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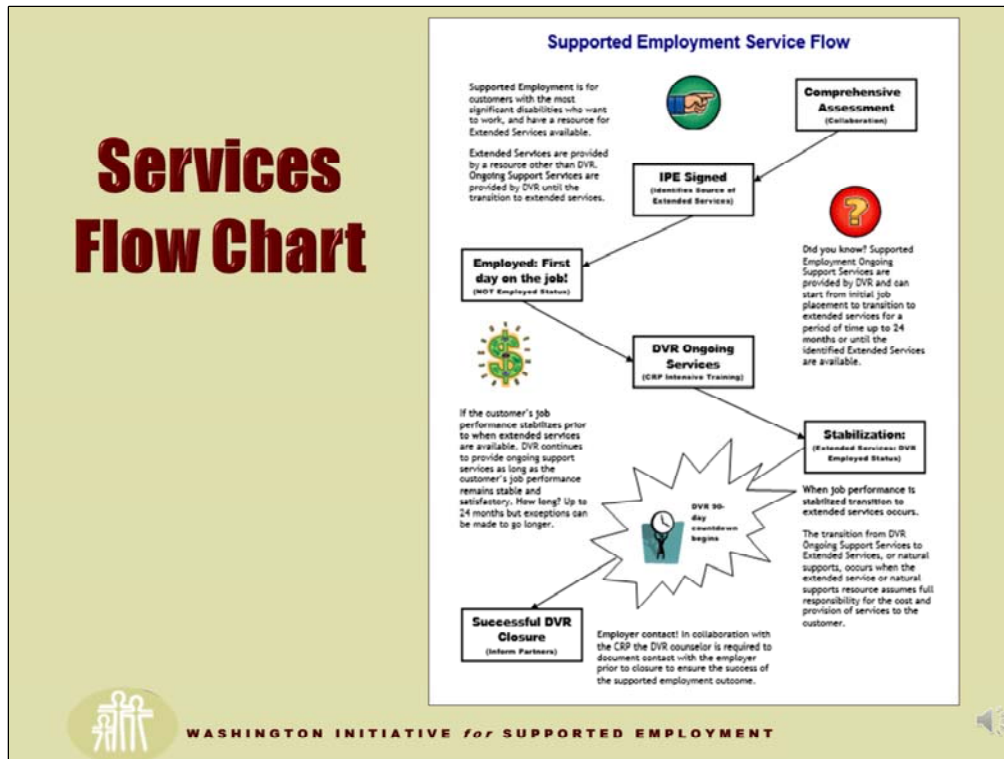


Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

DVR Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation

Fundamentals of Supported Employment in Vocational Rehabilitation

Services for Individuals Who Experience Developmental
Disabilities: 1



Before we begin the content of this training module let's review the supported employment model that the D.S.H.S. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or D.V.R., must carry out. As an employment consultant serving these customers, it is important that you understand the steps of supported employment that D.V.R. must follow and your role in the process. Let's review each step briefly.

D.V.R. supported employment services are provided to customers with the most significant disabilities who want to get and keep a permanent job. These customers require intensive support to obtain employment, as well as long term support to achieve and maintain successful job performance. Federal rules for supported employment require D.V.R. to provide the upfront vocational rehabilitation, or V.R. services known as on-going services, that a customer requires to get and learn a job. After that, a separate source will provide the extended support or long term supports the customer needs to keep their job once D.V.R. services end. All D.V.R. supported employment customers go through the same application and eligibility determination process. Once an individual is determined eligible for D.V.R. their V.R. counselor works with them to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their vocational rehabilitation needs, including whether the customer will require supported employment to get and keep a job of their choice. The comprehensive assessment often includes a community based assessment that is provided by a community rehabilitation program, or C.R.P., such as the one you work for. After the comprehensive assessment has been completed, the D.V.R. customer is assisted by their V.R. Counselor to develop an individualized plan for employment, or I.P.E. The I.P.E. identifies the customer's employment goal along with the steps and the D.V.R. services they will require to achieve their goal. The I.P.E. must also identify the customer's need for supported employment and what their source of long term support or extended services will be. If the source of extended services is unknown when the I.P.E. begins, there must be a strong expectation that a source will be identified within 24 months. D.V.R. services identified in the I.P.E. begin once the plan is signed by the D.V.R. customer and their V.R. counselor. Typically, the first step of an I.P.E. is for D.V.R. to authorize job placement services to assist the supported employment customer in becoming employed. Once the customer is employed then D.V.R. authorizes intensive training services to assist the customer in learning how to perform their job satisfactorily. However, once a customer reaches a stable level of satisfactory job performance, they must begin receiving their extended services from a source outside of D.V.R.. If a supported employment customer achieves stable job performance sooner than their extended services will be available, D.V.R. will continue providing ongoing support for up to 24 months. Once extended services have begun, D.V.R. keeps the case open during the first ninety days that these services are provided to make sure they meet the customer's needs. If the customer is doing well on their job at the end of this ninety days and their extended services continue without interruption, then the customer's D.V.R. case is closed.

