11.	Individualized follow-along supports	Score:
12.	Time-unlimited follow-along supports	Score:
13.	Community-based services	Score:
14.	Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	Score:
	Total:	

115 – 125	= Exemplary Fidelity
100 - 114	= Good Fidelity
74 – 99	= Fair Fidelity
73 and below	= Not Supported Employment

# IPS Fidelity Review – Sample #1

## Schedule/Agenda

### Tuesday January 1

I Introductions	9:00-9:30
- Overview Of Agency	
- Review of Agenda	
- Housekeeping	
II Interview with IPS Supervisor –	9:30- 10:55
III Interview with Employment Specialist –	11:00-11:40
IV Interview with Employment Specialist –	11:45-12:25
V Lunch	12:30-1:00
VI Interview with Participant –	1:00-1:30
VII Interview with OVR Counselors –	1:35-2:05
VIII Interview with Benefits Counselor –	2:15-2:30
IX Leadership Team Meeting –	2:45-4:00

### Wednesday January 2

I Unit Meeting –	9:00-10:00
II Treatment Team Meeting – Adult Services Team	10:30- 10:55
III Interview with Therapist –	11:05-11:40
IV Interview with Case Manager –	11:45-12:30
V Lunch	12:30-1:00
VI Job Development Activities –	1:45-3:00
VII Interview with Prescriber –	3:15-3:30
VIII Interview with Peer Support –	3:30-4:00

# Sample Agenda #2

## IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW SCHEDULE

123 Supported Drive, Hometown, KY

March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

### DAY ONE-Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

<b>Partial Day:</b> Chart reviews: Fidelity Reviewer (Room booked all day)	<b>Work Room, Room 123</b>
<b>8:30-9:00</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 119</b>
Interview w/ MH Therapist	Therapist
<b>9:00am-10:00am</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 119</b>
Interview w/ MH Case Manager	Case Manager
<b>10:00am-11:00am</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 206</b>
Interview with IPS Supervisor	Team Lead
<b>11:00am-12:00pm</b>	<b>Job Room, Room 163</b>
Mental Health Treatment Team Meeting	
<b>12:00pm-1:00m</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:00pm-2:00pm</b>	
Individual interviews w/ Employment Specialists	IPS Staff w/ Reviewer #1: <b>Work Room</b> IPS Staff w/ Reviewer #2: <b>Job Room</b> IPS Staff w/ Reviewer #3: <b>SE Office</b>
<b>2:00pm-3:00pm</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 119</b>
Interview w/ Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	VR Counselor
<b>3:00pm-3:30pm</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 119</b>
Family Interview	
<b>3:30-4:30pm</b>	<b>Work Room, Room 119</b>
Client Group Interview	

**DAY TWO-Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

**Partial Day:** Chart reviews: Fidelity Reviewer (Room booked all day)

**Work Room, Room 123**

**9:00am-9:20am**

**Work Room, Room 206**

Overview of the agency

CEO

**9:20am-10:00am**

**Work Room, Room 206**

Interview with Leadership Team Members: Agency CEO, Behavioral Health V.P., BH Clinical Director, and Quality Assurance Director

**10:00am-10:15pm**

**Work Room, Room 206**

Interview w/ Benefits Counselor, CWIC/ Phone Interview

**10:30-11:00**

**Dr. Office**

Interview with agency Psychiatrist

**11:00pm-12:30pm**

**Job Room, Room 170**

Unit Meeting

**12:30pm-1:30pm**

Lunch

**1:30pm-2:00pm**

**Supports Room, Room 170**

Interview with MH TCM

OVR Counselor

**2:00-2:30**

**Job Room, Room 170**

Interview with MH Therapist

Therapist

**2:30pm-4:00pm**

**Field work**

Shadow Job Development w/ Employment Specialists

**Fictional Mental Health Agency  
Supported Employment Fidelity Action Plan  
12/5/12**

Fidelity Item	Goal	Method to Achieve	Date	Person(s) Responsible
Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru frequent team member contact	1. Employment specialists will participate in the entire treatment team meeting to help the team think about work for others, and to learn about people who may be referred to SE in the future.	SE Supervisor to ask employment specialists to participate in entire meeting.	12/15/12	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor
	2. The clinical charts will each have an employment section in which all supported employment documents are filed.	SE Supervisor to rotate attendance at mental health treatment team meetings to observe the process.	3/15/13	
	3. There is one empty office available in the main building. This office will be reserved for SE staff to use when they are at the main building.	Records department to establish one section of the chart for SE documentation.	5/1/13	<u>Julia Vasquez</u> , Med Records Director;
		SE Supervisor to share a copy of all forms with Medical Records Director.	1/4/13	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor
		Maintenance department to supply keys to the SE team.	1/4/13	<u>Alton Worthy</u> , Facilities Director

Fidelity Item	Goal	Method to Achieve	Date	Person(s) Responsible
Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors	Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and employment specialists will meet at least once a month to talk about clients. VR counselors have agreed to attend the SE Unit meeting once each month, if the meeting can be held at the VR office on alternate months.	SE Supervisor and VR Supervisor to establish the meeting schedule and to jointly run the meetings.	1/4/13	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor; <u>Randy Reichert</u> , VR Supervisor
Agency focus on competitive employment	Annual treatment plans will include 2-3 questions about interest in work.	The Clinical Director and SE team will work together to develop a few questions to add to the treatment plans. The forms committee will review the proposed changes.	5/1/13	<u>John Smith</u> , Clinical Director; <u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor
	Posters about supported employment will be visible in waiting areas in the main building.	The SE supervisor will contact Dartmouth PRC to ask for client posters about SE. Management Team will review the posters before they are placed in waiting areas.	1/4/13	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor; <u>Hilda Ortiz</u> , Executive Director
	At least 2 client back-to-work stories will be featured in the agency newsletter this year.	The SE team will ask clients if they would be willing to share their stories and will help clients write the stories, as needed.	2/15/13	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor; <u>John Smith</u> , Clinical Director



