**Essential Questions for Supported Employment Design**

This document is intended to help VR agencies set up the framework for and effectively support quality supported employment (SE) services. Audience: VR SE program managers-leadership.

A companion document, “The Supported Employment Core Features Checklist,” assists VR agencies in evaluating SE services that are being provided by VR staff and/or contracted service providers. Audience: service providers and VR staff that oversee SE services. (insert link)

Please note that the items in each section are numbered for convenience of discussion and do not imply relative importance or a sequence of completion.

**Internal VR Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Will you have specialized caseloads for Supported Employment (SE)?
2. How will the decision be made for who needs Supported Employment services and what criteria will be used?
3. What needs to be included in the SE Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?
4. Will SE services like job development and job coaching be provided by in-house staff, or by a contracted vendor (Community Rehabilitation Program)? If the latter, how will you provide comparative information about available CRPs so that participants can make an informed choice?
5. What is the role of the VRC if a CRP is being used? Where is this clearly spelled out?
6. Who is responsible for ensuring that job placements meet the competitive and integrated employment requirements?
7. If you plan on using the “Short term Basis” option for non-competitive wages, how will that decision be made, documented and tracked?
8. What are the possible resources for Extended Services? How will those be identified and documented in the IPE?
9. What is the procedure for determining that Job Stabilization has been achieved?
10. If no non-VR Extended Services resources are available, what is the procedure for using SE funds to provide these services to youth with the most significant disabilities? Who needs to approve this expenditure? How will you track the “four-year or age 25” limitation to this use of SE funds?
11. Who is responsible for tracking the 24 month limitation on SE services as well as exceptions to that time limit when needed? How will this be done?
12. How are you involving your staff in the development of supported employment policies and procedures? How will you provide training once the plan is in place?
13. How are you involving your CRPs (if appropriate) in the development of supported employment policies and procedures? How will you provide training once the plan is in place?

**External Partnerships: DD/Mental Health/Medicaid**

1. Do you have Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or Cooperative Agreements in place with the agencies that will be providing long-term support? (Generally the Developmental Disabilities and/or Mental Health agencies, utilizing Medicaid waiver funds.)
2. Does your MOU describe the SE sequencing of services between partners, and if not, do you have written guidance that helps inform staff and partners how to coordinate those services?
3. How will partner staff and VR staff be informed about the referral process and characteristics of a good referral for VR services?
4. What information will be provided to VR by the partner agency regarding joint participants? Is there a Universal Referral and Release of Information document (or similar) to facilitate information sharing?
5. Who will be responsible for pre-plan information gathering such as Person-Centered Planning, Community Exploration, Employment Path development, or Discovery?
6. What are the expectations around ongoing communication/participation by DD/MH staff in the IPE development and employment services?
7. How will you ensure that the IPE reflects the DD or MH service plan, and is updated as needed?
8. What are the available resources for information about Medicaid waivers and benefits planning?

**External Partnerships: Contracted Providers (CRPs)**

1. On what basis will CRP services be paid for? (e.g. fee for service, contract, milestone/outcome, combination)
2. How is your agency ensuring rates/payment methods are reasonable and sufficient to help minimize CRP personnel turnover issues?
3. What is the agency methodology to effectively partner with CRPs to help ensure long term effectiveness and sustainability of providing services?
4. How will potential CRPs be identified and/or approved?
5. What accreditation, certification, and/or training requirements will be in place for agencies and/or individual providers?
6. What kind of communications will be expected between the CRP and the VRC? How often?
7. What are your options in areas where there are no CRPs; or in situations where there are no CRPs qualified to provide the kind of services needed (e.g. for people with visual or hearing impairments or non-English speakers)?
8. How will CRP services be tracked and evaluated? What are your quality criteria?

**Evaluating and Tracking Services and Expenditures**

1. How will you measure whether individuals are supported in finding and negotiating jobs of choice that match their interests, skills, and employment preferences?
2. How will you evaluate whether participants who receive supported employment services have access to the same orientation, training, supervision, and on-going supports offered to all employees in the business?
3. How are SE services recorded in case notes? What quality features are reviewed? (E.g., hours, wages, match between placement and IPE.)
4. How will you track which expenditures can be paid using SE funds (following placement) and which will fall under Title 1 (before placement)?
5. How will you track whether 50% of SE funds are being used to serve youth with the most significant disabilities?
6. How will you track whether you are providing at least a 10% non-federal contribution to the 50% reserve for youth with the most significant disabilities?
7. How will you track whether administrative costs are limited to 2.5% of the SE program allotment?

**Additional Questions for Supported Self-Employment**

1. What resources are available to assist in developing self-employment plans?
2. What criteria will be used to determine whether a self-employment plan is reasonable?
3. What needs to be included in the self-employment plan? Who will review it?
4. Will contractors be used to provide services to Supported Employment participants who are pursuing self-employment? What qualifications will you require (e.g. training, certification)?
5. How will self-employment services be tracked and evaluated? What are your quality criteria?
6. What are your policies and procedures that address the self-employment issues listed above?