Learning Objectives

Initial services:

Trial Work Experiences (TWE)

Community Based Assessments (CBA)

Job Placement

Role of employment consultant

Successful models



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This training will cover the initial services a DVR customer may receive when they enter the Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or DVR, including trial work experiences, community based assessments, and job placement. We will specifically look at the role of an employment consultant, as well as a few models that have proven successful for individuals in supported employment. We hope that by the end of this training, you will have a better understanding of the services you can provide your future customers, and a few ideas about how to support them to reach their DVR employment goals.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SYSTEM



- Trial Work Experience
- Community Based Assessment



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The first services a customer receives once they apply for DVR will depend on their individual circumstances and vocational goals. There are a few different types of experiences and assessments that a DVR counselor may utilize. As an employment consultant, you will typically be asked to provide either a Trial Work Experience or a Community Based Assessment when someone first applies to DVR. Let's look closer at the purposes of these services and how you may interact with them in the vocational rehabilitation, or VR, system.

Trial Work Experience (TWE)

- TWE report must include thorough and detailed description of specific support and assistance provided to enable customer to perform real work activities
- Report also must describe in detail customer's demonstrated
 - Abilities, Capabilities; **and**, Capacity to perform in work situations



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A trial work experience, or TWE, is only conducted when a DVR counselor is uncertain if a customer is eligible for VR services because his or her disability may be too significant to benefit from VR services and achieve an employment outcome. It involves an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations. A trial work experience is meant to determine if the individual can achieve employment by utilizing VR services and whether the individual is eligible for services; or if there is clear and convincing evidence that the individual cannot benefit from VR services due to the significance the disability and is ineligible for VR services. If you are asked to conduct a trial work experience, you will be responsible for locating the TWE site or sites and supporting the customer to work at a paid employment site or other realistic work setting to help determine if the individual will benefit from future VR services to become employed. In addition, the agreement between DVR, the customer and your agency will outline specific characteristics about the work they will perform, the number of TWE sites they will require, the period of time that the customer will work and what type of work they will try. The TWE report you provide DVR at the end of this service must include a thorough and detailed description of the specific support and assistance that you provided to the individual to enable them to perform real work activities. It also must describe the customer's demonstrated abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations. Your report will be the basis for clear and convincing evidence if the DVR counselor determines the customer is ineligible for services, so it must be extremely thorough.

Community Based Assessment (CBA)

- Purpose:
 - Identify strengths and barriers to employment
 - Obtain information needed for the individual to select a suitable employment goal and/or
 - Determine the nature and scope of VR services an individual will need to achieve an employment outcome



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If the customer is authorized to receive a community based assessment, or CBA, then the DVR counselor has already determined that they are eligible and will benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. If you are hired to conduct a community based assessment, you will be responsible for locating, securing and placing a DVR customer into a paid employment setting, or other realistic work setting. In addition, the agreement between DVR, the customer and your agency will outline specific characteristics about the work the individual will perform and the number of CBA sites the customer will require. It will also specify the period of time that the customer will work and what type of work they will try. The purpose of a community based assessment is to help the customer and the DVR counselor identify what strengths and barriers to employment the customer may have, to gather the necessary information for the customer to select a suitable employment goal, and or to determine the nature and scope of VR services that the customer will need to achieve that goal.

