

# Clarifications and Training Requirements for Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) Employment Services

## ODP Announcement 20-004

### AUDIENCE:

Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) Providers of Career Planning (Vocational Assessment and Job Finding), Supported Employment (Intensive Job Coaching and Extended Employment Supports), Small Group Employment (formerly known as Transitional Work Services), and Supports Coordinators and Supports Coordinator Supervisors

### PURPOSE:

To provide updated clarifications regarding the Career Planning (Vocational Assessment and Job Finding), Supported Employment (Intensive Job Coaching and Extended Employment Supports) services, Small Group Employment (formerly known as Transitional Work Services), and updated provider training requirements

### DISCUSSION:

The Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations (BSASP) is providing additional guidance about the AAW employment services and correcting and clarifying information that was included in previous notices (BAW16-39, BAW17-06, and BAW 17-29, Archived).

### ADDING AAW EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO THE ISP

AAW employment services may be added during the initial plan development, annual review or a critical revision of an ISP. **These services may not be utilized for volunteer positions.**

In order to receive Career Planning or Supported Employment through the AAW, the participant must first go through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). This

requirement is not necessary if the participant meets one of the exceptions outlined in the Joint OVR/ODP Bulletins, [00-19-01, issued February 14, 2019 “OVR Referral Process for ODP Employment-Related Services](#), and [00-19-02, issued July 1, 2019 “OVR Referrals During a Period when OVR’s Order of Selection is Closed](#), or subsequent updates.

## CAREER PLANNING – VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### Initial Authorization

- If a participant needs a vocational assessment, this should be the only employment service added to the ISP until the assessment is completed with the exception of Supported Employment. These two services can be provided concurrently if the participant wants to obtain a better job or different job while continuing paid work.
- Providers must complete the assessment using the BSASP Vocational Profile template and then submit it to the SC for entry into HCSIS. Once completed, additional services can be added to the ISP. See the “BSASP Technical Assistance” section of this notice for information on direct care staff submitting their very first Vocational Profile.
- Providers should use their judgement and experience to estimate the number of units needed for a participant’s assessment. As a guideline, BSASP recommends adding 60 units to the ISP for completion of a Vocational Assessment. If needed, the provider can request additional units.
- Vocational Assessment will be authorized for billing immediately once the ISP has been approved.
- Vocational Assessment may only be added to the ISP for a maximum of 90 days but may be reauthorized as described in the reauthorization section below.
- This service may be added to an ISP whenever the participant’s circumstances or career goals change.

### Additional Details about Vocational Assessment

- Vocational Assessment requires goals to be submitted to the SC. It does not require objectives.
- The provider must send a copy of the Vocational Profile to other members of the team for review. Once reviewed, each team member signs the page as confirmation that this was completed.
- A copy of the Vocational Profile must be maintained in the individual’s file.

- Vocational Assessment services may be provided directly to the participant and indirectly for the benefit of the participant. For example, identifying internships for a specific participant may occur with or without the participant present.

## CAREER PLANNING – JOB FINDING

### Initial Authorization

- If the participant needs help with finding a job but does not need an assessment, or one has already been completed, Job Finding may be added to the ISP.
- Job Finding may be added to an ISP if the participant’s employment ends or employment is determined unsatisfactory by the participant.
- Providers should use their judgement and experience to estimate the number of units needed for a participant’s job finding. As a guideline, BSASP recommends adding 112 units to the ISP for completion of a Job Finding. If needed, the provider can request additional units.
- Job Finding may only be added to the ISP for a maximum of 90 days but may be reauthorized as described in the reauthorization section below.
- Job Finding will be authorized for billing immediately once the ISP has been approved. The provider needn’t wait for participant to secure employment before Job Finding may be authorized and billed.

### Additional Details about Job Finding

- Job Finding requires goals to be submitted to the SC. It does not require objectives.
- Job Finding services may be provided directly to the participant and indirectly for the benefit of the participant. For example, speaking with a potential employer on a specific participant’s behalf which may occur with or without the participant present.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT - INTENSIVE JOB COACHING

### Initial Authorization

- Intensive Job Coaching may be added to the ISP for six months and reauthorized twice more, for up to a maximum of 18 consecutive months.
- The 18-month limitation applies to the same position at the same employment site. A new job position, employer, or job site resets the time

limitation and begins a new initial six-month period.

### **Additional Details about Intensive Job Coaching**

- Intensive Job Coaching supports participants who require on-the-job support for more than 20% of their work week.
- Intensive Job Coaching requires goals and objectives. Within three weeks of the service start date, objectives must be submitted by the provider to the SC.
- Prior to adding Intensive Job Coaching to the ISP, SCs should update the Employment/Volunteer screen in HCSIS to include the place of employment and add the number of hours per week the participant is scheduled to work in the comments box. This information is essential for BSASP to determine the appropriate type of Supported Employment services.
- If Intensive Job Coaching is added to the ISP, a plan must immediately be developed for considerations of how to fade the intensive job coaching. The transition plan should outline steps the participant and team will take to build skills in order to reduce supports to 20% or less of the time on the job. A participant may end Intensive Job Coaching to transition to Extended Employment Supports at any time; the participant does not need to wait until the end of a six-month authorization segment. Participants who transition to Extended Employment Supports may transition back to Intensive Job Coaching at any time based on their needs.

## **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT – EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

### **Initial Authorization**

- This service may be authorized up to a maximum of 416 hours per year, with the year starting on the ISP plan effective date.

