

Topic:	Employment Stabilization
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Overview

Description: This Worker's Guide outlines processes related to transfers from VR funded job coaching to ODDS funded job coaching. Due to changes in federal law regarding Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as well as related regulations and policies, individuals transfer from VR funded job coaching to ODDS funding job coaching at stabilization (as opposed to at 90 days as previously practiced). This policy helps outline services provided by VR, when services must be transferred, and how that transfer may take place.

Purpose/Rationale: The Employment Stabilization Worker's Guide is intended to explain individual transfers from VR funded job coaching to ODDS funded job coaching including when and how the transfer takes place. It also outlines when an individual may be able to use ODDS job coaching services without a transfer to/from VR.

Applicability: This Worker's Guide applies to Services Coordinators and Personal Agents authorizing ODDS funded job coaching.

Procedure(s) that apply:

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides supports and services to obtain Competitive Integrated Employment. The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) generally provides any long term supports and services required to keep and advance in Competitive Integrated Employment. How VR and ODDS services coordinated is described under the following topics, and in detail further below.

- I. Referral to VR
- II. Services at VR
- III. Role of SC/PA when person using is VR services
- IV. Stabilization and Transfer to Long Term ODDS Supports
- V. Authorizing Job Coaching
- VI. Support to Increase Hours
- VII. Requirements for VR Placement and ODDS Job Coaching
- VIII. Obtaining a Job without VR Placement

I. Referral to VR

A. When to Make the Referral

A case manager (Services Coordinator (SC) or Personal Agent (PA)) must refer a person to VR at any time the person requests. Transition-age youth may be referred to VR for services as young as 14 years of age. Youth under 16 years of age may receive VR employment services with DHS approval. A facilitated referral to VR for job development services should be offered during choice advising (i.e., upon request and annually during annual planning). If a person is accessing a time-limited employment service, such as Discovery or Employment Path, these conversations may happen more frequently. There should be a Desired Outcome in the individual's Career Development Plan to at least explore Competitive Integrated Employment. If the individual's Desired Outcome is to obtain Competitive Integrated Employment in the upcoming year, there should be associated key steps which outline the team member or responsible staff (identified by name) who will refer the individual to VR and by what date.

B. Pre-Referral Consultation with VR

VR may be consulted prior to referral at any time. Consultation may make sense in the following instances:

- To help determine whether ODDS Discovery is appropriate before a referral to VR. As part of this consultation, the VR counselor should work with the ISP team to review all employment related information available and help determine whether there is sufficient information to develop the VR Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). If sufficient information is already available, Discovery may not be needed and may even be counterproductive to helping a person obtain the job he or she wants. VR may also be consulted in the conversation regarding what activities will be completed as part of the Discovery service, and consulted in the review of the Discovery profile.
- Best practice is to use the same provider for Discovery, job development and job coaching. Therefore, early consultation with VR is important to identify an appropriate and available provider that can provide the ODDS and VR services needed. VR can also be consulted to assist in identification of a Discovery provider, particularly if the person wants to use the same provider for both ODDS Discovery and for VR services, including VR job development.

Note: Additional information regarding Discovery can be found in FAQs found here: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/dd/cm/Discovery%20FAQ.pdf>.

C. Information to Include with the Referral or at the Intake Meeting

It is important that any employment related information is shared with the VR counselor before or during an intake meeting and submitted as part of the VR referral or application, as this information is critical for VR eligibility, vocational goal setting (including hours worked), and completing the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) in a timely manner.

Prior to accessing VR services, a person may have received employment exploration services

through a transition program funded by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) or Local Educational Agency (LEA), which culminates in a Summary of Performance that is provided to the student when they leave school. The Summary of Performance and other relevant documents from ODE should be provided to VR upon referral, or before or during an intake meeting.

A person might have also used ODDS employment services, including Discovery, Supported Small Group, or Employment Path. The Career Development Plan, Discovery Profile, progress notes, other summaries or information related to employment should be provided to VR. Remember: There are no required prerequisites, such as a VR orientation video, prior to applying for services or beginning services through VR. A Career Development Plan (CDP) or participation in a particular employment service cannot be a reason to delay VR services for support to obtain a job. In the event that an individual is referred to VR, the SC or PA must ensure the CDP is updated to reflect this referral and any other key steps associated with the individual's VR service, or associated with a transition back to ODDS services upon job stabilization.