Common Questions Answered by TWEs & CBAs

- Work environment
- Work speed, stamina/endurance
- Follow instructions
- Accept supervision
- Stay focused on task
- Follow multi-step instructions
- Get along with others
- Degree of supervision
- Initiative in asking questions
- Retention of instructions
- Nature and extent of supports and accommodations
- Recommendations for employment goal
- Benefit from future VR services



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There are several different questions a DVR counselor may want you to focus on while conducting either a TWE or CBA. For example, you may be asked to determine your customer's preferences for a work environment, what their work speed is like, including stamina or endurance, if they are able to follow instructions, how able and willing are they to accept supervision, their ability to stay focused on a task, if they are able to follow multi-step instructions, how well they are able to get along with others, the degree of supervision they need to be successful, if they naturally take initiative in asking questions, or how well they retain instructions. You may also be asked to develop information and ideas about the nature and extent of supports and accommodations they will need to get and keep a job. You may be asked to recommend an employment goal, or give your thoughts about whether or not the customer will benefit from future VR services.

Information Gathering

- Who is the person?
- When and where is the person at their best?
- What are their strengths, interests, and abilities?
- What are the needed supports and accommodations?
- Other information: communication, mobility, work skills, work tolerance, self-direction, interpersonal attitudes, self care



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Whether you provide a trial work experience or a community based assessment, your job is to gather information about your customer to help determine how they will be successfully employed. Some of the questions you will want to ask your customer, the people in your customer's life and yourself are, who is the person? When and where is the person at their best? What are their strengths, interests, abilities? What supports and accommodations do they need? Some other areas to consider when gathering information are your customer's communication style, do they have challenges with mobility? What work skills do they already have? What is their tolerance for work? Can they direct themselves to the next task? How do they get along with others? Do they need help taking care of themselves? Ultimately, you are trying to determine what characteristics, skills and resources your customer possesses and can build on to become successfully employed. This will look different for each individual you serve, so the methods and models you choose to gather this information will most likely vary over time and by individual. Now let's look at a few different ways you may go about serving someone in these initial vocational rehabilitation services.

Approaches to Service

Discovery Process:

- Interviews, Observation, Employment Profile

Person Centered Employment Planning:

- Explore and discover potential interests and skills,
- Identify specific support needs for employment,
- Clarify desired employment outcomes,
- Planning sessions,
- Job search and job support plan for job development



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As we said before, regardless of which service you are hired to provide, your job is to gather information about your customer to help determine how they will be successfully employed. How you approach this initial process will really influence the information you gather about the individual you are serving. Some methods for gathering this information have proven very successful, particularly for individuals with significant support needs who will require individualized services and accommodations to be successful in their jobs. Let's look closer at a few methods that have often led to successful supported employment outcomes. The discovery process is one such effective model. The discovery process includes interviewing those who know the individual, observing the individual in different community and home settings that change the time, place, people, environment and or supports to learn more about the job seeker in different ways. Through the discovery process, an employment consultant develops an employment profile which captures information from interviews and observation to provide a direction for vocational success. Discovery is actually the cornerstone of another proven method called customized employment, a strategy that we will discuss later on in this training when we look more closely at job development. To learn more about the discovery process, you can visit the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration, or DDA, website, which was known as the Division of Developmental Disabilities or DDD prior to 2013. The address to that site will be provided at the end of this training on the resources section. Another proven strategy is person centered employment planning. Person centered employment planning is a strategy to explore and discover your customer's potential interests and skills, to identify specific support needs your customer will have when employed, and to help clarify desired employment outcomes. This is a facilitated process that includes structured planning sessions where the individual, their family members and other people in the person's life work together as a team. During a person centered planning session, team members identify personal characteristics, interests, skills and accommodation needs of the job seeker. The result is a job search and job support plan for job development. To learn more about person centered employment planning, you can visit the Institute for Community Inclusion, or ICI website, which has a guide entitled, *Starting with Me: A guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers*. The web address for this site will also be provided to you at the end of this training on the resources section. Individuals receiving services through the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration, or DDA, may have participated in a discovery process or person centered employment plan prior to coming to DVR for a community based assessment or trial work experience. Others may just be embarking on their pathway to employment and could benefit from one of these approaches. Either way, the information gleaned from discovery and person centered employment planning can be effective methods to strengthen and enhance vocational rehabilitation services.