<p>Agency focus on competitive employment (continued)</p>	<p>A person who has returned to work will visit the day treatment program quarterly to talk about working.</p> <p>The agency will track the number of working clients who have serious mental illness on a quarterly basis. Management Team will set goals for increased employment and will share this information with all employees at the agency.</p>	<p>The Clinical Director will work with “Bridges” (peer operated services) to see if they can help develop a small speaker’s bureau on this topic. The agency will pay a stipend (\$25) to speakers.</p> <p>Once each quarter, case managers will receive a caseload list and will indicate which clients are working. The IS department will compile the data for review by Management Team.</p>	<p>7/1/13</p> <p>9/1/13</p>	<p><u>John Smith</u>, Clinical Director; <u>Alan Freed</u>, Director of Bridges</p> <p><u>Barb Lasso</u>, IT Director; All MH supervisors; <u>Hilda Ortiz</u>, Executive Director</p>
<p>Executive team support for SE</p>	<p>Management Team will allocate part of their monthly meeting to the SE Supervisor at least twice each year.</p> <p>The QA program will track SE fidelity scores, and will develop goals for improved fidelity.</p>	<p>SE Supervisor to attend January and July meetings to discuss program barriers and facilitators.</p> <p>The QA Director will include fidelity scores in report and will work with SE Supervisor to develop goals for increased fidelity.</p>	<p>7/15/13</p> <p>9/1/13</p>	<p><u>Mary Johnson</u>, SE Supervisor; <u>Hilda Ortiz</u>, Executive Director</p> <p><u>Julio Vasquez</u>, QA Director; <u>Mary Johnson</u>, SE Supervisor</p>

Executive team support for SE (continued)	An SE Advisory Committee will meet quarterly to discuss program outcomes, to help the SE team with barriers, and to monitor the fidelity action plan.	The SE Supervisor and Clinical Director will schedule and facilitate Advisory Committee meetings. Participants may include: Hilda Ortiz (Executive Director), NAMI member, Chamber of Commerce member, VR Supervisor, Alan Freed from Bridges, clients from SE program and one mental health supervisor.	5/1/13	<u>Mary Johnson</u> , SE Supervisor; <u>John Smith</u> , Clinical Director
Work incentives planning	<p>All SE clients will receive help accessing benefits planning through WIPA.</p> <p>Employment specialists will help clients schedule appointments with WIPA and will offer to attend the appointments for clients who don't have a family member to go with them. Employment specialists will follow up with clients to ensure that they have the information they need and will offer additional benefits planning as changes in income occur.</p>	<p>VR will reimburse WIPA for open clients. The county mental health board will reimburse WIPA for clients who are not open with VR (about 10% of SE program).</p> <p>SE Supervisor will maintain tracking form of clients who have completed a meeting with a benefits planner.</p>	<p>3/1/13</p> <p>3/1/13</p>	<p><u>Randy Reichert</u>, VR Supervisor; <u>Rachel Greenberg</u>, MH Board</p> <p><u>Mary Johnson</u>, SE Supervisor</p>

<p>Job development-frequent employer contact</p> <p>(Role of employment supervisor)</p>	<p>The employment specialists will increase face-to-face employer contacts to at least 5 each week. Supervisor will attempt to make at least 1 employer contact/week for her (smaller) caseload.</p> <p>The SE Supervisor will sign off on tracking forms on a weekly basis. The supervisor will also meet with employment specialists who are having trouble meeting this goal (or who are not achieving job placements).</p> <p>The SE Supervisor will provide field mentoring to each employment specialist on the team (every other month for each specialist).</p>	<p>SE Supervisor to discuss new goal with the SE team and to brainstorm different strategies for making employer contacts.</p> <p>SE Supervisor to request tracking forms on Mondays. SE team (and supervisor) to begin using form suggested by fidelity reviewers. Copies of forms to go to VR monthly.</p> <p>SE Supervisor to schedule field mentoring (for employer contacts) with employment specialists.</p>	<p>1/4/13</p> <p>2/7/12</p> <p>2/15/12</p>	<p><u>Mary Johnson,</u> SE Supervisor; <u>SE Team</u></p> <p><u>Mary Johnson,</u> SE Supervisor</p> <p><u>Mary Johnson,</u> SE Supervisor</p>
<p>Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team</p>	<p>When clients begin missing appointments (or do not engage after referral) employment specialists will try several strategies to re-engage the person, including contacting the case manager to ask to attend the next case management appointment. Employment specialists will document outreach attempts in the clinical chart (progress notes).</p>	<p>SE Supervisor to talk about efforts to engage clients during supervision. If a particular strategy is not successful, SE Supervisor will help the employment specialist think of another strategy to try.</p>	<p>2/28/12</p>	<p><u>Mary Johnson,</u> SE Supervisor; SE Team</p>

Agency Name:

Date:

<b>Fidelity Item</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Method to Achieve</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>

**X CENTER**  
**SE FIDELITY ACTION PLAN**  
January 2013

**1. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.**

Current practice: Employment specialists go to VR office quarterly to meet with VR counselors and discuss people on caseloads.

Goal: Monthly meetings between VR counselors and employment specialists to discuss people who are on both caseloads.

Action steps: Barb Wilson (VR supervisor) has agreed that since most SE referrals go to Cindy Lewis and Alton Mertz anyhow, she will make an effort to begin assigning all cases to Cindy and Alton. Cindy and Alton will begin participating in the first SE Unit meeting of each month. **Start date: February 2013.**

**2. Role of the employment supervisor.**

Current practice: SE Supervisor, Fatima Pacis, collects a range of client outcomes that she shares with VR. These outcomes are also included in the QA reports.

Goal: Fatima will begin sharing client outcomes with SE practitioners and will involve the team in discussing outcomes and setting goals for improved outcomes.

Action steps: Fatima will bring the QA report with SE outcomes to the SE Unit meetings on a quarterly basis to discuss with the employment specialists.  
**Start date: April 2013.**

Further, Fatima will work with each employment specialist during their annual review to develop individual goals related to fidelity and client outcomes. She'll discuss progress on goals with employment specialist during 1:1 supervision (at least quarterly for each employment specialist). **Start date: throughout the year as each employment specialist is due for a performance review.**

**3. Zero Exclusion Criteria.**

Current practice: Zero exclusion is practiced by many employment specialists and mental health clinicians throughout the agency. However, zero exclusion is not standard practice for all practitioners in the agency.

Goal: All clients who want to work will receive information about supported employment and will have access to the program, if desired.

Action steps: Fatima and Dr. Strong (Medical Director) will visit each mental health team to talk about zero exclusion. They will visit each team twice during the coming year. **Dates: July 2013 and December 2013.**

The forms committee will work with Jordon Hess (Clinical Director) to add a new question to the supervision form for case managers and therapists. The new question will ask about interest in work for each person discussed during clinical supervision. **Projected date: April 2013.**

Each mental health team supervisor will identify 1 to 2 clinicians on the team who have the most people working, and will ask those people to share their strategies for talking about work during a team meeting. **Start date: April 2013.**

#### **4. Agency focus on competitive employment.**

Current practice: Rates of competitive employment are not measured for all people with serious mental illness who receive services at X Center.

Goal: The center will track the number of people who have competitive jobs on a quarterly basis.