Upon referral to VR, a VR Counselor (VRC) will set up an orientation/intake meeting with the person. The VRC should invite the SC/PA to the intake meeting and subsequent relevant meetings. The SC/PA should ensure that the VRC has all relevant employment related documents which include, but are not limited to:

- Career Development Plan(s);
- Summary of Performance/other relevant documentation from ODE;
- Discovery Profile;
- Information regarding work experience, including exploratory work experiences during school, Discovery or other pre-employment service and including any former community work experience;
- Behavior plan; and
- Demographic/eligibility information including disability related information, relevant medical documentation, and information regarding the person's support needs. These must include the actual documents verifying the disability diagnosis that makes a person eligible for DD services.
- The individual's Identification and verification of right to work in the US (if needed).

II. Services at VR

A VRC is responsible for providing information and support services through appropriate modes of communication, to inform individuals of VR services and assist them in exercising informed choice.

Typically, individuals will be referred to VR for job placement (development), and the first part of initial job coaching to job stabilization. Some additional VR services may include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive Assessment -- designed to identify/develop a vocational goal. Examples include work interest inventories, vocational counseling and guidance with VRC, identification of transferable work skills, job shadows, information interviews, labor market exploration, information gathering from individual support team. VR is required

to use existing data as much as possible, reducing the need for additional evaluations.

- Career Exploration -- includes a wide variety of activities to assist in identifying vocational interests. Examples include job shadows, information interviews, labor market review, vocational testing.
- Community-Based Work Assessment (CBWA) -- used to answer employment related questions as part of a VR comprehensive assessment process, that were not answered through eligibility documentation, or employment team meetings. Objectives to be achieved are outlined by the individual and VRC. Usually this is not needed if ODDS Discovery has been provided/completed. CBWA takes place in an integrated setting and will help identify an appropriate vocational goal and job support needs to assist with future job development.
- Targeted Vocational Assessment (TVA) --done for specific vocational goal to assist in understanding skills and tasks necessary for success in the desired employment field. This may be needed by individuals who have completed Discovery. VRC and individual will work with a chosen job developer to outline specific outcome of the TVA including the information to be gathered.
- Assistive technology or other accommodations designed to make the worksite accessible to and usable by the individual.

III. Role of SC/PA when Person is Using VR Services

The job developer/job coach are typically chosen during IPE development meetings, but should not delay completion of the IPE. In exceptional circumstances, if the SC/PA is not able to attend IPE development meetings in person, he or she should participate by telephone or, at a minimum, request or initiate a phone conversation or e-mail follow up to confirm the name, address, and telephone number of the job developer/job coach and to verify whether the chosen provider is also available to provide ODDS long term job coaching.

The SC/PA should, as soon as possible, submit any ODDS exceptions that may be needed for ODDS services and supports on the job (e.g. transportation is above the monthly threshold requiring ODDS approval, or the tier or staffing needs must be reviewed).

IV. Stabilization and Transfer to Long Term ODDS Supports

Job stabilization is the point when transition to long-term support services funded through ODDS begins. Job stabilization has multiple components including all of the following:

- The individual has successfully achieved the employment outcomes in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE);
- The individual has met or made substantial progress toward meeting the work hours-per week goal documented in the IPE;
- The individual and the VRC consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well on the job;
- The employer is satisfied that the individual is performing well on their job; and
- Ongoing services are available and can be provided without an interruption in services.

It is up to the individual and VRC to determine when stabilization has been achieved. When the individual chooses to take a job that deviates from the initial plan (i.e., different hours, type of work, etc.), the IPE should be revised promptly to reflect these choices.

A VRC should notify the SC/PA as soon as the individual is placed in a job, to discuss the anticipated date of stabilization. This should occur at least 30 days prior to stabilization, unless stabilization occurs within fewer than 30 days of placement. At the point that the SC/PA is notified, he or she should verify the following:

1. Whether the individual will need initial and ongoing job coaching through ODDS.
2. Whether the individual's current job coach can provide services through ODDS and, if so, whether the individual wants to remain with the same job coach or organization. In any event, a job coaching plan should be developed to ensure continuity of support.
3. The estimated date of stabilization.

After transfer, the individual's IPE file remains open for a period of time determined by individual need and case closure requirements (i.e., that the individual is on the job for 90 days). Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) guidance requires that, in Supported Employment, case closure should not happen until at least 90 days after transfer to ODDS long-term supports.