Trial Work Experience Example



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Now let's look at an example of a customer who received a preliminary service from DVR. Marsha had very little exposure to employment or being in the community, so when she came to DVR, her counselor authorized a trial work experience to help determine if she would benefit from future VR services to become employed. Alley, an employment consultant from Employment Quest Inc. was selected to provide the service to Marsha. Marsha and her sister showed Alley a person centered plan that had been developed a few years back when Marsha moved out of her family's home. Alley learned a lot by reading the plan. For example, she learned that Marsha enjoyed reading books and seemed more comfortable in quiet settings. With this information in mind, Alley developed a work experience opportunity for Marsha at the local library. Marsha learned to collect books that the library patrons left lying around after the library closed in the afternoon. Marsha and Alley worked on several barriers through the trial work experience. For example, at first Marsha seemed overwhelmed in the library, but with support from Alley she learned the layout of the library and felt more comfortable. Marsha also had a hard time interacting with the library employees at first, but she quickly learned who to go to at the library if she had questions and that helped her have less anxiety. Marsha started riding the specialized public transportation system to and from the library, and Alley worked with Marsha's sister to make sure Marsha had money to pay for her ride. At the end of the trial work experience, Alley wrote a report summarizing the types of accommodations and supports she had helped Marsha utilize at the library. Alley noted how over time, Marsha was able to navigate through the library without getting lost, and how she needed help determining who to ask when she had a question. After the trial work experience, Marsha, her DVR counselor, her sister and her employment consultant, Alley, all agreed that she would benefit from additional services to help her find employment.

Community Based Assessment Example



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Mark, a student in a school transition program, was served by Ashley, an employment consultant from Employment Quest Inc. During the summer before his last year of school, Mark and Ashley went through the discovery process to learn more about what type of work Mark wanted to obtain. Over the summer, Ashley worked on collecting information about Mark by completing a vocational profile. For example she visited Mark at home and spoke with him and his dad about Mark's interests and skills. Mark's dad told Ashley that he really enjoyed social media, a skill that Ashley didn't know Mark had. She also had the opportunity to observe him doing his chores at home, and got to see how his family set his chores up so that he could take a break when he got fatigued, which was a common challenge for Mark. Ashley went with Mark to an art class he was enrolled in for the summer. She learned through observation that he enjoyed helping other people and had interactions with almost every other person in the class. And finally, Ashley recorded this information in the vocational profile she was working on, which helped Mark, Ashley, his family and DVR counselor imagine the type of work he would be successful doing in the future. Mark and his team utilized the information in the vocational profile to agree on the type of job everyone believed Mark would like to try out during the following school year. When his DVR counselor authorized a community based assessment, everyone agreed that Mark should try work in a setting where he could help and interact with other people. In addition, the team agreed that due to stamina challenges, Mark should try a shift that was at least three hours long but no more than five. As a result, Ashley developed a CBA at a computer store where Mark helped set up displays, direct customers when they had questions and restock and clean shelves. The CBA gave Mark the opportunity to try working in a retail setting where he provided customer service. He also got a better understanding of what employment would be like, and the type of job he would like to search for.

Job Placement in the VR System

- Characteristics and Roles of Employment Consultants
- Customized Employment
- Building a Business Network and Making Business Contacts
- Providing Quality Customer Service & Follow-Up

Overall goal :

- Equitable, Competitive, Integrated employment



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Next let's take a look at what goes into developing a job for someone receiving services from DVR. In this section we will cover the key points of job development and how the process may work for you as an employment consultant. There are several different angles to job development, and you will learn more about these aspects as you develop your skills in the field. Today we want to help you begin thinking about a few of the topics that are important to job development, including the characteristics and roles of an employment consultant, customized employment, building your business network and making business contacts, and providing quality customer service and follow-up. At the end of this part of the training, we hope you remember that the main goal of job development is to find equitable, competitive and integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities in the local job market.

Job Placement in the VR System

- Employment goal must result in permanent, competitive employment that is performed in an integrated work setting
- **Integrated setting:** commonly found in the community, come into contact with non-disabled people while receiving service, not same people providing VR services. Or commonly found in community, contact with non-disabled people, amount of contact with non-disabled people is same as non-disabled person in same type of job



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Before we jump into the role of an employment consultant in job development, let's look at a few key terms that the VR system uses. In the VR system, each customer's employment goal must result in permanent, competitive employment that is performed in an integrated work setting. DVR defines each of these terms as follows: competitive employment means part-time or full-time work, work that is performed in an integrated setting, work for which an individual is paid at or above the minimum wage, and work for which an individual earns the same wages and benefits as other employees, who are not disabled, doing similar work. Integrated setting means that the setting in which you receive a VR service is integrated if it is a setting commonly found in the community, such as a store, office or school, where you come into contact with non-disabled people while you are receiving the service. The non-disabled people you come into contact with are not the same people providing VR services to you. Or, the setting in which you work is integrated if it is a setting commonly found in the community where you come into contact with non-disabled people as you do your work. The amount of contact you have with non-disabled people is the same as what a non-disabled person in the same type of job would experience.

