

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Natural Supports Worksheet for
Supported Employment Assessment**

Introduction:

By understanding all of the various forms of support available to them, individuals with disabilities are more likely to enjoy the independence, freedom and dignity that having a job can provide and to keep their jobs.

DORS funding for intensive job coaching support is short-term, provided when an individual first becomes employed, and includes on-site job skills training, social skills training, related services, and follow-up services. The general goal of these services is to help the individual learn the best way to do the job as independently as possible and to be comfortable in the workplace.

Even though DORS funding for job coaching is short-term, some individuals require these supports to be ongoing. When an individual has long-term funding for ongoing services, the job coach can be available to check-in with the individual and provide assistance as needed. When long-term funding for ongoing services is not available, the individual will need to receive these supports from others when the job coach is no longer available.

For this reason, job coaches try to help individuals to obtain employment in work cultures that will be supportive, and spend time identifying and using supports that are available in the work place, or “natural supports”, that an individual can use to maintain a job when DORS funding is no longer needed or available.

Natural supports include training support, social skills support, health support, community support, and job retention support, which may be provided by coworkers, mentors, management, supervisors, family members, and/or friends to foster an individual’s independence and integration in the workplace.

The purpose of this worksheet is to review the types of natural supports which people often use to be successful at work, and to assess whether there is a reasonable expectation that an individual in need of supported employment services will have natural supports available, when needed to transition from DORS funding to ongoing supports.

The DORS counselor and consumer and any others who the consumer wishes to involve, should discuss the questions on the next page to determine if there is a reasonable expectation that natural supports will be available and useful to the consumer.

After completing this worksheet, if the DORS counselor and consumer agree that it is reasonable to expect natural supports to be available and useful for the consumer, then the counselor may request Administrative Approval to develop a supported employment plan on the basis of this reasonable expectation. Submit the draft plan and this worksheet with the administrative approval request.

Instructions:

For each of the types of natural supports below, describe how the support can help you in future work, whether you need help identifying that support, and whether you know someone who can provide that support.

1. Training Support

(Assistance from coworkers, mentors, or supervisors to learn a job.)

Do you need this support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How can this support help you maintain future employment?

Do you need help to identify that support when you get a job?

Do you know who can provide that support when you get a job?

2. Social Skills Support

(Assistance from coworkers, mentors, or supervisors to integrate or fit in with the workplace culture – e.g., having a workplace “buddy.”)

Do you need this support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How can this support help you maintain future employment?

Do you need help to identify that support when you get a job?

Do you know who can provide that support when you get a job?

3. Health Supports

(Assistance accessing the employee assistance programs, wellness programs, medical appointments, and medication management.)

Do you need this support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How can this support help you maintain future employment?

Do you need help to identify that support when you get a job?

Do you know who can provide that support when you get a job?

4. Community Supports

(Assistance accessing agencies and services available to the public at large that can be used to help someone maintain employment.)

Do you need this support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How can this support help you maintain future employment?

Do you need help to identify that support when you get a job?

Do you know who can provide that support when you get a job?

5. Job Retention Supports

(Assistance benefiting from performance reviews, professional development, skill building opportunities and workshops.)

Do you need this support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How can this support help you maintain future employment?

Do you need help to identify that support when you get a job?

Do you know who can provide that support when you get a job?

6. Other Factors to Consider

Is the employment goal available in a work culture where natural supports are likely to be developed?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the consumer consent for the employment goal to include development of natural supports?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do the consumer's experiences demonstrate that natural supports can be developed in the time allowed for supported employment services, including youth extended services, as appropriate?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Can the consumer use technology, job accommodations, on-the-job training, and job coaching support during the time specified on the IPE to stay employed while developing natural supports?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the consumer a SSA recipient whose IPE indicates that the hourly goal is at least 20 hours per week and is the consumer willing to receive benefits counseling and be referred to an Employment Network?
☐ Yes ☐ No