

# Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services Job Placement Incentives Fact Sheet

## Introduction

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) recognizes the importance of assisting our consumers to reach a maximum level of independence by achieving the highest level of employment possible. DORS also acknowledges that, for many of our Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Rehabilitation Communication Specialists (RCSs), and Independent Employment Specialist (IES) finding beyond the standard entry level jobs can be difficult and time consuming. To facilitate this process, DORS policy includes [Placement Incentives](#) for CRPs, RCSs, and IESs working with consumers to obtain employment.

## Incentive Availability

When authorized to provide job development, a CRP, RCS, or IES may request any or all of the placement incentives options listed below, as applicable, after placing a DORS consumer in competitive integrated employment except when the position is funded by AbilityOne or Maryland Employment Works and/or the position is with a CRP as the employer of record. Placement incentives will be paid after the DORS consumer maintains employment for at least 90 days. Employment stability does not often begin with the first day of employment. A consumer is first considered to have achieved employment stability when each of the following conditions have been met:

- The consumer has reached a maximum level of work performance, consistent with their unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

- The hours worked per week is consistent with the individual's preferred target number on the DORS Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).
- The consumer's needs for benefits counseling and worksite accommodations have been addressed.
- DORS services are no longer needed to "stabilize" the employment outcome or to address consumer or employer concerns.
- Supported employment or intensive job coaching hours have ended.
- The consumer has transitioned from intensive supported employment job coaching to extended services or natural supports.

**The job placement must be related to the employment goal on the IPE.**

A placement will not qualify for these incentives if the employment is not related to the employment goal on the IPE. For example, if a CRP, RCS, or IES assists a consumer to obtain employment as a cashier while involved in training to achieve an IPE goal to become a computer repair technician, the employment will not qualify for a placement incentive.

## **Incentive Options**

### **1. Designated Population Incentives (\$250 each)**

- **Ex-Offender Status** – A consumer who qualifies as an ex-offender has been subject to some stage of the criminal justice process, as a result: Employers running a background check against national data will find this individual has a history of arrest, charges, prosecution, and/or conviction, or anyone using the [Maryland Judiciary Case Search](#) will find criminal

cases in which this individual was a defendant, or the Individual requires assistance in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction.

- **Specialized Disability Populations** – This include consumers whose primary disability is ABI, Autism, Blind, Deaf, or Deaf/Blind. The primary disability must be noted in the consumer’s DORS file and the DORS [Employment Services Progress Report \(RS-7d\)](#).
- **Specialized Occupational Areas - S.T.E.M. Occupations** – The Code, Occupation, and the S.T.E.M. discipline will correspond with the O\*Net Online listing of S.T.E.M. disciplines.

## 2. Rapid Placement Incentive (\$300)

A consumer is placed in a position and begins to work within 60 days from the date of the authorization for job development services.

## 3. 25% Above Minimum Wage Placement Incentive (\$400)

A consumer obtains a position in the area related to their IPE and is paid 25% above the State or county minimum wage (whichever is higher). **Note:** If the work location address is located in a county where the minimum wage exceeds the State minimum wage, the county’s minimum wage will be the benchmark to measure the 25%. The wage that is the highest must be used to measure the 25%.

## 4. Ticket to Work Substantial Gainful Activity Incentive (\$400)

A Social Security disability beneficiary whose Ticket to Work is in use with DORS obtains a position earning over Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) for blind or non-blind, as appropriate. **Note:** Before authorizing, the DORS counselor will review requests for this placement incentive with the DORS Supervisor.

(Reference: [www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga.html](http://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga.html)).

## **5. Supported Employment Natural Supports Incentive (\$450)**

**For CRPs only:** Available when an individual receives supported employment services and maintains stability in the job for 90 days after transitioning to extended services provided via natural supports. Not available when the consumer has transitioned to extended services funded by a long-term funding provider (e.g., BHA or DDA) or when the consumer is a youth receiving DORS funding for youth extended services.

## **Process for Requesting Authorization and Invoicing for Incentives**

### **1. At Job Placement, Provider will:**

Provide the [Employment Services Progress Report \(RS-7d\)](#) or other documentation containing the following required information:

- Employment start date
- Location
- Hourly wage (including tips, if applicable)
- Average hours worked per week
- Position title or position description
- O\*Net code

### **2. At 90 Days Beyond the Employment Start Date, Provider will:**

Invoice, as authorized, for any available placement incentives.

## **DORS Process**

Upon receipt of employment verification and request for an authorization for incentive payment (Step 2, above), the DORS counselor will:

1. Ensure the position is related to the employment goal, wages, and number of hours per week on the IPE, and no further service is needed to stabilize the employment.
2. Attach verification of wage information in AWARE™ using attachment category: “Verification of Consumer Wages.”
3. Notify the DORS Social Security Programs Unit for verification that the Ticket to Work is assigned to DORS when a Ticket to Work Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) Incentive is requested.
4. Issue new authorization for applicable incentives.

## Questions?

- re: the Designated Population, Rapid Placement, 25% Above Minimum Wage, and Supported Employment Natural Supports Incentives
  - [Kate Drake](#) 410-554-9440 or [Tamlia Mc Dowell-Omodho](#) 410-554-9584
- re: the Ticket to Work SGA Incentive
  - [Eric Schmidt](#) 410-554-9295
- re: Rehabilitation Communication Specialists
  - [Noe Turcios](#) 410-405-7054 (VP)