Characteristics of a Employment Consultant

- Business Etiquette
- Optimistic
- Strong communicator and listener
- Believe in benefits of supported employment
- Networker
- Goal oriented
- Persistent and respectful



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Employment consultants that are successful job developers seem to share some common characteristics. Let's think about how your approach to job development may help you be more successful at developing employment opportunities for your customers. One crucial part of job development is how you present yourself. Your business etiquette could make or break the job development process, so consider your overall presentation and strive to be professional. This includes how you dress, how you speak and how you behave when you are at work. This leads to the next characteristic of a successful job developer, optimism. Job developers inevitably find themselves in situations where they hear "not interested" or "no thank you" all too often. Being able to stay optimistic and know that you will find the right employer will help you be successful. Strong communicators also tend to be successful job developers. This means that regular communication is very important, as is listening to what employers have to say. Give the employers you are working with the opportunity to ask questions and allow them the opportunity to become comfortable with the idea of supported employment. Successful job developers understand and believe in the benefits of supported employment. They can speak to the value of hiring a supported employee and share their passion as they work with employers to make strong job matches. Job developers tend to be natural networkers. They find success by connecting with the business community and other job developers in the field. They are also goal oriented and measure progress toward their goals on a regular basis. This is particularly important with supported employment because outcomes can sometimes take a very long time. And finally, successful job developers are persistent but respectful. They follow up on a regular basis, but are considerate of professional boundaries that the employer may have.

Role of the Employment Consultant

- Present yourself as a consultant
- Share knowledge, resources and solutions
- Connect to the business community
- Do not over sell, follow through with commitment
- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Involve the job candidate in the job search process



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Now let's look at a few roles you will be filling as you become a strong and successful job developer. One main priority you will have as a job developer is to present yourself as a reliable consultant to the employer. In order to do this you will need to identify the employer's needs. Some new job developers skip this step and ask for a job placement too quickly. Instead, take time to inform employers of the resources and services available to them through your program. Relate your ideas and information to how they would benefit as an employer. Remember that your job as an employment consultant is to develop solutions to the business's needs. For example if an employer has difficulty with high turnover in entry level positions, a feature of your service can be providing pre-screened candidates which benefits them by saving them overhead and HR costs.

This presents another role that job developers may take on, that of connecting to the business community. Several job developers strengthen their understanding and connections of business by getting connected to the business community and staying informed of current business trends and innovation. Be careful you do not over-sell to employers and make sure to follow through with your commitments. Please remember that you are only expected to deliver services and resources to the best of your ability, and if the employer expects more than you can deliver, you will most likely have trouble. Building trust and realistic expectations with the employer will strengthen the long term relationship you are trying to build with them. In terms of trust and expectation, be sure to clearly identify and document your professional role and services with the DVR customer and their family so they know what they can expect from you and your agency and vice versa. This process will begin with the agreement you develop with the DVR counselor and your customer.

However, many employment consultants find that regular updates help the customer understand and become an important part of their own job development process. Remember it is your responsibility to get to know your job candidates. Identify their skills, interests, abilities and present their marketable skills to the employer. Successful employment may depend on the match between your job candidates' skills and environment rather than solely on the personal characteristics of a job candidate.

That leads to the next point, which is the importance of the DVR customer in the job development process. Most people want to know about and participate in their supported employment services. Their participation may look very different depending on the individual, but people are often involved by participating in the discovery process, in developing their resume or portfolio, or by actually searching for a job with support from the employment consultant. Let them lead the process to the degree possible. An employment consultant can have several roles as a job developer. As we've just discussed, the characteristics and roles of the job developer tend to determine how successful they are in serving their DVR customers and the employers they work with. Job development tends to be more successful when certain models are used to facilitate the process. Next we will examine a few different methods that may help you in your job development efforts.