Supported Employment services are individualized and the time it takes to reach job stability is based on each individual's needs. One scenario is job stability one month into the job, with immediate transition to ODDS support. While some individuals may attain stability within a month, many other individuals will require VR services for a longer time, and, in some cases, up to the 24 months allowed by WIOA.

Stabilization may take longer in some circumstances. Examples of these circumstances include:

1. A turnover of the supervisor or co-workers requiring additional work with the new staff;
2. Extra time is needed to learn the job (e.g., job tasks vary from day to day or week to week);
3. The job changed after the supervisor got to know the person;
4. Communication is an issue for the person or the employer/co-workers).

V. Authorizing Job Coaching

The SC/PA should authorize the job coaching in the individual's CDP and in Plan of Care prior to the date of stabilization in order to ensure a smooth transfer of services. The SC/PA also should authorize transportation or any other ancillary services required. Occasionally, transportation may require ODDS approval (if plan is above \$500.00/month), and so a request for approval should be submitted as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transfer to ODDS long term supports at stabilization.

If the individual does not need long term job coaching, then the plan for natural supports at work should be documented in the individual's CDP.

A. Available Providers and Provider Types

In the event that the individual needs long term job coaching through ODDS but the current job coach is not able to provide services through ODDS, other available options for job coaching should be explored including personal support workers or agency providers. The SC/PA should inform the VRC if the current job coach is not able to provide services through ODDS and the estimated time it will take to find an available and appropriate job coach. Federal regulation and Oregon policy require that transition to long term support, funded through ODDS, take place at or very near the point of stabilization.

B. Authorizing the Right Type of Job Coaching

Prior to transfer to ODDS job coaching, the SC/PA should authorize the appropriate type of job coaching in the individual's CDP and Plan of Care. Available options include initial, ongoing, and maintenance job coaching. Initial Job Coaching is available for 6 months minus any time Job Coaching is used through VR. For instance, if the individual only used 3 months of job coaching with VR, he or she remains eligible for 3 months of initial job coaching with ODDS. After the individual has received job coaching for 6 months, the service becomes ongoing job coaching. Ongoing job coaching is available for up to 18 months. Upon approval from ODDS, maintenance job coaching may continue for 12 months so long as the individual continues to require job coaching supports. The maintenance rate may be requested annually as requested by the individual and his or her employment team. For more information on initial, ongoing, and maintenance job coaching, see the related Worker's Guide on Job Coaching Requirements found here:

<https://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/dd/cm/Job%20Coaching%20Requirements.pdf>.

Desired outcome(s) for maintaining or advancing in Competitive Integrated Employment, and key steps to support the individual reach the desired outcome(s), must be documented in the CDP and monitored at least annually by the SC/PA. This includes identification of any support the person needs to maintain or advance in his or her job and obtain the desired outcome(s).

VI. Support to Increase Hours

If the individual wishes to continue to increase work hours after the VR case file is closed, this should be discussed before transfer to ODDS job coaching and documented in the VR file and the CDP, as outlined in the Worker's Guide regarding the 20-hour standard for planning supported employment services found here:

<https://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/im/2016/im16044.pdf>.

Post employment VR services are an option when an individual wants to advance in employment, but the job coach is often the best choice for helping the individual increase hours worked on the current job. VR post employment services are the logical choice if an additional accommodation is needed to advance on the current job. The job coach will typically continue to support the person to seek advancement and additional hours in either the job the person has or another closely related job.

Occasionally a VR participant will choose to reach his or her work hours goal through multiple, part-time jobs. In that case, the person may reach job stabilization and transfer to DD job

coaching services for one job while a second job is developed. The VR case file would not be closed until the work hours goal is reached, the person is stable in the most recent job obtained, and at least 60 days have passed since the final job has transferred to ODDS job coaching services.

VII. Requirements for VR Placement and ODDS Job Coaching

Competitive Integrated Employment, as required for VR placement and ODDS long term job coaching, means work in an integrated setting where the individual interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons. Competitive Integrated Employment is also where the person earns competitive wages and benefits and has the same opportunities for advancement as do individuals without disabilities. For more details, please review the Worker's Guide regarding Competitive Integrated Employment on the DHS staff tools page.

