

Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

This attachment describes the:

- Quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- Timing of the transition to extended services

Individuals with most significant disabilities who participate in ACCES-VR supported employment programs engage in job planning, counseling, assessment, job development, intensive job-site training and extended job retention services. Training is also provided to direct service personnel, such as job coaches and job coaching supervisors. New York State's Chapter 515 of the Laws of 1992 on integrated employment, including supported employment, is implemented through a collaborative interagency process in New York State. ACCES-VR is designated as having the primary responsibility for integrated employment, including intensive supported employment services. The State agencies responsible for the extended phase of supported employment work collaboratively with ACCES-VR to ensure the provision of comprehensive supported employment services in New York State.

In addition to Chapter 515, the framework for supported employment is established by the following policies and procedural documents:

- The October 1999 Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Supported Employment;
- The Guidelines for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Employment (March 2007); and
- The Quality Indicators for Supported Employment.

Supported employment providers, in cooperation with the State agencies, have the following responsibilities:

- Actively involve consumers and their families, in assessment, planning and decision making throughout the service delivery process;
- Consider the individual's and employer's satisfaction with the nature and frequency of provider's services and with the job placement itself;
- Through a consumer-centered decision-making process, pursue the goals detailed in the ACCES-VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by using supported employment resources to the best advantage of the individual;
- Report in a timely fashion on programmatic and fiscal details;
- Deliver supported employment services in accordance with federal and State standards and the contractual obligations for the service; and
- Strive continuously to evaluate the effectiveness of the services and make improvements to the services and the results.

Eligibility for Supported Employment:

Supported employment services may be provided to any individual who is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and who meets the criteria stated below, as documented in the record of service:

1. Has a most significant disability, as defined in Section 205.00 of ACCES-VR Policy on Individuals with Significant Disabilities;
2. Has not traditionally participated in competitive employment or whose employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a most significant disability; and
3. Has had a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs which identifies supported employment as an appropriate vocational objective and has:
 - a) the ability to engage in a vocational program leading to supported employment;
 - b) a need for ongoing support services in order to perform and sustain competitive work;
 - c) the ability to work in a supported employment setting; and
 - d) met the criteria for extended service funding.

An Individual with a Most Significant Disability:

- a) Has one or more physical or mental disabilities, determined by an assessment of eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs which cause substantial functional limitations; and
- b) Has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) impacting an employment outcome; and
- c) Whose vocational rehabilitation will require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Supported Employment Program Standards:

Service quality standards for supported employment have been established through the development and issuance of provider guidelines. Issued in March 2007, the "Guidelines for Supported Employment" were revised with the assistance and involvement of collaborating State agencies, service providers and advocacy groups, with the intent to facilitate access to services and to ensure the quality and consistency of service delivery.

The current guidelines incorporate language changes consistent with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments and corresponding federal regulations and reflect additional changes to bring them into alignment with current contract provisions and with reporting process enhancements. The guidelines also establish a common base of accepted practices

and procedures among ACCES-VR and supported employment service providers. The guidelines are available on ACCES-VR's website at:
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/supportedemployment/seguidelines.htm> .

Supported Employment Program Reporting:

Each supported employment project is required to complete individual and quarterly narrative reports in a format specified by the supported employment contracts. The monthly reporting format requires the provider to assess the person's progress in relation to the IPE, indicating any assessment, job development/placement and intensive training services. In addition, onsite reviews are conducted by ACCES-VR through a program review protocol to ensure compliance with contract requirements.

Scope of Supported Employment Services:

Supported employment services provide all the services necessary to assist the person with:

- Learning specific work duties and performance standards;
- Learning formal and informal site-related expectations (e.g., time and attendance, dress, communication protocol);
- Acquiring site-appropriate work-related behaviors when dealing with supervisors and co-workers;
- Acquiring the sense of belonging to the workforce;
- Understanding and using the benefits of employment (e.g., spending pay, using leave, participating in employee programs, working under direction from the supervisor, socializing with co-workers); and
- Developing a community support system that accommodates and positively reinforces the employee's role as a worker.

The strategies are customized to the needs of the individual, assisting the individual in meeting employer expectations and improving interpersonal skills. Job coaches use any available community resources in meeting consumer needs as a means of assisting the individual in maintaining employment.

Supported Employment Data:

ACCES-VR, the Office of Children and Family Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH), the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) and the Office of Mental Health (OMH) track participation of individuals in their respective supported employment programs. The New York State Interagency Employment Reporting System (NYSIERS) collects data on individuals with disabilities in supported employment programs. This interagency system integrates data from the respective State agencies coordinating supported employment. The NYSIERS database includes:

- Hours of pre-employment services, which include screening and assessment, job development, job placement and advocacy;
- Hours of onsite and offsite interventions;
- Total hours of service provided;
- Extended services funding source; and
- Average weekly work hours and wages paid.

Discussions are underway to streamline the NYSIERS data that supported employment providers are required to provide.

Each year, the State agencies review their progress and issue an annual report on supported employment. The State Fiscal Year 2006 report is available on the ACCES-VR webpage at:

http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/current_provider_information/vocational_rehabilitation/chapter_515/chapter515.pdf