Customized Employment

"...individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both"

- Callahan, 2002

- Negotiation that addresses strengths, conditions and interests of customer and needs of employer
- Individual Profile
- Team Planning Meetings and/or Approach
- Customer Portfolio
- Informational Interviews with employers
- Employment Proposal



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Customized employment is one effective method for developing jobs for individuals with significant support needs. According to Michael Callahan of Marc Gold and Associates, customized employment essentially means, "...individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both," taken from Callahan, 2002. A few important characteristics of customized employment are: the model is based on negotiation that addresses the strengths, conditions and interests of the customer and the identified needs of the employer. This means that the employer voluntarily negotiates job duties or employee expectations, and the negotiated employment relationship meets both, the unique needs, strengths, and interests of the DVR customer, and the discrete needs of the employer. The customer is the primary source of information and decides the direction in which to explore the job market. This direction is often developed through the discovery process that we discussed earlier in this training, however whether or not the discovery process is used, customized employment typically involves some type of individualized profile where information about the customer is collected. In addition, exploratory time is essential to uncover the customer's unique needs, abilities, and interests, so more often than not, there is a planning element to customized employment. In this model, the job seeker controls the planning process that captures their preferences, interests, and connections in the community. This process may also include the person centered employment plan that was introduced earlier in this training. However no matter what actual model is utilized, customized employment typically includes a team approach to helping someone identify and obtain employment. Another typical element of customized employment involves development of a customer portfolio that includes information to be shared with potential employers, including the customer's experience, and skills they offer a business. Next, customized employment involves performing informational interviews with targeted employers, including worksite visits to look at what the employer's work entails, how their business operates, and an opportunity to find ways the job seeker may be able to assist the business, often by submitting a proposal. Finally, the last key element to this model is the employment proposal that is developed and submitted to the employer. The proposal outlines the type of position to be developed and will most likely include specifics such as the proposed position, a brief description of your customer and your employment agency's role and services, and how and or why this proposal could assist the business' bottom line. Overall, customized employment results in jobs that fit the individual and therefore have the potential for advancement for job seekers who have been chronically unemployed or underemployed. While this is a brief overview of customized employment, it is meant to give you a general understanding of the types of elements and activities that tend to result in successful job placements. You can learn more about customized employment by following the link at the end of this training for the Department of Labor website.

Building a Business Network

- Networking
- Cold Calling
- Marketing vs. Job Development
- Marketing Materials



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Building a business network is another approach that many employment consultants have found useful when developing jobs. Networking, a concept that we've already briefly covered, is worth revisiting in terms of how to use it as a main part of your job. We are learning that when employment consultants embed themselves in the business community and spend time with business leaders and decision makers, they build much more than just a list of employer contacts. For example, think about joining events and associations that have CEOs, company presidents and managers as members on a regular basis, such as neighborhood business associations, service clubs, etc. A key ingredient to job development is the ability to always meet new people, collect job leads and offer assistance to help employers identify their business needs, which may result in supported employment opportunities. Cold calling is another activity that many employment consultants have found important for job development. Cold calling means contacting employers either over the phone, through email or other social media, or in person. When cold calling you should have developed a strong elevator speech that lasts no more than thirty seconds. Use your elevator speech to do three things: introduce yourself, share a fact, statistic or success statement, and end with a closing hook or question about their business. For example, your elevator speech may be, "My name is Monica McDaniel, I work for ABC Services, and John from XYZ Insurance suggested I give you a call. We are a local non-profit assisting businesses, with employment needs like yourself. Have you heard of us?" Notice how in this example, the employment consultant used a previous employer recommendation to hopefully open more opportunities with the business she was speaking to. Always have a next step in mind when you are approaching a business, for example you may be trying to get a tour of the business or set up a presentation. And whether it's networking or cold calling, if you do these types of activities on a daily basis you will build a strong business network. Next let's look at marketing and job development because there are differences between marketing and job development activities. Marketing activities support the job development process. Marketing involves how you promote and market your agency's services, what research you do to learn about the business, how you identify the business's needs and how you establish a relationship. Job Development is the actual activity of identifying a specific job candidate and working with the employer to match their needs with the correct candidate, confirming the job position and the supports, etc. The point here is that employers typically buy into who you are first, then they are ready to hear about your agency and the services you can offer them. Ultimately, building a business network is about building trust and relationships before landing jobs.

One final element to building a business network has to do with the marketing materials you use. There are a variety of marketing materials in the supported employment field, but whether you decide to use one or several of them is less important than making sure that the language in your materials is business friendly and not social service based. One way to determine if what you have is appropriate is to ask people outside of the supported employment field to review your materials for feedback and see if they think they are easy to understand. Many successful employment consultants use materials that have clear visuals of people working with their co-workers and employers. They choose materials that have less text and clearly outline the benefits of supported employment to employers, which often take the form of testimonials. All of these elements can help you build a strong business network that will ultimately serve you well as you sharpen your job development skills and serve multiple DVR customers and businesses in the future.