VIII. Obtaining a Job without VR Placement

If a person obtains a job in a Competitive Integrated Employment setting, without VR services, but needs job coaching support to maintain or advance in the job, then ODDS may fund initial job coaching support. **Job Development may not be authorized or paid unless it is not available through VR, and an exception has been approved by ODDS.**

ODDS may fund initial, ongoing, and maintenance job coaching support without referral to VR in the event that the job meets the requirements to be considered Competitive Integrated Employment (see related [Worker Guide](#) for more information) and the individual:

- Is working the preferred number of hours identified in their CDP, through the Discovery process or in another form or documentation;
- Is working in the field identified in the CDP, through the Discovery process or in another form or documentation, and upon review is satisfied with the job; and
- Is not at risk of losing the job as identified by the individual and the Employment Team.

Prior to authorization for job coaching through ODDS without referral to VR, the individual and his or her identified Employment Team must review the above requirements. The following must also occur:

1. The job must meet all the criteria for Competitive Integrated Employment outlined under the related Worker's Guide. As outlined under that Worker's Guide, ODDS presumes that a job at a provider site is Employment Path. However, if additional information demonstrates the position meets the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment, then the more appropriate support service may be job coaching. Providers need to submit additional information to ODDS in order to overcome this presumption. To facilitate this, the provider must complete the assessment found at the link below: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4521621/Oregon-Office-of-Developmental-Disabilities-Non->

2. The decision and justification, based on these requirements, must be documented in the attached “Job Coaching without VR placement” form. This form must be submitted to maintenancejobcoaching.request@state.or.us within 30 days of beginning the job. ODDS approval is not required prior to authorization and use of this service.
3. The Career Development Plan must be updated to reflect the work and authorization for job coaching.

In the event that the job is identified as at risk, or the individual or Employment Team requests a referral to VR for stabilization, the SC/PA must immediately help secure stabilization and make a referral to VR.

If it is identified that the individual is not working the preferred number of hours, not working in an area of interest, or is not stable in the job (i.e., the job is at risk), the individual must be referred immediately to VR. The SC/PA may authorize funding for job coaching for up to 30 days without prior approval from ODDS, in order to continue support while the individual is enrolled at VR. In this instance, job coaching may not be authorized for more than 30 days in Plan of Care. In the event that it takes more than 30 days for enrollment at VR, an exception must be requested to continue job coaching support.

Exceptions must be submitted to: ODDS.fundingreview@state.or.us using the “Request for Funding- Review or Exception” form. Refer to APD-AR-14-019 for guidance on use of the Funding Review mailbox and request form. Include the following information:

- The anticipated date for the VR intake appointment.
- A request to expedite VR intake.
- The estimated duration proposed for long term job coaching.
- Information regarding the providers being considered, and verification that the providers are both ODDS and VR vendors.

IX. Tier Review

Tier Review requests must be submitted to ODDS.FundingReview@state.or.us using the “Request for Funding- Review or Exception” form. Refer to APD-AR-14-019 for guidance on use of the Funding Review mailbox and request form.

Form(s) that apply:

Individual Support Plan/Career Development Plan: <http://oregonisp.org/forms/>

Individualized Plan for Employment: IPE

Applicable VR referral form (typically varies by region)

Job Coaching without VR placement form

Related ODDS Worker’s Guide titled: “Employment Stabilization and Competitive Integrated Employment”

Definition(s):

Career Development Plan:

- a. Means the part of an ISP that identifies:
 - A. The employment goals and objectives for an individual;
 - B. The services and supports needed to achieve those goals;
 - C. The people, agencies, and providers assigned to assist the individual to attain those goals;
 - D. The obstacles to the individual working in an individualized job in a competitive integrated employment setting; and
 - E. The services and supports necessary to overcome those obstacles
- b. A Career Development Plan is based on person-centered planning principles.

Competitive Integrated Employment means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment):

- a. For which an individual:
 - A. Is compensated at a rate that:
 - i. Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in federal, state, or local minimum wage law, and also is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or
 - ii. In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience and skills; and
 - B. Is eligible for the level of benefits provide to other employees.
- b. That is at a location where the employee interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons; and
- c. That, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Job Coaching means support for an individual to maintain or advance in an individual job in a competitive integrated employment setting in the general workforce, including customized employment or self-employment.

Reference(s):

20 hour policy transmittals (regarding VR and ODDS); ODDS Worker Guide

OAR 411-345

OAR 582-001-0010

RSA/WIOA: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html>

VR Stabilization Policy

ODDS Worker's Guide on Job Coaching Requirements:

<https://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/dd/cm/Job%20Coaching%20Requirements.pdf>.

Provider Assessment tool:

<http://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/1990286/ODDS-employment-and-day-service-provider-assessment>.

Frequently Asked Questions:

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