Chapter 15:

Supported Employment

Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Policy and Procedures Manual

Revision Date: January 2022

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# Definitions

* 1. **“Individual with a most significant disability”** means an individual who has been determined by DBVI to have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and that seriously limits function in four or more areas of functional capacity (mobility, communication, work tolerance, work skills, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, dexterity/coordination), requiring multiple services over a period of six months or more.
  2. **“Extended services”** means ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability/disabilities, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment, and that are provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from DBVI services. DBVI may provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four (4) years.
  3. **“Supported employment”** — The term ‘supported employment’ means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment. The employment is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals involved, for individuals with the most significant disabilities:
     1. For whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
     2. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from DBVI services in order to perform the work involved.
  4. **“Supported employment services”** — The term ‘supported employment services’ means ongoing support services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment, that:

1. Are provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment;
2. Are based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment; and
3. Are provided by DBVI for a period of not more than 24 months, except that period may be extended, if necessary, in order to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment.
   1. **“Youth with a disability” —** The term ‘youth with a disability’ means an individual with a disability who is not younger than 14 years of age or older than 24 years of age.
4. General Policy
   1. DBVI maintains a cooperative agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to provide supported employment services. Supported employment is most often provided as a service for individuals with developmental disabilities or for individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities.
   2. Under the agreement, DBVI provides DVR with a portion of its supported employment funds known as “Title VI, Part B funds”. The agreement states that DVR will negotiate on behalf of DBVI for the provision of extended services and long-term supports and will act as a liaison between DBVI and supported employment providers.
   3. DVR provides supported employment through grant agreements with community rehabilitation providers generally, Designated Agencies or Specialized Service Agencies, specifically:
      1. Developmental Services (DS) programs for adults with developmental disabilities; and
      2. JOBS programs for youth with severe emotional/behavioral disabilities.

These programs are Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs funded by Medicaid and administered by the Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) and Vermont Department of Mental Health. They provide placement services, training, on-the-job support, and support to the employer.

* 1. A consumer who is a student in high school with a developmental disability is not guaranteed to be eligible for HCBS. However, if the counselor determines the consumer is likely to meet the DDSD System of Care (SOC) Priority, then it is reasonable to identify the HCBS as a likely source of extended services.
  2. DBVI staff, as a part of the agreement with DVR, will provide technical assistance to job developers, job coaches, tutor trainers, and employers regarding adaptive devices and techniques that relate to low vision or blindness. Additionally, DBVI will arrange for adaptive skills assessments and training (i.e. Orientation and Mobility (O&M), low vision or technology) and will provide any aids and devices recommended by the Rehabilitation Technology Specialist, O&M Instructor, or Vision Rehabilitation Teacher.
  3. When a consumer requires supported employment services, the DBVI counselor shall refer the consumer to DVR. The DVR counselor, typically a DVR transition counselor, along with the DBVI counselor will assist the consumer, and legal representative, if appropriate, in choosing a provider and identifying service needs. This includes projected extended service needs. Supported Employment services are required to be included in the DVI IPE. See Chapter 22, “Vocational Rehabilitation Services to an Individual by More Than One VR Agency”.

1. Spending Guidelines – General Provisions
   1. The Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), with input from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), shall establish and maintain reasonable spending guidelines which shall be reviewed annually.
   2. DBVI may not place absolute dollar limits on a specific service or total services provided. However, it can set reasonable spending guidelines to ensure reasonable costs to the program. The guidelines may not be so low as to deny the individual a necessary service.
   3. When considering exceptions to the spending guidelines, the Director or designee must consider the individual’s ability to contribute to their services, The individual’s contribution must be:
2. Reasonable;
3. Based on the individual’s financial need; and
4. Not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service.
   1. DBVI cannot require individuals who are SSDI or SSI beneficiaries to provide funding toward their services, including post-secondary education and training.
5. Specific Funding Guidelines
   1. The cost of most supported employment services will be covered under the agreement described above. The spending guideline for additional services purchased directly by DBVI is $3,000 per year unless an exception is granted by the Director or designee in accordance with B. and C. of Section III.