Employment First
Worker's Guide

Topic:	Statewide Employment First Referral and Release of Information
	Date Issued/Updated: April 1, 2019

Overview

Description:
This guide outlines information related to Oregon's Statewide Employment First Referral (DHS form 4130) and the Statewide Authorization for Sharing Individual Information (Form 3010, commonly referred to as the Statewide Release of Information). These tools were developed jointly by Oregon's Employment First agencies, including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), and Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

Purpose/Rationale:

The purpose of the tools and related training is to:
- Help facilitate a coordinated delivery of employment service, particularly as a person is simultaneously served by multiple state agencies.
- Expedite delivery of employment services by documenting what employment information might be available from the multiple agencies.
- Decrease duplication caused when a person has to recreate information for multiple agencies.
- Decrease the time case managers and counselors spend handling and following up for employment and eligibility information.
- Ensure agencies can share information for service delivery that may require certain protections under federal or state law or policy.
- Support the person to make an informed choice about sharing information relevant and necessary to deliver employment services.
- The referral and release may be used by employment service agencies who have joint clients. The employment team (including team members responsible for service planning from both DD and VR) can use these tools to:
  - Collaborate and support the person to develop a coordinated plan for employment.
  - Ensure the team is working together to identify a person's support needs related to employment.

- Ensure the team is working together to identify what work experience and skills building a person may benefit from prior to or during job development, and then identify the most appropriate service to meet the need (regardless of whether its funded through ODDS or VR).
- Submitting a referral and release of information does not constitute an application for services. It grants permission for ODE, VR, and ODDS to coordinate the delivery of employment services.

Procedure(s) that apply:

When should the referral and release tools be used?
- The referral and release should be used as part of a person's referral for ODDS and/or VR funded employment services. The referral and release can be for just VR, just ODDS, or both agencies simultaneously.
- A referral should be made to VR if the person is interested in working and would like a referral. If the person is unsure about whether they want to work, then another service like employment path should be used to explore employment options.
- A referral for ODDS employment services should be made if there is a reason to believe the person might be able to benefit from DD services (ongoing job coaching, discovery, or employment path), and the person is interested in a referral.

Who can support the person to complete the Referral and Release and then submit these referral tools to VR and/or ODDS?
- The employment team can appoint someone to support a person to complete and submit the referral tools. Often times, this will be the case manager, teacher, YTP specialist, or VR Counselors. A person can also submit a referral for his or herself, or also just go straight to VR or ODDS to request services.

What information should be included with the referral?
- All information that is relevant for employment services should generally be shared.
- It is important to share information regarding a person's employment related skills and experience as well information regarding a person's support needs. This information is used for employment service planning and employment service delivery. It can inform the job search to ensure the best job match possible. It can also inform the employment services and supports needed on the job.
- It is important to make sure the person and his or her support team understand that all information listed in the Catalogue may be shared between agencies and their contractors (e.g. case management entities

and providers) in order to help the person obtain the best job match possible, and then to support the person on the job. This is regardless of whether the information already exists, or if it is later developed during the course of employment services.

- The employment team should coordinate to check all existing information that is relevant to employment under Section 5 of the Referral tool (i.e. the Catalogue of Employment Information). This Catalogue is a living document. The team should checkmark new information or documents as it becomes available (e.g. a new ISP is available, or a Discovery Profile is developed during the course of employment services). Completing the Catalogue should not delay a referral because the referring party is waiting for certain information to become available.
- The referring party should discuss with the person that all the information listed on the Catalogue may be shared between agencies (and their contractors) once it becomes available, unless it is not relevant for employment services or a person has specified that they do not want to share the information.

What information is generally considered to be relevant?

- Information that is relevant to the delivery of employment services should be shared to ensure that service delivery is coordinated and that the person can find the best job match and be supported to be successful on the job.
- While determining what is relevant is highly individualized, the following are generally considered relevant:
  - A person's employment history and employment services.
  - A behavior support plan if there is a relevant risk that may occur in a work or employment service setting.
  - A Discovery Profile.
  - Risks and related health and safety mitigation strategies or protocols are relevant when the risk may reasonably be expected to threaten the health and safety of the individual, the provider, or the community at large without appropriate precautions during the delivery of the employment services.

What if there is information the person does not want to share?

- If an individual refuses to disclose relevant information important for the delivery of employment services, the refusal can be documented in the release of information form under "Is there specific information not to release?" Note: some information may be required to determine service eligibility. A person can decide to share certain information with one entity and not another (for example, a person may decide to share certain information for an eligibility determination and service planning, but decide to not share it with the provider for example).

- The referral can occur even without a release of the relevant information.
- The person and the VR/ ODDS representative can have a conversation about why the relevant information may be needed for an eligibility determination and/or the delivery of employment services.
- The person can wait to make a decision about disclosing relevant information to a provider until he/she had chosen a provider.
- If a release indicates a person does not want to share a particular piece of information, but later decides to go ahead and share it (e.g. after a conversation with the provider), then a separate release should be completed.
- Ultimately, if the person decides not to disclose relevant information, the provider may opt not to deliver the services.

How do we help to ensure the person seeking services has an opportunity to make an informed choice about what information to share?
- Making an informed choice means the person has received information and understands all advantages and disadvantages to sharing the information (i.e. it can be important to get a good job match, and provide the right supports on the job).
- The form of communication shall be appropriate to the needs and preferences of the person.
- At the start of this process, the person and the support team should designate someone to support the person to navigate this process. Ideally, this is someone who knows the person well, including how the person likes to communicate.

What if I don't know whether certain documents exist?
- Coordinate with the employment team members representing the person from partner agencies to identify existing information in the Catalogue. However, a referral should not be delayed because a referring party is unsure about whether a particular piece of information or document exists.

Where should the referral and release form be submitted?
- For ODDS services, submit the referral and release forms to the county for an eligibility determination. If eligibility has already been established, the referral and release of information can be sent to the case manager.
- For VR services, submit the referral and release to the local VR branch. If there are multiple branches within the person's region, the person may want to choose the nearest branch.

Where (and when) should the information identified in the referral form be submitted?

- Each employment team member will work to gather the relevant employment information available.
- The primary contact for each partner agency is responsible for ensuring the assigned VR counselor and/or assigned case manager receives the relevant information the person has agreed to share from that team member's respective agency.
- For a referral to VR, this information should be shared at or prior to the VR intake meeting, or as soon as reasonable. Generally, the referral and release is sent to VR. Employment Team members work to gather the information, but wait until a VR counselor is identified in order to send the information to VR.
- For a referral to DD, this information should be shared with the county eligibility specialist as soon as possible.

Is the referral considered an application for VR services? Does it trigger VR timelines relating to an eligibility determination or a timeline for getting a person into VR plan?

- Submitting the referral and release, and indicating what types of documents are available, is generally in itself insufficient to meet the requirements to be considered an application.
- A VR application is generally completed at a VR intake meeting with the person present.

Forms:

- Oregon DHS Forms Page: https://aix-xweb1p.state.or.us/es_xweb/FORMS/
  - DHS Form 4130: Employment First Referral
  - Form 3010: Statewide Authorization for Sharing Individual Information (Release of Information)

References:

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