

Beginning July 1, 2014 the Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) initiated a new service called Discovery. This FAQ is designed to answer some of the recent questions and provide clarification about Discovery. ODDS will be initiating a formal process for receiving input about this service, including the development of a workgroup. As additional clarification is available, this FAQ, as well as other policy documents, will be updated.

Discovery FAQs

1. What is Discovery?

As the name implies, the fundamental purpose of Discovery is to find out “who the person is.” It is a process that begins prior to specific employment planning. It also helps to inform and shape the person’s Career Development Plan.

A qualified ODDS Employment Specialist provides Discovery. Discovery is grounded in community-based experiences that are tailored to the person’s skills, interests and talents. Such experiences help the person and the people who support them to understand the elements that are crucial to the person’s employment success. While conversations with people who are close to the person are important, community-based experiences are the core of Discovery.

The discovery process can involve a number of activities, but generally includes:

- Interviewing the individual and people who know that person well (family, friends, support staff, personal advocates, etc.).
- Observing the individual in various settings, including their own home and their surrounding community. This might include observing the individual in typical life routines and activities.

- Accompanying the individual on planned community-based activities that are tailored to the person, including activities that might be new or unique to the person.

In general, the results of the Discovery process should yield and document:

- The conditions or characteristics necessary for the person to succeed in any job developed for them.
- The person's interests that gives direction toward general areas of work likely to be intrinsically motivating.
- The contributions the person will offer the employer and business.

The information identified during the discovery process is captured in a narrative format known as the Discovery Profile. The profile adds to the information that drives job development efforts. This information also helps to describe the conditions necessary for achieving as good a job match as possible.

Discovery is a short-term service. The expectation is that the service will take a maximum of three months. However, upon request and with consent of the individual receiving the service, a Service Coordinator (SC) or Personal Agent (PA) has the option of extending the service for an additional three months (for a grand total of six months). The outcome payment amount remains the same.

It should also be mentioned what Discovery is not:

- Discovery is not a formal quantitative assessment or evaluation process. Instead it is a qualitative process, descriptive in nature, that was developed to compliment more traditional vocational assessment and evaluation practices. It is another tool that can be used to help an individual achieve their integrated employment goals.

- Discovery is not a process to determine whether or not someone wants to engage in competitive integrated employment. The person's readiness to begin and participate in competitive integrated employment is assumed.
- Discovery does not result in the person's employment plan. While the Discovery process needs to be –intentional and structured, it does not constitute an individual's total plan for achieving employment. It informs that planning process. Other information techniques such as the Career Development Plan should be used in conjunction with the Discovery process and Discovery Profile. Additional services to consider may be short term assessments provided by VR and the Summary of Performance completed by ODE.
- Discovery is not needed for everyone with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability seeking competitive integrated employment, but it is a helpful tool for many, including those with significant disabilities.
- Discovery is not a requirement to access other services. While Discovery is designed to be a helpful tool for job development, job coaching and to help an individual achieve their employment goals, it should never serve as a barrier to employment or as a prerequisite for another service.

2. What is the purpose of a Discovery Profile?

The purpose of a Discovery Profile is to capture the information obtained during the Discovery service and provide an in-depth portrait of a person that will serve as a solid foundation for obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in individual integrated employment.

At a minimum, the profile should provide:

- Valuable employment-related information to the person's Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and employment provider(s).
- A thorough analysis of the person's strengths and skills that can be transferred to a competitive integrated employment setting.
- Information that demonstrates how the information in the profile was obtained.

The Profile is strength-based and should demonstrate the process used to gather the information presented.

Discovery cannot be billed if the Discovery Profile is inadequate or incomplete as determined by the CDDP or Brokerage. Some things to consider may be: did the person participate in job shadowing or other community exploration, did the person have the opportunity to explore their strengths in a way that is meaningful to them, and does the profile accurately reflect what you know about the person, etc.

3. When is Discovery the right service?

Engagement in the Discovery process may not be a needed or necessary step for everyone seeking competitive integrated employment.

Discovery may be used when, upon review of all employment-related information available, it is determined there is insufficient information regarding the conditions in which the individual will be successful in an integrated employment setting in the general workforce or the interests that would provide general direction for job search activities. The employment team should review the information available and make a recommendation to the Service Coordinator (SC) or Personal Agent (PA) regarding whether Discovery should be authorized. The employment team includes the individual, the SC/PA, a VR representative, a representative from the school, if applicable, and any other person invited by the individual.

In many regions, brokerage and county staff meet monthly with either the VR branch manager or designated staff to discuss upcoming referrals,

whether Discovery would be a recommended service for any one individual, as well as to discuss other issues that arise.

Other factors that may be considered to determine whether Discovery is the right service:

Discovery might be the right service when:

- The person has expressed an interest in pursuing an individual integrated job and is interested in using VR Job Development after the Discovery service.
- A standard assessment would be inadequate to capture information regarding the person's employment skills and strengths.
- The person has had integrated jobs, but they did not last.
- The person's integrated work experience is no longer of interest or not recent.

Discovery might **not** be the right service when:

- The person has already gone through many discovery-like activities, and there is enough information that would make the service redundant for the person.
- The person wants to begin job development with VR immediately and does not want to use the Discovery service.

4. What are the key differences between Employment Path Community service and the Discovery service?

The key differences include:

- Discovery is not designed to teach an individual employment related skills. While an individual may learn a great deal about their strengths, the type of work they may be interested in as well as some peripheral skills (such as how to interview well) this service is designed to focus on learning about an individual's current strengths that may be applied to a variety of jobs.