Action steps: Case managers will receive their caseloads quarterly during their team meetings and will circle the name of each person who has a competitive job. (Jordon Hess will visit each team to discuss competitive work versus other types of employment.) The supervisor for each mental health team will turn in caseload lists to the IT department. Claire Campbell will share the quarterly outcomes with all staff at the Center. **Projected date: July 2013.**

#### **5. Executive team support for SE.**

Current practice: Information for supported employment comes to the directors from Jordon Hess (Clinical Director).

Goal: Fatima (SE supervisor) will have direct access to the directors, including Claire Campbell (CEO).

Action steps: Fatima will visit a director's meeting at least twice each year to talk about facilitators and barriers to exemplary fidelity to the SE model. **Start date: May 2013.**

#### **6. Work incentives planning.**

Current practice: Employment specialists help clients access benefits planning.

Goal: Employment specialists will offer to help clients with monthly reporting (until the person can do it independently) if it appears that a person might need help with this.

Action steps: When clients find work, Fatima will use the SE team meeting for a quick discussion about whether or not the person should be offered help with benefits reporting. **Start date: February 2013.**

## 7. Disclosure

Current practice: Employment specialists talk to all clients about disclosure at the beginning of the job search. They encourage each person to make a choice based on their individual preferences and situation. They help each person think through the possible pros and cons of disclosure.

Goal: Employment specialists will talk to people about disclosure over time. For example, if someone who hasn't chosen to disclose begins having problems on the job or if someone has difficulty finding employment.

Action steps: Fatima will talk to the team about disclosure discussions over time during an SE team meeting (**February 2013**). She'll suggest further discussions about disclosure during team meetings and 1:1 supervision as she hears of situations such as those indicated above.

## 8. Job development – Frequent employer contact.

Current practice: Employment specialists make an average of 4.7 employer contacts per week.

Goal: Employment specialists will make an average of 5-6 employer contacts per week.

Action steps: Fatima will meet weekly with employment specialists who are making 4 or fewer employer contacts to help them plan job development for the week. She'll also go out monthly with employment specialists who are making 4 or fewer employer contacts each week. **Start date: March 200013.**

## 9. Job development – Quality of employer contact.

Current practice: Employment specialists meet with employers to talk about the SE program and clients who are looking for work. They build relationships over multiple visits.

Goal: Employment specialists will try to learn about the businesses they are visiting, include the employer's staffing preferences and concerns.

Action steps: Fatima will provide reminders about this during SE Unit meetings. She will also provide field mentoring at least once a quarter for each employment specialist to practice this new strategy. **Date: March through December 30013.**

**10. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team.**

Current practice: Employment specialists, and mental health practitioners, provide assertive outreach and engagement using a variety of strategies.

Goal: Employment specialists will document outreach attempts. (Mental health practitioners already document discussions about work for people who are missing SE appointments.)

Action steps: Employment specialists will use a log to document outreach attempts for clients who are missing appointments. The logs will be filed in client charts. Fatima and Jordon will develop the logs. **Start date: February 2013.**

\_\_\_\_\_ reviewed by X Center Directors  
date

\_\_\_\_\_ reviewed by the SE Advisory Committee  
date



## Agency Leadership Actions for Good Fidelity Evidence Based Supported Employment Services

The broad agency leadership group (which may include the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Clinical Officer, the Medical Director, the Quality Assurance Director, and the SE Team Leader) facilitates the adoption and sustaining of Evidence Based Supported Employment through important actions including but not limited to,

- Demonstrates a working knowledge of the principles of SE
- Supports use of an active steering committee for SE services
- Communicates frequently with agency staff to emphasize importance of employment for the agency, the agency mission and recovery
- Works with agency leadership to identify barriers to high fidelity SE services and modifies or removes barriers including agency policies and procedures
- Works with agency leadership to eliminate vocational services that are not evidence based and create barriers to competitive employment in the community
- Uses of multiple communication strategies to share and promote client success stories related to SE and employment
- Assures that the agency devotes sufficient resources to hire and train an SE supervisor and a sufficient number of full time employment specialists
- Assures that the agency helps clients and family members to have ready access to good, accurate work incentive counseling
- Assures that the agency has an effective collaboration and partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation services
- Works actively to create continuous quality improvement for supported employment services

## Executive Leadership Actions for Good Fidelity Evidence Based Supported Employment Services

The executive leadership team of the agency (which may include the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Clinical Officer, the Medical Director, and the Quality Assurance Director) facilitates the adoption and sustaining of Evidence Based Supported Employment through important actions including but not limited to,

- Works to identify barriers to high fidelity SE services and modifies or removes barriers including agency policies and procedures
- Works to eliminate vocational services that are not evidence based and that create barriers to competitive employment in the community
- Assures that the agency devotes sufficient resources to hire and train an SE supervisor and a sufficient number of full time employment specialists who are paid fair and competitive salaries
- Communicates frequently with agency staff to emphasize importance of employment for the agency, the agency mission and recovery, including the use of multiple communication strategies to promote client success stories related to SE and employment



## EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Sue Smith  
IPS Supervisor  
ABC Program  
123 Any Lane  
Richmond, KY 40475

July 3, 2018

Dear Sue,

It is time to prepare for your fidelity review visit. The fidelity monitors will be myself and Jane Oliver. We are looking forward to visiting with you and your staff on September 9 & 10, 2018, as previously confirmed with you.

During the fidelity review we will need to attend both your weekly IPS unit meeting as well as one weekly mental health treatment team meeting.

Also, *prior to the visit*, we will need to review specific documents. We will also discuss and review this documentation with you during the review. Please let me know if you don't have any of the documents listed below. The excel spreadsheet attached in the email, may be useful in providing some of the needed documentation for the review. If you are utilizing your own spreadsheet that encompasses this information, please submit that document.

Please provide the below documents to me electronically or via mail by COB on **Wednesday, August 29, 2018**.

- Roster of IPS staff and assigned caseloads.
- A list of places clients are currently working, including job titles, job start dates, and names of businesses. If there are fewer than 10 people working, please compile a list of job starts for the past six months. List (utilizing a client number or first name/last initial) of clients should also include client age and diagnosis, both primary and secondary.
- Agency brochure.
- Field mentoring logs for the last two (most recent) months (*if available*).
- Two (most recent) full months completed employer contact forms for each full-time and part-time employment specialist.

- A list of clients who have not been seen in 30 days.
- Minutes from steering committee meeting(s) for the past 12 months.
- Agency intake and annual assessment or treatment plan review template/sample.
- Agency organization chart (*to document where IPS is within the agency and to whom program reports*).
- Agency Quality Assurance Report for the past 12 months - please only include the parts of this report that pertain to IPS.
- A one page typed working client success story that is told by the client. The success story should include, *if possible*, a photo of the client. Provide a release of information to share this success story in written, verbal and/or electronic format. The story will be distributed from Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and its contracted entities. (*For additional questions about this item, please feel free to consult with your state trainer or myself*)

There are specific activities that we will need to complete during our two-day fidelity visit. Please include a copy of our agenda with the above items. Also provide the address and any specific information we need to know such as parking restrictions/locations, contact person when entering the building, and so forth.

