

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 authorized a new formula grant program entitled the State Supported Employment Services Program. The Act recognizes supported employment as a legitimate vocational rehabilitation outcome. The amendments to the Rehabilitation Act maintained many of the core components of the original supported employment regulations but made the program more effective and flexible in assisting persons with the most significant disabilities to successfully obtain and maintain competitive employment in integrated work settings. Supported employment services are a central link in the rehabilitation service delivery system in South Dakota.

Supported Employment Definition

The Act as amended defines supported employment as:

Competitive work in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment:

- a. has not traditionally occurred; or
- b. has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
- c. who, because of their nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services for the period, or extended services to perform such work.
- d. This also includes transitional employment for persons with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness.

Quality of Supported Employment

Ensuring that quality supported employment (SE) services are being provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities in South Dakota is a priority for the Division. Quality is measured by more than just the number of individuals who receive supported employment services. Quality also incorporates key values such as self-determinism; choice; person-centered supports; quality of life; and full inclusion.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) is committed to providing quality supported employment services to individuals with disabilities. Providing training to VR counselors and supported employment service providers is essential to improving services. The Division currently contracts with the South Dakota Center for Disabilities to provide comprehensive training for supported employment service providers in South Dakota.

In June 2015, the Division implemented a 25% higher reimbursement rate to supported employment service providers who obtain a Certified Employment Support Professional credentials. In addition, the Division has been sponsoring trainings to help service providers improve their service ability and maintain their continued education credits.

Timing of the Transition to Extended Services

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency provides time-limited services needed to support an individual in employment. Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 24 months of job coaching and follow-along services unless the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) indicates that more than 24

months of services are necessary for the individual to achieve job stability prior to transitioning to extended services. For individuals who are youth with intellectual disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 48 months of job coaching and follow-along services.

Prior to the purchase of supported employment services, the need for the services, the appropriate extended services and funding, and the appropriate agency agreeing to provide the services are established and identified on the IPE. The transition to the extended services (long term funding source) occurs when 18 months of job coaching and follow along services have been provided or earlier if the following three requirements are met:

1. The individual's employment is stable;
2. The individual has met the hourly goal of employment established in the IPE; and
3. The extended services are immediate without any interruption in the provision of the ongoing services to maintain employment.

If the IPE indicates that more than 24 months of services are necessary in order for the individual to achieve job stability, the time-limited services of job coaching and follow along can exceed 24 months. After the individual has transitioned to extended employment, the individual must maintain employment for at least 90 days before the consumer's case is a successful closure.