Making Business Contacts

- Informational Interviews
- Presentations
- Informational Tours
- Employment Proposals



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Now let's explore the possible approaches you can take after you have made the initial contact with the employer. You will generally be asking them to do one of the following, however your ultimate goal will most likely be to make a presentation to the employer at some point.

Informational interviews are a common activity to do once you have an employer's attention. This method helps you not only establish a relationship with the employer, but it provides you with more information about the business. Informational interviews can also provide an opportunity for your customer to market themselves as a potential candidate to the employer, and give them more information about the industry they hope to work in. Informational tours can be used to conduct a less formal presentation approach while touring the business and discussing operations. The tour will give you an opportunity to review the business's environmental conditions, the types of co-worker and natural supports that exist, and the various employment positions and requirements throughout the business. Again, providing a presentation to an employer is typically your ultimate goal. A standard presentation should be no more than twenty to thirty minutes and there should be no limit on how many presentations you conduct with an employer. Rather, the amount of presentations will most likely be based on the time it takes to develop the relationship with that particular employer and their interest in supported employment. As we discussed earlier in this training, employment proposals are typically utilized in a customized job development approach and are being used more and more as a marketing strategy by employment consultants. Typically, employment proposals are introduced to the employer after the initial meeting or job analysis has been conducted. Proposals add additional strength and documentation for a position that may not already be established in the business, and can often be used as a measure of how close you are to getting agreement for a position in a business. Proposals typically include an opening statement that highlights the benefits of the position to the employer, the proposed customized position, a brief description of your customer, your agency's role and services, and a closing statement. Regardless of which direction you take at this point in job development, all of these methods share some common and desired end results. You are aiming to build rapport and find common ground with the employer. You want to speak the employer's language and show them you've done your research by explaining what you know about their business or industry. Remember you want to build a relationship with them and understand what their needs and goals for their business are. Help them understand how the features of your services will benefit them. Always end a contact with an appropriate next step such as a tour, informational interview with your customer or maybe a follow-up with another department or manager to gather more information. When you get to the point of presenting your customer, be sure to focus on their strengths, skills and marketable attributes. Finally, remember that employers typically don't want to be sold on supported employment. Rather, they want to work with consultants to resolve problems or find new resources for their businesses.

Providing Quality Customer Service

- Fading
- Employer Follow-up
- Service Surveys
- Retention Strategies



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Fading is a process in which the employer, the supported employee and the employment consultant agree that the new employee is requiring less support and training, and is becoming independent in their day-to-day tasks. It is a good idea to stay in contact with the employer at this time to make sure all parties have an agreed upon a fading plan for the transition of job coaching services. To do this, you will want to establish, at the beginning, how often and which format works best for communicating with the employer on a regular basis. You will want to follow up on a regular basis within the first sixty days to elevate any potential concerns the employer may be experiencing. From there, an employment consultant typically follows up one or two times per month, depending on the individual DVR customer and their work schedule. In addition, consider utilizing a survey to ask employers to rate your services and provide leads for future business contacts. This is also a good activity to do in-person with the employer a few times a year. And always encourage the employer to call you with any concerns or questions. Good retention is about successful job matches, providing good job coaching supports, consistent employer communications and contact, and even publically recognizing the employer. To learn more about helping someone learn their job and the process of fading supports, please watch *Services for Individuals Who Experience Developmental Disabilities: 2* in this training series.