Charts may be reviewed in either paper chart format or via electronic health record. Remember the ten charts should consist of: two (2) records for unemployed people who have been closed to the IPS program within the last six (6) months, five (5) records for people who have started work in the past six to eighteen months, and three (3) records for people currently in job search or going to school.

Job development observation with two employment specialists will also occur. Please make sure that each employment specialist visits two employers in the county they provide services. One visit should be a scheduled job development meeting and the other visit a face-to-face “cold call”.

Thanks for your help with the fidelity visit. We realize that it is a lot of hard work but we want the report to be accurate so that more people can achieve their work goals. The entire Kentucky IPS team wants to assist your program to move forward with IPS supported employment growth. Please feel free to call or email if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

Margaret Thurman, MRC, CRC  
[margaret.thurman@eku.edu](mailto:margaret.thurman@eku.edu)  
 Fidelity Monitor



# BENEFITS PLANNING





# Wage Reporting Fact Sheet for SSA Disability Beneficiaries

If you are a Social Security disability beneficiary receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and you have returned to work, you are required to report your wages on a monthly basis. Here is what you should know about wage reporting.

## Wage Reporting Basics

**When you start a new job** you must inform the Social Security Administration - they will not automatically know. The best method for informing SSA is to immediately submit a letter to your local SSA Field Office to advise SSA that you have started a new job. The letter should include the following information:

1. **Your name and Social Security Number (SSN),**
2. **Name of employer,**
3. **Number of hours you work each week,**
4. **Hourly rate,** and
5. **Start date.**

**When you experience increases or decreases in hours or pay,** report the change to your local SSA Field Office as soon as possible. To report the increase or decrease in pay, submit a letter with the information noted above to the local SSA Field Office.

**When a job ends,** report the loss of employment to your local SSA Field Office as soon as possible. To report the loss of employment, submit a letter with the information noted above to the local SSA Field Office.

To find your nearest SSA Field Office, visit: <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/>.

## When and How to Report Wages

You should report wages to the local SSA Field Office each month. For most SSA disability beneficiaries, the preferred method of reporting is by mail, or in person at your local Field Office. Here are some tips for reporting:

1. Make a copy of your pay check stubs to be submitted to SSA. File your original pay check stubs for your records.
2. Write your Social Security Number on the pay check stubs you are submitting to SSA.



3. If you report your wages in person, ask for a receipt from your local Field Office that confirms you have provided evidence of your earnings, and retain this in your records.
4. If you report your pay check stubs by mail, include a letter that asks SSA to send you a receipt from your local Field Office that confirms you have provided evidence of your earnings, and retain this in your records.

Be sure to report all monthly wages each month. If you have more than one job, make sure you include pay check stubs from all jobs.

Timely reporting is very important! It is the best way to prevent potential overpayments.

**For certain SSI recipients**, telephone wage reporting is an option. If you'd like to learn more about this option, visit: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-telephone-wage.htm>.

## How Wages Are Counted

### For SSI Recipients

SSI payments are received on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month, causing fluctuations in the amount of payment received from month to month. SSA estimates the amount received based on known circumstances from previous months (i.e. patterns of earnings), SSA calls this Retrospective Monthly Accounting. To determine the SSI benefit payment amount, SSA considers the following two elements:

1. Computation Month - Based on the individual's (or couple's) income, resources and other factors in the month the SSI benefit payment will be received; and
2. Budget Month – A payment computation generally based on the income from two months prior to the month SSI benefit payment will be received.

Because of this accounting method, SSA needs earnings information as soon as it's available so they can use that information to adjust payments moving forward. If an SSI recipient is eligible for some or all of their benefit in the *budget* month and receives wages in their *computation* month, SSA adjusts the benefit accordingly. Therefore, timely reporting is especially important for SSI recipients.

### For SSDI Beneficiaries

SSDI beneficiaries do not have fluctuating benefit amounts, however, it is equally important to report new work activity, changes in employment, and monthly earnings. SSA uses wage information to determine whether or not the SSDI beneficiary is eligible for their SSDI benefit and/or is using available SSDI Work Incentives. Timely reporting is equally important for SSDI beneficiaries.

## Tips on Reporting earned income to Social Security

1. Type of disability payments: 2 types (SSI or Title 16/SSDI or Title 2)
  2. Each benefit has its own rules and work incentives around how earned income affects it.
  3. In the social security office there are workers who only handle one benefit typically
  4. There are also two computer systems that house the information for a beneficiary in either of those two systems. The two computer systems do not share information.
  5. Really important to make sure you know what type of the benefit the person receives.
  6. Report any earned income MONTHLY to SSA, despite what they tell you otherwise.
- 
7. REPORTING FOR SSI:
    1. Report new employment to Social Security office once paycheck is received. Best to go into the local office to report the new employment. Provide employer, wage, hours, etc...
    2. Turn in any receipts for IRWE's or BWE's or discuss any other work incentives that may apply.
    3. Proceed to report gross earned income MONTHLY to social security. SSI beneficiaries can use the telephone wage reporting line, mobile application, face to face, or fax. Mail and drop box is not preferred which we will talk about in a moment. Mobile app must be set up at the local SSA office.
    4. If using the telephone wage line, cannot report new IRWE's or BWE's, would need to turn receipts in monthly to SSA. SSA will provide beneficiary with worksheets and phone number.
    5. Rule of thumb, REPORT by the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the following month.
    6. SSI uses a calculation to configure the SSI cash payment, so there is a 2-month delay from when someone reports the income and how it will affect the SSI cash payment-Retrospective reporting-SSA estimates the future earned income to calculate SSI payment from trends of previous months. EX: someone reports income for the month of July by Aug 6<sup>th</sup>, the reported earnings will affect the SSI check that is issued in September.
    7. If reporting by face to face-provide copies of paystubs to SSA with client name, SSN number and "SSI" clearly marked on the top. Ask for a receipt from the SSA representative that shows you were there and what you turned in. THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO AVOID OVERPAYMENTS!
    8. If faxing the paystubs be sure to mark the paystubs the same way as mentioned and keep a copy of the fax transmittal sheet.
    9. Mail is only recommended if sending certified, return, receipt so that beneficiary has something they can have as proof that the paystubs were received by someone!
    10. Drop boxes and regular mail are not recommended as there is no paper trail.
  8. REPORTING FOR SSDI:
    1. Earned income affects SSDI differently than SSI. This is an all or nothing type of benefit.
    2. Work reviews are conducted at random times (sometimes many years) where earned income is evaluated and SSA decides if someone should receive a check that month. This method can lead to BIG overpayments.
    3. Important to report earnings to SSA even if not evaluated monthly so that when a work review is conducted they have the information. Important for beneficiaries and payees



to track this info and if suspect they should not get the check NOT SPEND the monies or report this to SSA and return the monies to avoid an overpayment in the future.

