

QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services of the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)/Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program ensure that VR consumers with the most significant disabilities are integrated into competitive employment settings that are consistent with their capabilities, priorities, resources, strengths, and informed choice.

Quality of Supported Employment Services

The supported employment concept assumes that all persons, regardless of the degree of their disability, have the capacity and should be afforded the opportunity to engage in competitive employment with appropriate support services. To ensure that supported employment services are provided according to federal regulations, the following requirements shall be met:

- **Most Significant Disabled.** Services will be provided for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have a documented need for supported employment services, including extended support services.
- **Competitive Employment.** Employment must be full-time or part-time in an integrated setting. The individual and his/her VR Counselor will jointly establish in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) appropriate goals for the number of hours per week that will maximize the individual's vocational potential.
- **Integrated Setting.** The employment should provide daily contact in immediate work settings with non-disabled employees and/or the general public. The setting must allow interaction to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with others. No more than eight individuals will be clustered in any employment setting.
- **Wages in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.** Each individual in supported employment will be paid comparable wages for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals. The payment may be less than minimum wage; however, the individual must be working towards minimum wage.
- **Extended Services.** Proactive extended supports are tailored to meet each individual's needs, and to prepare the individual for career advancement after completion of the supported employment program. To ensure the continuation of integrated employment, re-employment services oriented toward career development are provided to workers changing jobs.

The quality of supported employment outcomes is assessed individually. Such issues as consumer and employer satisfaction, earnings, benefits, the degree of integration, availability of dependable transportation, co-worker support, socialization, work environment, and provision of support services are important. On a regular basis, the supported employment administrator

conducts technical assistance visits with each provider for quality assurance purposes. Each supported employment provider establishes on going strategies to measure consumer satisfaction.

Scope of Supported Employment Services

The scope of supported employment services vary based on the amount, intensity, and kind of support needed by each individual. Supported employment offers more than just the assistance needed to obtain employment. It provides the necessary on-going support to help an individual maintain employment.

Services made available by VR Title VI, Part B funds are limited to those initial services resulting in stable job performance in an integrated competitive work setting. As appropriate to individual needs, these services may include:

1. **Assessment.** An assessment of the individual's need and qualification for supported employment services.
2. **Integration.** Integration into competitive employment for the maximum number of hours possible consistent with the person's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.
3. **On-the-job Training.** Intensive on-the-job skills training that are based on a systematic analysis of the work to be performed, and a systematic analysis of the employer's performance expectations and requirements. It is conducted in accordance with a written plan identifying the methods of teaching, instruction, and behavior management necessary to enable the individual to acquire skills and master the work to be performed, to regulate behavior in accordance with the employer's requirements and expectations, and achieve stable job performance. The training provides for a systematic reduction of intensive teaching, instruction, and behavior management methods to the lowest intervention level necessary to maintain stable job performance.
4. **VR Services.** Other vocational rehabilitation services that are needed to achieve and maintain employment stability including, but not limited to:
 - a. Interpreter services for individuals with hearing impairments to permit communication between the individual and the skilled job trainer.
 - b. Occupational licenses and permits required by federal, state, and local law to perform an occupation.
 - c. Occupational tools, equipment, and uniforms required by the employer but not routinely provided to new employees, and safety shoes and other articles of clothing necessary to permit safe performance on the job.

- d. Rehabilitation technology services including adaptations and modifications of the workplace.
 - e. Transportation from place of residence to the work site and return until the person can pay for the cost from earnings.
5. On-going monitoring services from the time of job placement until the transition to extended services. At a minimum, these services include an assessment of the individual's employment stability and need for extended services to maintain stable employment.

These services are designed to maximize the individual's employment potential.

Extent of Supported Employment Services

As part of the eligibility determination process for vocational rehabilitation services, supported employment will be considered as a possible vocational outcome for individuals with the most significant disability. The GDOL/VR Program provides supported employment services through a network of 380 approved service vendors. These services may include:

1. **Job Development and Placement.** Job development and placement services are provided to the extent necessary to place the individual into integrated competitive employment consistent with his or her informed choice, or to determine on the basis of clear evidence that an employment outcome cannot be achieved.
2. **On-the-job Training.** Intensive on-the-job and other training services are provided to the person to the extent necessary to achieve stable job performance, or to determine on the basis of clear evidence this cannot be achieved. Services are provided for a maximum of 18 cumulative months, beginning on the day the person starts the job, unless a longer period is provided in the individual written rehabilitation program of the person.
3. **Follow-up Services.** Follow-up services, including regular contact with the employer, the individual with a most significant disability, the individual's parents, guardian or other representative, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.
4. **On-Going Support.** The individual shall be provided needed on-going support services such as job site training, transportation, family support, or any service necessary to achieve and maintain the supported employment placement. On-going support must include, at a minimum, twice monthly contact with the supported employee at the work site to assess job stability unless it is determined that off-site monitoring is more appropriate for a particular individual. Off-site monitoring must consist of at least two face-to-face meetings with the individual and one employer contact monthly.

Transition to Extended Employment

Transition to extended employment generally occurs within eighteen months of the date of placement into supported employment. Generally transition to extended employment occurs when the supported employment specialist, the VR counselor, and the consumer determine that employment stabilization has been achieved.

Stabilization is measured for each individual by considering all circumstances including support needs, consumer choice and satisfaction regarding services, and employer feedback. On a case-by-case basis, as determined in the individual's IPE, the eighteen-month limitation may be extended in order to assist the individual with obtaining stable employment.