### **Additional Details about Extended Employment Supports**

- Extended Employment Supports is intended for participants who require support 20% or less of their work week.
- Extended Employment Supports requires goals and objectives. Objectives must be submitted by the provider to the SC within three weeks of the service start date.
- Prior to adding Extended Employment Supports to the ISP, SCs should update the Employment/Volunteer screen in HCSIS to include the place of employment and add the number of hours the participant is scheduled to work per week in the comments

box. This information is essential for BSASP to determine the appropriate type of Supported Employment services.

- A participant may end Extended Employment Supports at any time to transition to Intensive Job Coaching. Participants who transition to Intensive Job Coaching may transition back to Extended Employment Supports at any time based upon need.

### **Additional Details about Supported Employment**

- Providers of Supported Employment services may not also be the employer of the participant to whom they provide Supported Employment.
- Supported Employment may be provided directly to the participant and indirectly for the benefit of the participant.

### **SMALL GROUP EMPLOYMENT**

- Small Group Employment services are only billable when the participant is receiving direct support during the time that he or she is working and receiving wages through one of these service options or during transportation to a work site.
- Effective 07/01/2019, Small Group Employment may be provided without referring a participant to OVR because OVR does not provide Small Group Employment.

### **REAUTHORIZATION OF VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT, JOB FINDING & INTENSIVE JOB COACHING**

- Reauthorization of these services is subject to BSASP review and approval.
- Each reauthorization must be added as a separate service line each time it is added to the ISP.
- Continuation of these services requires reauthorization:
  - Every 90 days (for Vocational Assessment and Job Finding), if necessary, for up to one year from initial authorization every time it is added to the ISP; or
  - Every six months (for Intensive Job Coaching), if necessary, for up to 18 consecutive months from initial authorization for the same position at the same employment site.
    - If a participant has received Intensive Job Coaching at the same employment site for 18 consecutive months and continues to need this service, an Exception Request to the service limitation needs to be submitted to BSASP by the SC. See Administrative

Notice BAW 16-31: Request for an Exception to Established Service Limits for more information on the exceptions process.

- Prior to the end of the authorization period and before the SC requests reauthorization, the team is expected to discuss progress towards the service's goal(s) and the continued need for these services.
  - For Intensive Job Coaching, the team is also expected to discuss progress towards fading the service.
- If needed, the SC should submit a Critical Revision at least 15 days prior to the end date of the current service line to add an additional 90 days of service for Vocational Assessment and Job Finding, or to add an additional six months of Intensive Job Coaching for the same position at the same employment site. The SC's HCSIS service note must include details regarding the team's discussion on progress made and reasons why additional time is needed.
- If a participant is laid off or stops using Intensive Job Coaching for any other reason, the employment provider must notify the SC as soon as possible so the SC can update the ISP accordingly.

#### PROVIDER REPORTING & DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- Providers are required to document service delivery per the 55 Pa. Code Chapter 6100 Regulations.
- Providers are required to submit Quarterly Summary Reports<sup>1</sup> for these services via QuestionPro.

#### NEW TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

**Effective 07/01/2020, or within 6 months of hire if hired after 01/01/2020.**

**Staff working directly with the participant to provide Career Planning, Supported Employment and Small Group Employment services must have one of the following:**

- Hold a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) credential from the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE); or
- Have been awarded a Basic Employment Services Certificate of Achievement or a Professional Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services from an Association

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<sup>1</sup> Quarterly Summary reports are being replaced by Quarterly Progress Notes to comply with 55 Pa. Code Chapter 6100 Regulations. As of the release date of this publication this change has not formally been implemented by BSASP and QSRs should continue to be completed until further notice; however, providers are still responsible for compliance with the regulations.

of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) organizational member that has ACRE-approved training.

Effective 07/01/2020, newly hired staff who do not have the required certification must work under the supervision of someone who is certified. This can occur for no longer than 6 months from the date of hire to allow the new hire time to obtain the certification.

**Staff providing these services must also complete standard ODP required orientation and annual training.**

**All providers of Career Planning and Supported Employment MUST ALSO:**

Have documentation of and complete the following two AAW Employment/Vocational Services training modules prior to their first service provision.

- Understanding Vocational Issues for Persons with Autism, and
- Employer Development, not Job Development
- To access the courses on the MyODP Training & Resource Center, use this link:  
[www.myodp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=200](http://www.myodp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=200)

**All providers of Career Planning - Vocational Assessment MUST ALSO:**

- Have documentation and complete the following AAW Employment/Vocational Services training prior to their first service provision:
  - Vocational Assessment: Completing the Vocational Profile
  - To access the course on the MyODP Training & Resource Center, use this link:  
[www.myodp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=200](http://www.myodp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=200)

### **BSASP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

- Vocational Assessment staff should submit their first Vocational Profile developed for a participant onto MyODP for review by BSASP.
  - The Vocational Profile is submitted after it has been completed if this is the staff's first assigned participant.
  - The option to submit the profile on MyODP's Employment/ Vocational trainings will become available only after the AAW Employment/Vocational Services training courses has been completed. BSASP will review the Vocational Profile and provide technical assistance to the provider, if required, regarding the quality of the profile.

NOTE: If you have not already done so, you will need to create an account on MyODP and set up a profile as an AAW Employment Provider, prior to beginning the course. Do not view this course as a Guest. Guests cannot access the required quiz or receive a certificate for course completion.

IMPORTANT: Agencies are responsible for ensuring that all staff are fully qualified at the time of service provision. Certificate(s) must be maintained by the provider within the individual direct service worker's training records. During annual monitoring, BSASP will require verification that all the necessary training requirements have been met.

Any questions regarding this ODP communication can be sent to [ra-odpautismwaiver@pa.gov](mailto:ra-odpautismwaiver@pa.gov) and indicate "AAW Employment Services" in the subject line.

*ODP communications and training modules are available at [www.MyODP.com](http://www.MyODP.com)*