4. Ways to report: In person, Fax, and a new feature thru the online MY SOCIAL SECURITY ACCT. Mail and drop box still not recommended. Mobile app and telephone reporting NOT an option. BE sure to mark paystubs with name, SSN #, and "SSDI or CDB".
- 
9. CONCURRENT BENEFICIARIES:
    1. Special category because the information has to go to both computer systems.
    2. To ensure proper reporting in person or via fax is preferred. Mark paystubs with name, SSN, and "SSDI and SSI". Get receipt OR HAVE A PAPER TRAIL!
    3. No mobile apps, or telephone reporting lines for this situation!
  
  10. Overpayments:
    1. For SSI, max someone pays is 10% of the FBR per month. Deducted from the SSI cash payment.
    2. Can request a payment plan or hardship to lower the payback amount.
  
  11. Payees:
    1. Many do batch reporting: large fax with all beneficiary paystub info. Need to send a fax or identify for each beneficiary what type of benefit they receive to avoid overpayment/underpayments!
    2. If payee fails to do their reporting responsibility and this result in an overpayment, person can file a waiver of reconsideration and stating not person's fault for overpayment and sometimes payee can be responsible for repayment!

12. OTHER:

There are now email and text reminders that beneficiaries can sign up for to remind them to report monthly to Social Security. Can be set up thru the MYSOCIAL SECURITY account on [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Remind beneficiaries to report increases or decreases in hours or pay rate.

Also remind beneficiaries to report when a job ends to Social Security. (if not done can lead to underpayments)

**Kentucky Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC)**

**WIPA'S\***

**\*An authorization for services will not be utilized for WIPAs.**

<b>Agency</b>	<b><u>Center for Accessible Living</u> 501 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Ste. 200 Louisville, KY 40202</b>		
<b>Counties Served</b>	Adair, Allen, Anderson, Ballard, Barren, Boyle, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Butler, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Carroll, Casey, Christian, Clinton, Crittenden, Cumberland, Daviess, Edmonson, Franklin, Fulton, Gallatin, Graves, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hardin, Hart, Henderson, Henry, Hickman, Hopkins, Jefferson, Jessamine, Larue, Livingston, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, McCracken, McLean, Meade, Mercer, Metcalfe, Monroe, Muhlenberg, Nelson, Ohio, Oldham, Owen, Russell, Shelby, Simpson, Spencer, Taylor, Todd, Trigg, Trimble, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Woodford		
	<b>CWIC</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>INITIAL REFERRALS</b>	Edwards, David	859-638-2155	<a href="mailto:dedwards@calky.org">dedwards@calky.org</a>
<b>FOLLOW-UPS</b>	Mundy, Donna (WIPA Program Manager)	812-389-1050 502-438-6319 (cell) 812-389-1332 (fax)	<a href="mailto:dmundy@calky.org">dmundy@calky.org</a>
	Hesler, Ashleigh	502-963-2206	<a href="mailto:ahesler@calky.org">ahesler@calky.org</a>
	Hensley, Larry	502-552-6301	<a href="mailto:lhensley@calky.org">lhensley@calky.org</a>
<b>Agency</b>	<b><u>Goodwill Industries of Kentucky</u> 130 W. New Circle Rd., Ste. 100 Lexington, KY 40505</b>		
<b>Counties Served</b>	Bath, Bell, Boone, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Campbell, Carter, Clark, Clay, Elliott, Estill, Fayette, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Grant, Greenup, Harlan, Harrison, Jackson, Johnson, Kenton, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Lincoln, Madison, Magoffin, Mason, Martin, McCreary, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Owsley, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Scott, Whitley, and Wolfe		
<b>INITIAL REFERRALS</b>	James, Emily	866-336-3316 502-371-8949 (fax)	<a href="mailto:workincentives@goodwillky.org">workincentives@goodwillky.org</a>
<b>FOLLOW-UPS</b>	Williams, SuAnn (WIPA Program Manager)	859-231-8394 859-351-9172 (cell)	<a href="mailto:asuann.williams@goodwillky.org">asuann.williams@goodwillky.org</a>
	Souder, Esther	859-381-7506	<a href="mailto:esther.souder@goodwillky.org">esther.souder@goodwillky.org</a>
	Galecio, Cecilia	859-806-5112	<a href="mailto:Cecilia.galecio@goodwillky.org">Cecilia.galecio@goodwillky.org</a>

**KY – OVR In-house CWIC services – no authorization needed \*\***

**\*\* Please send encrypted email along with OVR-2, BPQY and a request for needed services.**

CWIC	Employer (service area)	Phone	Email
Johnson, Evangeline	CAL / OVR (same area as Goodwill WIPA)	859-246-2537	<a href="mailto:evangeline.johnson@ky.gov">evangeline.johnson@ky.gov</a>
Richardson, Sarah	OVR (meets consumers at Georgetown and Frankfort OVR offices)	502-782-3423	<a href="mailto:SarahF.Richardson@ky.gov">SarahF.Richardson@ky.gov</a>

**Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinators (CPWIC)\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Please see Benefits Analysis Service Fee Memo for authorization instructions**

Vendor	Agency/Address	Phone	Email
Grimberg, Mindy	Path Forward of Kentucky 707 Executive Park Louisville, KY 40207	502-451-2565	<a href="mailto:mindy.grimberg@pathforwardky.com">mindy.grimberg@pathforwardky.com</a>
Lutz, Sherri	Communicare 320 Ring Road Elizabethtown, KY 42701	270-735-1803, ext. 2113 270-668-5580 (cell)	<a href="mailto:SALutz@communicare.org">SALutz@communicare.org</a>
Mundy, Donna	Social Security Work Incentives Benefits Counseling Services 8440 E. Schnellville Rd., Birdseye, IN 47513	812-389-1050 812-389-1332 (fax) 502-438-6319 (cell)	<a href="mailto:mundy.donna@frontier.com">mundy.donna@frontier.com</a>
Sloan, Tim	Benefits Counseling Services PO BOX 43 Irvington, KY 40146	270-234-6404	<a href="mailto:timsloanbcs@yahoo.com">timsloanbcs@yahoo.com</a>
Tsegaye, Hamri		502-893-2006	<a href="mailto:hamrawitt@gmail.com">hamrawitt@gmail.com</a>
Wheeler, Carolyn	1041 Heather Hill Lane Lexington, KY 40511	859-492-7971	<a href="mailto:carolynwheeler1210@gmail.com">carolynwheeler1210@gmail.com</a>

# WIPA

## WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program provides individualized benefits counseling support to people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WIPA?