- People who access Discovery want to go to work as soon as possible. Employment Path Community services, while time limited in nature, might be used to explore individual, integrated employment, but the person may not want to immediately obtain individual, integrated employment.
- Discovery is paid on an outcome basis, when the Discovery Profile is appropriately completed. It is expected to occur over a three month time period. On an exception basis, Discovery may be extended for an additional three months (for a grand total of six months).
- Discovery must always result in a complete Discovery Profile which includes the components outlined in question 1, above.
- Discovery should also result in a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

5. If a person is using the Discovery service, when should the referral to VR occur?

Depending on the person's individual circumstances, it may be most effective to make the referral to VR when the individual is beginning the Discovery service in order to ensure a seamless flow of services from ODDS-funded Discovery to VR-funded Job Development. This should be coordinated between the SC/PA, the provider, and VR. Factors that impact the time of referral might include the estimated timeline for VR intake and eligibility, the length of time between Discovery authorization and completing the Discovery service, as well as other individual circumstance. Planned timing can help ensure the VR intake process occurs while the person is participating in the Discovery service, and VR Job Development can begin as soon as the person has completed the Discovery service.

If a referral is made to VR without the Discovery service, the individual's Employment Team (i.e. the individual's ISP team, the VR Counselor, and ODE contact, where applicable) should meet to determine whether the Discovery service is appropriate. The ultimate determination is made by the individual, along with his or her ISP team, and the service coordinator or personal agent.

6. Is Discovery an individualized service and must it be provided in an integrated community setting?

Discovery is a 1:1 individual service. A Discovery provider is expected to spend 1:1 time with an individual in the community in order to understand the person's strengths that can be transferred to an individual integrated job. To know what skills the individual can transfer to individual integrated settings, it is critical, as part of the Discovery service, to observe the person in individualized community settings. The settings could include on the job activities (with support as needed), business tours and other ways to learn about different jobs, watching the individual do chores at home, etc.

However, the provider also has to be aware of what the individual does outside of the Discovery process. Learning about an individual's current work in small group employment or employment path is required to fully inform the Discovery Profile. However, the time spent in small group or employment path is not part of the Discovery service itself.

7. Who authorizes Discovery?

ODDS funds the "Discovery" service. While schools, transition programs, and VR do support exploratory activities (community assessments, and community work experiences), ODDS funds a formal, stand-alone Discovery service through two of Oregon's 1915(c) Home and Community Based Medicaid waivers. See OAR 411-345 and AR 14-042 for additional information.

The Service Coordinator or Personal Agent authorizes Discovery based on the request from the individual and recommendation from the individual's ISP team and employment team. The Service Coordinator or Personal Agent will also make a referral to a qualified and trained Discovery provider chosen by the individual. A list of providers who have completed the training is available on the ODDS case management tool page found [here](#).

Authorization should occur after a thorough review of all employment related information available (please see question 1 for details), with the individual and his or her ISP team, and members of the employment team,

where applicable. The employment team would include any involved representatives from the education system, VR, or anyone else the individual would like to have as part of the team.

8. What if the ODDS Discovery Service is not available to me at this time?

If Discovery is not immediately available due to a wait to work with your chosen provider, there are other employment services and opportunities that can support an individual looking to learn more about his or her strengths and skills that can be used in an individual integrated job. These include work experience opportunities supported by other ODDS employment services, by a school or transition program, or by VR, including those outlined below:

School or transition program: Work experience opportunities supported by a school or transition program.

ODDS: Employment Services, offered through ODDS, including Small Group Employment Support, or Employment Path Services.

VR: Person-centered planning or various types of vocational assessments. Also, time for the VR Job Developer to “get to know the individual” is built into the rate for VR Job Development/Placement.

Information about an individual's employment service experiences can be made available to VR on request of the individual.

9. How often can an individual use the Discovery service?

An individual can access this service more than once if there has been a significant change that has made a completed Discovery Profile substantially irrelevant. This is determined by the Services Coordinator or Personal Agent, along with the individual and his or her person centered planning team. These circumstances might include, but are not limited to, a significant change in the individual's support needs, an interest in making a significant career change, or a significant move that includes a change in providers.

10. Who can provide Discovery?

Discovery may be provided by a staff member of an ODDS provider agency, or a qualified independent contractor.

Each Employment Professional (including any individual person providing the Discovery service) must complete an ODDS-approved Discovery training before providing the Discovery service. This requirement is outlined under OAR 411-345, Policy Transmittal 14-029, and Action Request 14-042. The list of ODDS approved trainings are outlined in AR 15-004, and can be found here:

<http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/ar/2015/ar15004.pdf>.

All providers of ODDS Employment Services, including the Discovery service, must be enrolled to provide ODDS services, and have access to the Plan of Care billing system.

Effective July 1, 2015, all ODDS Discovery providers (including provider organizations and independent contractors) must also be a qualified VR vendor eligible to provide VR job development and/or job placement services.

Recently, ODDS and VR entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding contracting for services. VR agreed to contract with ODDS agencies certified to provide employment services, or qualified Independent Contractors if they meet all VR requirements, including taking the EOP-II course. This will allow provider organizations to meet this requirement.

11. How do I know that the Discovery Profile used is the right Discovery Profile?

The Discovery Profile must use a Department-approved template. The Discovery Profile used by the organization must include all elements in the ODDS approved template, or it must be one that is approved by ODDS. If a

provider does not want to use the ODDS Discovery Profile, the provider may submit an alternative profile for ODDS to review and approve.

For approval, or for more information, contact Julie Huber at Julie.I.huber@state.or.us or 503-945-9787. Upon approval, a provider will receive a profile approval letter with a unique identifier at the bottom of the letter.