

3-28-14

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Statewide Employment First Coordinator Mike Maley and ODDS Interim Director and Chief Operating Officer Trisha Baxter

Re: Employment Services and Waiver Definitions

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

In this week's message, Trisha Baxter with the Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) and I will give an overview of employment-related services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) through the Support Services and Comprehensive Waivers (Waivers). These Waivers are provided through the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). There are significant changes being made to the Waivers that will go into effect on July 1, 2014, and more detailed information about those changes will be provided later. This message is not intended to provide an in-depth description of the changes to services, but to give a brief overview. However, employment services that will lead to community integrated employment can and should be provided now and do not have to wait until July 1.

The Waivers are an important aspect of employment services because they provide a significant portion of the resources that pay for the services and establish the framework and expectations of those services. State staff members are finalizing changes to current Waivers to update and clarify the employment services for adults with I/DD. For the most part, these services will be similar to previous ones, though they may be described differently or have more specific outcome expectations to better align with state and federal Employment First initiatives. CMS has provided specific guidance about what employment services are allowable under the Waivers. This guidance is on the web at:

<http://downloads.cms.gov/cmsgov/archived-downloads/CMCSBulletins/downloads/CIB-9-16-11.pdf>

Employment-related services under the Waivers available to adults with I/DD starting July 1 are:

1. **Individual Supported Employment:** This service is for individuals who need ongoing support to obtain and maintain a job in an integrated community setting. For example, this service will provide ongoing job coaching for someone to help maintain or improve their employment situation. This service can also include support for self-employment. The

expected outcome is sustained paid employment in an integrated, competitive job at or above minimum wage.

2. **Small Group Supported Employment:** These are services and training activities provided in regular business, industry, and community settings for groups of two to eight individuals. Examples of this type of activity include mobile crews and other business-based workgroups. These services must promote integration into the workplace and interaction with people without disabilities in those work settings. The expected outcome of this service is sustained paid employment leading to career advancement and individual integrated employment at or above minimum wage.
3. **Employment Path Services:** Sometimes referred to as “pre-vocational” services, these services are for individuals who have an employment goal. It should lead to integrated competitive employment. These services should develop and teach general work-related skills and work experience, including volunteer opportunities. The individual can develop general strengths and skills that contribute to employability in integrated work settings at or above minimum wage. Employment Path Services will be provided in a community or fixed facility site over a defined period of time.
4. **Discovery/Career Exploration Services:** This is a new employment service under the CMS Waivers. This is a person-centered, time-limited, employment planning service. It can help an individual obtain, maintain, or advance in a competitive integrated employment setting at or above minimum wage. Activities in the service can vary and can identify an individual’s interests, strengths, abilities, transferable skills, and conditions for success. These services should occur over a 3-month period (with the possibility of a 3-month extension). They can be provided in conjunction with the other services allowed under the Waivers. The specific outcome of this service is the development of a person-centered employment profile that will aid in the planning and search for integrated employment.

There is still much to be done to fully implement all the services outlined above. This includes administrative rule writing, completing service rate structures, and implementing necessary training. In addition, once proposed changes to the Waivers are submitted to CMS, some changes to the application could be made based on discussions between the state and federal partners. Any significant changes will be described in future communications.

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. If you

have comments or other questions, please email them to employment.first@state.or.us.

~ Mike and Trisha