- Between 14 years old and full retirement age
- Beneficiaries who have a disability and receive SSI and/or SSDI
- Working, or interested in returning to work or increasing employment

### SERVICES PROVIDED

- Individualized short- and long-term benefits planning and management services so beneficiaries know what they need to report to the Social Security Administration when they work, including how to report wage and other information to the Social Security Administration, and how to access and use the Social Security Administration and other federal, state, and local work incentives programs.
- Referral to employment support services and trouble-shooting benefits issues related to working and the return-to-work process.
- Presentations to beneficiaries, their supports, and providers about the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance programs and work incentives.
- Outreach to beneficiaries and their supports about WIPA services and how to access us.



[WWW.GOODWILLKY.ORG](http://WWW.GOODWILLKY.ORG)



# WIPA

## WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

### WHAT DO WE NEED FROM PARTICIPANTS?

WIPA provides beneficiaries and their supports with benefits analysis and work incentives information specific to their situation and employment goals. Participants will be asked to provide verification of current benefits, including type of cash benefit received, related healthcare coverage, and verification of other public benefits received (ie. food stamps, Section 8 Housing, or other rental assistance).

### KENTUCKY COUNTIES SERVED:

Bath, Bell, Boone, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Campbell, Carter, Clark, Clay, Elliott, Estill, Fayette, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Grant, Greenup, Harlan, Harrison, Jackson, Johnson, Kenton, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Lincoln, Madison, Magoffin, Mason, Martin, McCreary, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Owsley, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Scott, Whitley, Wolfe.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Goodwill's toll-free WIPA line: (866) 336-3316  
Ticket to Work helpline: (866) 968-7842  
TTY (hearing impaired): (866) 833-2967  
Email: [workincentives@goodwillky.org](mailto:workincentives@goodwillky.org)

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[WWW.GOODWILLKY.ORG](http://WWW.GOODWILLKY.ORG)





## Working While on Benefits

*Working While on Benefits: Choices Navigator*

***Assisting Social Security Beneficiaries to go to work without fear of losing benefits.***

*Work Incentives for Individuals who Qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the Social Security Administration.*

CHOICES NAVIGATOR is a program funded by Social Security and administered in the western half of Kentucky by the Center for Accessible Living in Louisville.

The Center will make available a Community Work Incentive Coordinator, a knowledgeable advocate, who will help you understand complex work incentive program requirements.

This program helps SSI and SSDI disability beneficiaries, ages 14 through full retirement age, to understand their work options so that they may make more informed choices about going to work. The program provides information about federal, state and local work incentive and related programs.

As a part of this program, you will receive information about the availability of Protection and Advocacy services that are available without charge.

### QUESTIONS...

- Do you receive SSI or SSDI?
- Are you working, about to start work, or actively looking for work?
- Are you unsure of how working will affect your benefits?
- Confused about all the rules and regulations?
- Afraid of telling Social Security that you want to work?

### ANSWERS...

Work Incentives Coordinators from across the state of Kentucky are available to assist SSI and SSDI disability beneficiaries, and the family members and professionals assisting in their return to work effort with:

- Information about Medical Benefits, Social Security, Transitional Assistance, Public Housing, Workers Compensation, Resources for Training or Education Related to Employment
- Personalized benefits planning and work incentives planning.
- Information about how working will affect benefits
- Ongoing assistance on issues concerning benefits

### HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

Do you have questions about Ticket to Work or are ready to get started? Our Ticket to Work Help Line is staffed with knowledgeable and friendly people who can answer your questions about the program, get you enrolled and connect you with free employment services. Experts are available Monday – Friday, 8 AM – 8 PM EST. Call toll free: 1-866-968-7842 (Voice) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY).

If you are working, about to start work, actively looking for work, or seeking resources to get vocational training or education, call toll free:  
1-888-813-8497 (Voice)  
e-mail: [webinfo@calky.org](mailto:webinfo@calky.org)  
Website: [www.calky.org](http://www.calky.org)

A Community Work Incentives Coordinator will contact you and explain the program.

If you wish, you may contact us by mail at:  
Center for Accessible Living  
501 S 2nd Street, Ste 200  
Louisville, KY 40202

Serving the following Western Kentucky counties, including: Allen, Adair, Anderson, Ballard, Barren, Boyle, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Butler, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Carroll, Casey, Christian, Clinton, Crittenden, Cumberland, Daviess, Edmonson, Franklin, Fulton, Gallatin, Graves, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hardin, Hart, Henderson, Henry, Hickman, Hopkins, Jefferson, Jessamine, Larue, Livingston, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, McCracken, McLean, Meade, Mercer, Metcalfe, Monroe, Muhlenberg, Nelson, Ohio, Oldham, Owen, Russell, Shelby, Simpson, Spencer, Taylor, Todd, Trigg, Trimble, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, and Woodford.

The Center for Accessible Living does not discriminate on the basis of Age, Race, Gender, Color, race or ethnicity, National origin, Creed or Religion, Sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, Disability, or type of disability, and provides on request all materials and information in alternative formats.

**ALL INQUIRIES AND SERVICES ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE AND ARE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

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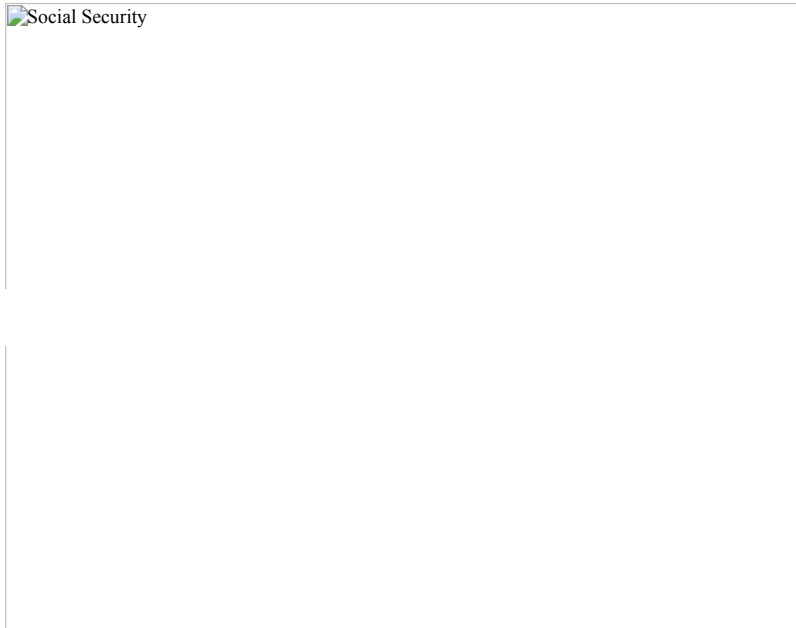
For more information on the Social Security Administration visit their website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). For more information on Ticket to Work, visit [www.chooseworkttw.net](http://www.chooseworkttw.net)

**DONATE**

# Work Incentives Planning and Assistance National Training and Data Center

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*Welcome to the VCU National Training and Data Center!*



## ABOUT US

The Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) National Training Center (NTDC) provides comprehensive training and technical assistance to Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects, the Work Help Line, and community partners to ensure accurate and support for beneficiaries on the road to employment and financial independence.