Benefits Planning

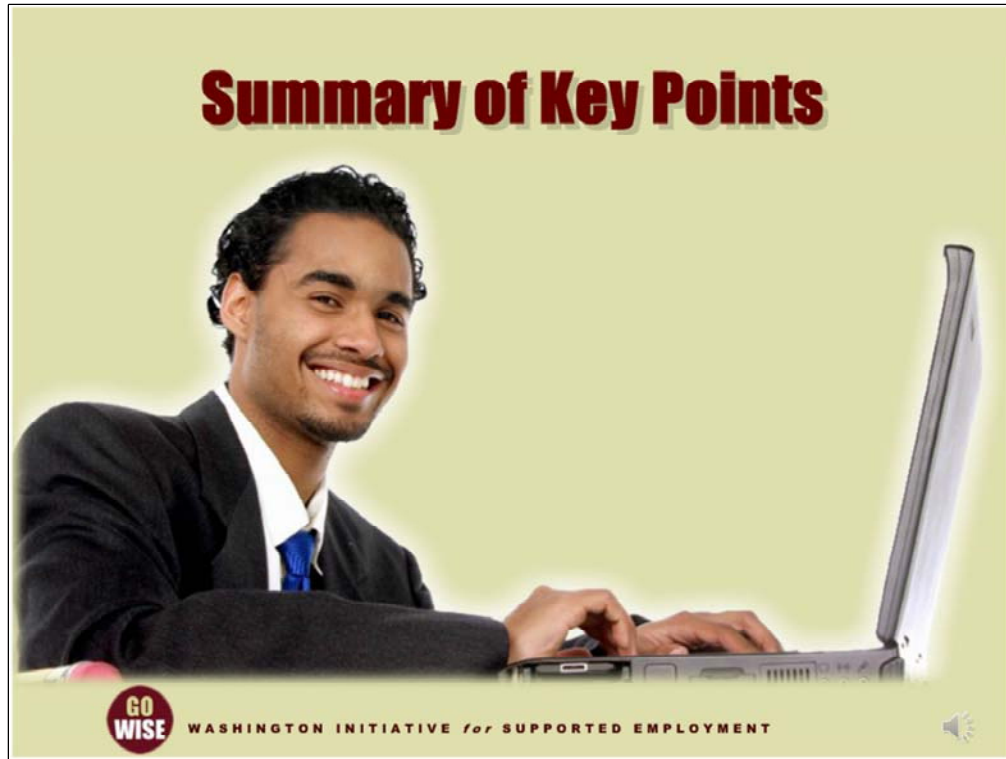
- Mandatory for all DVR customers who receive SSDI or SSI
- Before job placement services begin
- Do not accept job placement referral from DVR unless benefit planning has been completed with customers receiving SSDI or SSI
- Determines impact future wages will have on benefits
- Understand income reporting requirements



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Before we end this training, it's important to briefly cover a few main points about benefits planning. Benefits planning is a very important part of the service process for all DVR customers who are receiving Social Security benefits, such as Social Security Disability Insurance also known as SSDI, or Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, and other disability benefits based off of a worker's contribution and record. DVR procedures require VR counselors to conduct benefits planning with all SSDI and SSI customers before making referrals for job placement services. This means benefits planning should have been conducted by DVR before the customer was referred to you for job placement. If that did not happen, do not accept the referral for job placement until DVR and the customer have completed a thorough benefits planning analysis. Benefits planning can provide your customer with a few important pieces of information, including understanding the impact their future wages will have on their benefits, and understanding the reporting requirements they will be responsible for so they can avoid overpayments to Social Security. Benefits planning will empower your customer to make informed choices and hopefully reduce their fears and dispel myths they may have about work and earning income. They will gain information about other possible services and resources they may be able to obtain, such as cash and medical benefits, work incentives to pay for extended or long term supports, mental health services, a waiver from the Developmental Disabilities Administration, food stamps, housing supports, etc. Finally, benefits planning is complicated and should be completed by a qualified benefits specialist. In addition, many people will need to review their benefits on a regular basis. To learn more about benefits planning, please watch the *Importance of Benefits Planning*, which is another training module in this training series.



The initial services a DVR customer may receive will depend on their specific circumstances and needs. Your role as an employment consultant is to understand the service you have been hired to provide, and always remember that you are providing services to help your customer be as successful as possible. We hope that this training has provided you with a better understanding of the services you may provide to future customers, and that you now have a few additional resources to utilize when helping your customers reach their vocational goals.

DVR Language

Employment Consultant: also known as an employment specialist, job coach, job developer, etc.

Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP): also known as employment agency, employment provider, vendor, etc.

Customer: also known as client, consumer, person with a disability, supported employee, etc.

Extended Services: also known as long term supports, follow along services, etc.



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Resources

- Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/>
- Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA): <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ddd/>
- Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI): *Starting with Me: A guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers*
http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=54
- Department of Labor (DOL): Customized Employment
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/CustomizedEmployment/what/index.htm>
- Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Tool Kit:
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/ietoolkit/employers.htm>
- Think Beyond the Label <http://www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com/>

Content for this training was developed by representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.



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