

Use of Paid Work Options in DVR

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Purpose:

To share information with staff and providers about the use of paid work options with DVR. To outline what types of settings and payment requirements are included when paid work is used as a service.

Rationale:

The Rehabilitation Act requires three primary characteristics of employment: 1.) Competitive, 2.) Integrated setting and 3.) Consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. In many areas "Work Adjustment Training" has been provided as a combination of skills training and paid work. There is no RSA definition or code for this type of combined service and DVR has chosen to provide a separated array of services to allow for individualized approaches to combine Disability or Occupational skill training with paid work. This approach will be more in line with DVR philosophy, RSA characteristics of employment and will allow for service components to be provided together in a flexible way.

It is believed that this separated array of services is an opportunity for DVR to work collaboratively with local service providers to create training curriculum and methods that will meet the employment needs of DVR consumers. This guidance is meant to provide comparative information about those options. There are several points of emphasis intended to provide clarification.

- VR consumers are assumed to be capable of competitive employment. Wages and settings of ALL DVR services are provided in a manner consistent with that belief.
- DVR services resulting in paid work will be consistent with the competitive and integrated requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Training may be provided in classrooms or other community settings as approved by the local WDA.
- Training including Disability Related Skills training and/or Occupational skills training can be provided in small groups as approved by the local WDA.
- Inclusion in a group opportunity will require the DVR consumer be fully informed of the implications to personal privacy and disclosure of disability to other members of the group.
- DVR consumers can opt-out of group activities after full consultation.
- DVR will continue to purchase Disability Related Skills Training and Occupational Skills training when necessary. It is expected these training programs will be developed locally, involve detailed goal oriented reporting and utilize outcome based fees.
- Disability Related Skills training and/or Occupational skills training can be provided simultaneously with paid work options.

- DVR will continue the use of other support services (i.e., job coaching, assistive technology etc.) in paid work as appropriate.
- Consumers may need to have specifically designed community based services and supports as an exception to locally established skill training programs and offerings when there is exceptional and established consumer need. DVR will assist in a case by case basis in identifying community based locations for paid work services.
- DVR must provide a variety of trial temporary work opportunities through an IPE, over a sufficient period of time that result in clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, before the decision can be made to close the case due to the severity of the individual's disability.
- Paid work should be included in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment if provided for purposes other than assessment. It is important to include in the case record the specific purpose and parameters for the temporary work.

TRAINING OPTIONS

The training options below can be provided simultaneously with other paid work. Training may be provided in small groups or one-on-one as needed. There is an expectation that ongoing reporting will be provided that include progress achieved and skills acquired.

Occupational/Vocational Training Code 063 - Occupational, vocational, or job skill training *not leading to an academic degree* provided by a community college and/or business, vocational/trade or technical school to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

Examples: Certified Nursing Assistant, fork lift training, truck driver training, stand-alone computer course, continuing education courses, specialized work skill training certificates/competencies, bi-lingual training, etc.

Disability Related Skills Training Code 055 - Training to improve functioning for competitive employment by addressing specific disability related issues.

Examples: Speech reading, sign language, and cognitive training/retraining, job search groups, employment related soft-skills training.

PAID WORK OPTIONS

There are a number of paid work options available in the DVR process.

The Rehabilitation Act requires three primary characteristics of employment:

1. Competitive
2. Integrated setting,
3. Consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The paid work options below are intended to reflect the requirements of employment as defined by RSA. DVR staff should insure that each consumer is placed meeting the three characteristics provided by RSA as well as the needs of the consumer and the purpose and timing of the placement.

CONSUMER - The individual needs of each consumer should be considered for each placement. Placements should be made in integrated, competitive and community based sites in all paid work situations.

LENGTH - The length of the placements can vary based on need of consumer, employer and purpose of placement. Each timeframe should be considered carefully and individualized. See chart and related technical specifications for described perimeters.

PURPOSES(S) - **There are many** reasons that paid work options can be utilized in the DVR process. Paid work should NOT be used for income maintenance purposes.

- **Assessment** - Provide the participant, employer and DVR counselor with an opportunity to evaluate the participant's interest, suitability, job accommodation needs, productivity and other worker traits in a real work environment.
- **Career Exploration** - Learning about an occupational area or work environment of interest.
- **Work Hardening** - Improve physical and/or emotional capacity to work.
- **Work Adjustment** - Learn about basic work behavior and workplace requirements regardless of the specific job goal.
- **Skill Enhancement** - Develop skills in a specific occupation or brush up on existing skills.
- **Reference Development** - Obtain a current positive employment record.
- **Job Try Out** - Many DVR participants need to approach working with as little stress as possible. These participants often benefit from a limited commitment to the employer. Also, some employers may not be ready to commit to a permanent hire, but are willing to offer paid employment on a trial basis. Both the consumer and employer can try each other out.

PAYMENT- DVR must insure the individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage and not less than the customary and prevailing wage and benefit level paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled. Verification of customary and prevailing wages must be recorded.

Hours worked must also be reported. This includes ALL DVR authorized paid work placements.