[Learn More »](#)

## WIPA NEWS

New NTDC Web Course: Introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits, Work Incentives, and Employment Support Programs

VCU's NTDC is pleased to announce a new web course that provides a basic introduction to the Social Security disability benefit program (SSDI) and their associated work incentives. This two-week course consists of six (6) one-hour lessons. Each lesson includes a video lecture, supplemental readings and resource tools, as well as interactive activities.

[Read More »](#)

## QUICK LINKS

- [Social Security Resources](#)
- [NTDC Training Calendars](#)
- [Initial Training Calendar](#)
- [Supplemental Training Calendar](#)
- [WIPA Training Manual](#)
- [NTDC Technical Assistance Liaisons](#)
- [Introductory Web Course](#)

## E-NEWSLETTER

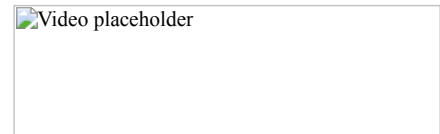
Click on the link below to view the most current issue of the RRTC's Work Support E-newsletter

[View our current issue »](#)

Click on the link below to subscribe to the newsletter and/or to view previous issues.

[Subscribe here »](#)

## WIPA PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



If you would like to share a spotlight about your WIPA project with your peers on our website, please complete and submit a request form. We will respond to your request within two to three business days.

[Click here to download the spotlight form.](#)

[View Spotlight »](#)



# Work Incentives Planning and Assistance National Training and Data Center

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## Introduction

### Introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits, Work Incentives, and Employment Support Programs Web Course

[Introduction](#)

[Calendar](#)

We are now offering a new web course that provides a basic introduction to the Social Security disability benefit programs (SSI and SSI) and their associated work incentives as an overview of the field of work incentives planning. This two-week course consists of six (6) hour lessons. Each lesson includes a video lecture with slides, supplemental readings and resource tools, as well as interactive activities.

The course is designed to meet the training needs of individuals who want a better understanding of Social Security disability benefits and the basics related to how work affects these benefits but do not require certification. The target audience includes several distinct groups all of whom play an important role in supporting beneficiaries who wish to pursue employment:

Community partners who provide return-to-work services including staff of ENs, state VR agencies, American Job Centers and other employment service providers;

Agency staff who have regular contact with beneficiaries and are in a position to encourage work and financial stability planning an outcomes, including staff from state and local Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities agencies, Mental Health and Substance Abuse agencies, Centers for Independent Living, State Protection and Advocacy, Public School systems, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, among others;

WIPA/BOND project staff that do not require certification, including administrative or other staff; and

WIPA/BOND project staff that plan to pursue CWIC certification, and would like to come to the initial training with a basic knowledge of the topics to be covered, and of their job requirements.

The Introductory web course consists of the following content:

Lesson 1 discusses the problem of unemployment among Social Security disability beneficiaries and describes the national WIPA initiative as part of the solution to this problem. Information will be provided on the Ticket to Work program, the key components of the WIPA program, the role of CWICs as part of the employment support team. Information is also provided on how participants can work with WIPA projects to support their shared goals.

Lesson 2 provides an introduction to Social Security disability benefit programs including an overview of the eligibility criteria for both Title II disability and SSI benefits and will describe Social Security's definition of disability and the disability determination process. Course content also covers the basic program concepts that distinguish Title II disability benefits from SSI and how these benefits interact for concurrent beneficiaries.

Lesson 3 provides an overview of the Title II disability benefits (SSDI, CDB and DWB) and explains how paid employment affects the benefits. Course content covers the factors Social Security considers during Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) determinations and describes work incentives that apply in the Title II disability program. This lesson also covers how the Extended Period of Medicare Coverage allows beneficiaries to retain Medicare if cash payments stop due to work.

Lesson 4 focuses on helping participants gain a basic understanding of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program. Course content covers the factors that affect eligibility and payment amounts for the SSI program. The lesson also describes the effect of resources on SSI eligibility and identifies common resource exclusions.

Lesson 5 covers how paid employment affects SSI benefits and SSI related Medicaid. Participants will learn how to use the SSI calculation sheet to understand the basic effect of earned income on SSI cash payments and course content will cover four SSI work incentives that can be applied to support a beneficiary's transition to work. The course also covers how beneficiaries may keep Medicaid coverage if cash benefits are lost due to employment through the 1619(b) provisions.

Lesson 6 covers ways that participants can support beneficiaries to take the next step toward employment. Course content addresses four positive message points participants can communicate to beneficiaries in order to encourage work. We will provide details about sources of accurate information on work and benefits, as well as strategies for working effectively with WIPA projects.

Participants who successfully complete all of the course requirements will receive a certificate of completion that is accessible through myNTC account.

To view a calendar and register for upcoming Introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits, Work Incentives, and Employer Support Programs web courses, please [click here](#).

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Work Incentives Planning and Assistance  
National Training and Data Center  
Virginia Commonwealth University

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Richmond, Virginia 23284-2011  
This website produced at US taxpayer expense.  
Updated: 06/05/2017

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Fax: (804) 828-2193  
Email: [jaschall@vcu.edu](mailto:jaschall@vcu.edu)

