

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Adult Learning Experiences (ALE) with RCS or IES Support
Desk Reference

Adult Learning Experiences (ALE) are short-term work experiences (up to 12 weeks) for adults with little to no work experience to provide a broad exposure to workplace situations, tasks, and expectations that will help them connect real work experiences to future success in competitive integrated employment.

ALE is geared towards harder-to-place, more professional, skilled positions. It should be used for consumers who have typically not been successful with CRPs (community rehabilitation providers); for example, a consumer who has recently completed a college degree but has no work experience in the field. An ALE is not meant to take the place of working with a CRP or other rehabilitation specialists for Job Development or Job Coaching services. It is also not meant for Pre-ETS, trial work experiences, or career exploration.

An ALE is a DORS-funded paid work experience partnering with a CRP or other rehabilitation specialist and a local company to provide a work-based learning experience for the DORS consumer. "Company" in this context can refer to a for-profit business or a non-profit, charitable, or religious organization that provides unpaid work experience to a DORS participant. An ALE is an integral part of the consumer's VR employment program and established IPE employment goal.

In a standard ALE, a CRP is chosen to assist the consumer with developing and supporting the ALE. The CRP serves as the Employer of Record and assumes responsibility for the required Workers' Compensation insurance. Independent Employment Specialists (IES) for the blind and Rehabilitation Communication Specialists (RCS) for the Deaf may also serve as ALE providers. In this case, the RCS or IES will use the Goodwill Staffing contract, making [Tailored Staffing Solutions](#) the Employer of Record for Workers' Compensation purposes.

Examples of Appropriate Uses of ALE:

- A consumer who has recently completed a college degree, but has no work experience related to their employment goal.
- A consumer who worked in Sales for 10 years but went blind. They had to learn all new ways of performing their job tasks, and need to gain confidence and recent work experience as they have not worked in five years.
- A consumer who has worked in Accounting in the past but has a gap in employment due to anxiety and hospitalization. The consumer needs to "test" their ability to return to the type of work they did previously.

ALE Coordinators

Designated DORS staff serve as ALE Coordinators for ALE participants who are blind or Deaf. Their job is to coordinate the ALE process with [Tailored Staffing Solutions](#) (Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc. contract), which serves as the Employer of Record for consumers who receive ALE services through an IES or RCS. This process will ensure timely submission of documentation, including timesheets, and payment of wages via [Tailored Staffing Solutions](#) for participants.

The ALE Coordinators are:

- **RCS:** [Noe Turcios](#), Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Services Staff Specialist, 410-405-7054 VP
- **IES:** [Nicole Harrison](#), OBVS Management Associate, 410-554-9471

DORS Counselor Procedure for Coordinating an ALE:

- Determine if the adult is eligible for VR employment services and is in an open category for Order of Selection.
- Develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with the consumer that includes participation in ALE.
- **Authorization:**
 - **Service Category:** Vocational and Occupational Skills Training
Subcategory: Adult Learning Experience
- Assist the consumer with selecting a DORS-approved Rehabilitation Communication Specialist (RCS) or Independent Employment Specialist (IES), as appropriate, to develop the ALE.
- Supply the IES or RCS with the items listed below:
 1. Appropriate referral
 2. Copy of the IPE, with the agreed-upon employment goal
 3. **Authorization:**
 - **\$750** for **Developing Worksite and obtaining signatures**
 - **Service Category:** Vocational and Occupational Skills Training
Subcategory: (ALE) Develop Site and Agreement
- Contact the appropriate DORS ALE Coordinator to give them information about the participant and the IES or RCS.

The DORS ALE coordinator will:

- Assist the IES/RCS and DORS counselor with completing the [Tailored Staffing Solutions application](https://staffing.appttrino.com/GCP/JoinNow/ApplyNew.aspx?OfficeName=50): <https://staffing.appttrino.com/GCP/JoinNow/ApplyNew.aspx?OfficeName=50>
- Provide the DORS counselor and consumer with the Tailored Staffing Solutions onboarding information.
- Coordinate scheduling with Tailored Staffing Solutions for a review of documents and onboarding meeting.
- Provide the [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) Timesheet \(RS-11b\)](#) to the RCS/IES for weekly completion by the consumer of hours worked.

IES/RCS Procedure for Developing an ALE:

- Schedule a meeting with the consumer and DORS counselor to discuss ALE options, based on the consumer's interests, abilities, informed choice, and stated employment goal.
- Begin developing the ALE.
- Contact/visit appropriate companies to create the ALE.
- Complete the [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) RCS/IES Agreement \(RS-11f\)](#).
 - Once a company has agreed to participate in an ALE, the RCS or IES will submit a completed [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) RCS/IES Agreement \(RS-11f\)](#) with all signatures to the DORS counselor.
 - The RCS or IES should also submit an invoice for **\$750** for **Developing Worksite and obtaining signatures** along with the completed ALE Agreement.

DORS Procedures for the ALE Agreement & Authorizations:

- The **DORS counselor** will review and sign the [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) RCS/IES Agreement \(RS-11f\)](#) prior to the ALE start date, and furnish the IES or RCS with a signed final copy of the Agreement.
- The **DORS counselor** will issue an **Authorization**:
 - **\$1,000** for **Upfront Coordination**.
 - **Service Category:** Vocational and Occupational Skills Training
Subcategory: (ALE) Upfront Coordination
- **DORS staff** will complete an Actual Service record in AWARE™ **to document** the consumer's **ALE Wages** based on the number of hours per week the consumer will be participating in the ALE, as documented in the [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) RCS/IES Agreement \(RS-11f\)](#):
 - **Service Category:** Vocational and Occupational Skills Training
Subcategory: (ALE) Training Stipend

The amount should be verified when the consumer's [Adult Learning Experience \(ALE\) Timesheet \(RS-11b\)](#) and paystubs are attached in AWARE™ by the ALE Coordinators.

- **Referral for ALE Supports/Job Coaching** – When ALE supports/job coaching services are to be provided for a consumer, DORS will furnish the RCS or IES with an **Authorization**:
 - **\$300 per week** for **ALE Supports**
 - **Service Category:** Vocational and Occupational Skills Training
Subcategory: (ALE) Weekly Supports

It is expected that the consumer receives support from the RCS or IES for each week of the ALE for which the provider invoiced, with a minimum of two face-to-face contacts per week.

Completion of the ALE:

- **The DORS counselor will** – Follow up with the consumer upon completion of the ALE to determine if learning objectives were met and to determine the next step toward competitive integrated employment.
- **The RCS or IES will submit to DORS:**
 - A final [Adult Learning Experience Monthly Progress Report \(RS-11c\)](#)
 - An invoice
 - Copies of detailed paystubs consistent with the DORS authorizations provided for weekly ALE support/job coaching and stipends.
 - Copies of the consumer's approved [Timesheets \(RS-11b\)](#) consistent with the DORS authorizations provided for weekly ALE support/job coaching and stipends.

NOTE: The RCS or IES may submit reports and invoices weekly, if preferred.

Note: Regional Director approval is required for the provision of a second ALE to the same consumer.