# Social Security

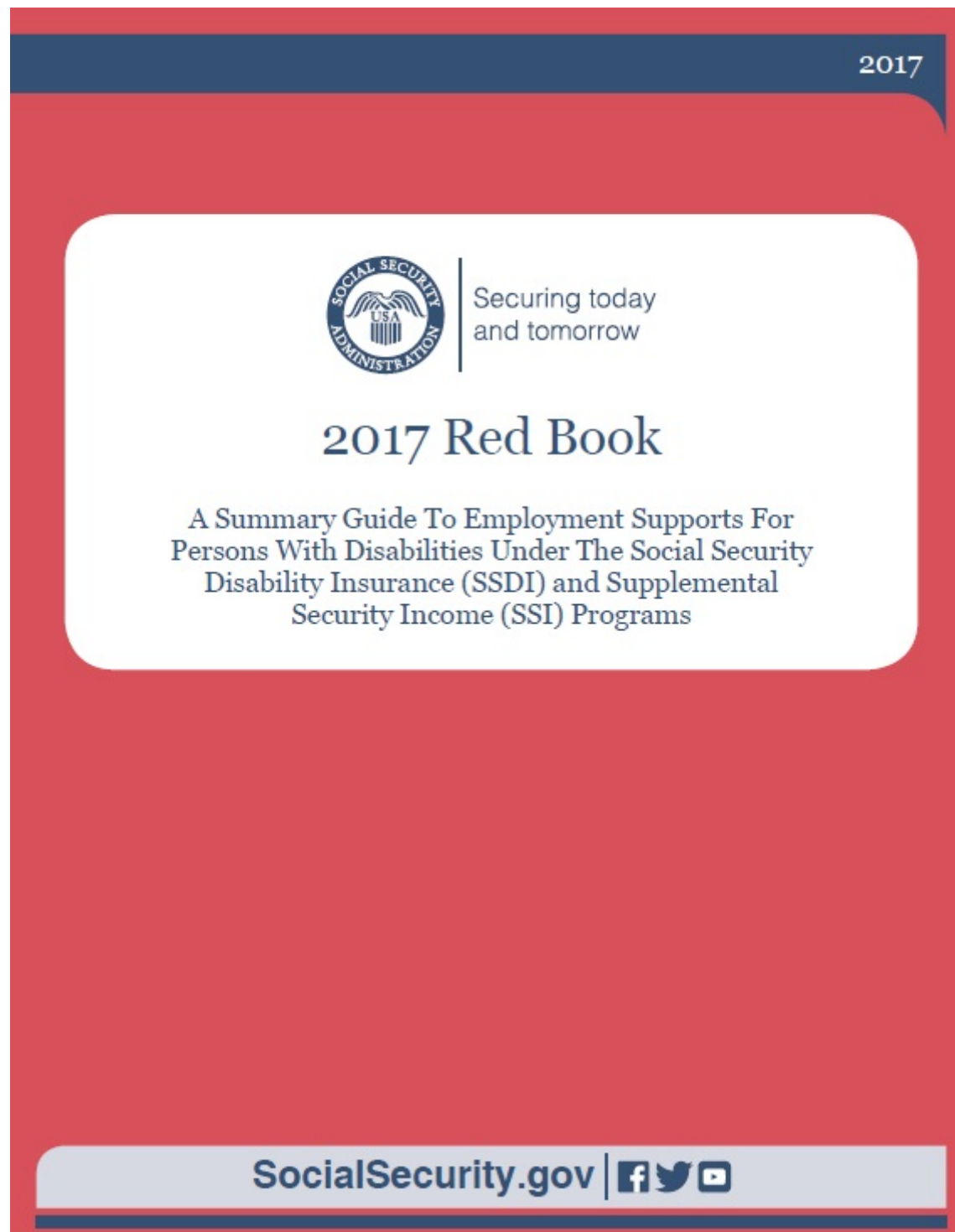
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## The Red Book - A Guide To Work Incentives

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SSA Publication No. 64-030, (2017 Red Book), January 2017, ICN 436900 (Español).

The Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income Programs for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities.



## 2018 SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES

### Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA):

Based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) from the third quarter of 2016 through the third quarter of 2017, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries will receive a 2.0 percent COLA for 2018. Other important 2018 Social Security information is as follows:

<b>Tax Rate</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Employee	7.65%	7.65%
Self-Employed	15.30%	15.30%

**NOTE:** The 7.65% tax rate is the combined rate for Social Security and Medicare. The Social Security portion (OASDI) is 6.20% on earnings up to the applicable taxable maximum amount (see below). The Medicare portion (HI) is 1.45% on all earnings. Also, as of January 2013, individuals with earned income of more than \$200,000 (\$250,000 for married couples filing jointly) pay an additional 0.9 percent in Medicare taxes. The tax rates shown above do not include the 0.9 percent.

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Maximum Taxable Earnings</b>		
Social Security (OASDI only)	\$127,200	\$128,400 <sup>1</sup>
Medicare (HI only)	No Limit	
<b>Quarter of Coverage</b>		
	\$1,300	\$1,320
<b>Retirement Earnings Test Exempt Amounts</b>		
Under full retirement age	\$16,920/yr. (\$1,410/mo.)	\$17,040/yr. (\$1,420/mo.)
NOTE: One dollar in benefits will be withheld for every \$2 in earnings above the limit.		
The year an individual reaches full retirement age	\$44,880/yr. (\$3,740/mo.)	\$45,360/yr. (\$3,780/mo.)
NOTE: Applies only to earnings for months prior to attaining full retirement age. One dollar in benefits will be withheld for every \$3 in earnings above the limit.		

Beginning the month an individual attains full retirement age	None
---	------

	2017	2018
<b>Social Security Disability Thresholds</b>		
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)		
Non-Blind	\$1,170/mo.	\$1,180/mo.
Blind	\$1,950/mo.	\$1,970/mo.
Trial Work Period (TWP)	\$ 840/mo.	\$ 850/mo.
<b>Maximum Social Security Benefit: Worker Retiring at Full Retirement Age</b>		
	\$2,687/mo.	\$2,788/mo.
<b>SSI Federal Payment Standard</b>		
Individual	\$ 735/mo.	\$ 750/mo.
Couple	\$1,103/mo.	\$1,125/mo.
<b>SSI Resource Limits</b>		
Individual	\$2,000	\$2,000
Couple	\$3,000	\$3,000
<b>SSI Student Exclusion</b>		
Monthly limit	\$1,790	\$1,820
Annual limit	\$7,200	\$7,350
<b>Estimated Average Monthly Social Security Benefits Payable in January 2018</b>		
	<b>Before 2.0% COLA</b>	<b>After 2.0% COLA</b>
All Retired Workers	\$1,377	\$1,404
Aged Couple, Both Receiving Benefits	\$2,294	\$2,340
Widowed Mother and Two Children	\$2,717	\$2,771
Aged Widow(er) Alone	\$1,310	\$1,336
Disabled Worker, Spouse and One or More Children	\$2,011	\$2,051
All Disabled Workers	\$1,173	\$1,197

<sup>1</sup>This amount was updated per our November 27, 2017 press release titled, *Updated 2018 Taxable Maximum Amount Announced*.

## Benefits Worksheet

<b><u>Benefit</u></b>		<b><u>Amount</u></b>
SSI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
SSDI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
SNAP (Food Stamps)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Spouse or dependent child receives benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Medicaid	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Medicare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Housing Subsidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.

### **What was discussed?**