

**RSM 2  
VR & IL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL  
SECTION 900**

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Updated: 7/23

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### **901 Emphasis on Competitive Integrated Employment**

Throughout the vocational rehabilitation (VR) process the DORS counselor will emphasize the goal of competitive integrated employment (CIE) as the culmination of all services provided to the individual. Career counseling will be provided from intake and throughout the process as needed to assist individuals in focusing on the requirements and benefits of employment, even though specific job placement/employment activities may not occur until the last phase of the VR process.

## 902 Provision of and Responsibility for Employment Services

### 902.01 Counselor Responsibility

Employment services will be provided as a component of an individual's **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)** when a CIE goal is established and the individual is not already satisfactorily employed. The DORS counselor has the primary responsibility for the provision of employment assistance to individuals nearing completion of **IPE** services. The DORS Counselor should consider using the **DORS Placement Plan (RS-7e)** with consumers prior to providing job placement services, as appropriate.

### 902.02 Purchase of Job Placement Services

The DORS counselor may consider purchasing job placement through community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) (see **Section 912**). The DORS counselor will coordinate employment services and will promote collaboration and teamwork among DORS staff including, where available, DORS business service representatives, American Job Centers, CRPs and the individual receiving DORS services in order for the individual to achieve a successful employment outcome.

### 902.03 Consent for Disclosure

Prior to beginning job placement activities, the DORS Counselor shall review the **Beginning the Job Search: Consent for Disclosure (RS-8f)** form with all consumers for whom job placement services are provided, assuring that it is completed and signed by the individual and attached in AWARE™. A copy of this form shall be included with the referral when authorizing a CRP to provide job coaching services, including job placement.

In regard to DORS job search assistance, the DORS counselor shall discuss with the individual the pros and cons of disclosure of the disability to potential employers, and the need for the individual's consent in this regard.

- If the individual does not wish for prospective employers to be aware they are receiving DORS services or have a disability, the DORS counselor and others providing job placement assistance shall provide indirect, "behind the scenes" assistance.
- If the individual consents to disclose to prospective employers that they are a person with a disability assisted by DORS, DORS staff and CRPs may assist in a more direct manner, reaching out to employers on behalf of the consumer seeking employment.

In regard to DORS Ticket to Work Employment Network assistance, the DORS counselor shall also review with Social Security beneficiaries how DORS Partner Employment Networks may assist Ticket to Work holders to maintain employment, report earnings to Social Security, address benefits questions, and utilize Social Security Work Incentives. If the individual indicates interest in potentially working off cash benefits and willingness to be referred to a DORS Employment Network, the DORS counselor will immediately indicate "OK to Refer to DORS EN" in AWARE™ on the Special Programs page, and after the individual achieves employment will collaborate with the DORS Program Income office to determine whether and how best to facilitate the referral.

## 903 Supported Employment Job Placement

Individuals who require supported employment services shall be provided employment services on an individual basis in collaboration with staff of the CRP providing services. Consideration should be given to the job placement activities described in this section, as appropriate. See **RSM 2, Section 800**.

## 904 Job Placement Activities

Beginning with the initial interview and continuing throughout the VR process, the DORS counselor will assure that the individual is preparing for CIE. Related activities include, as appropriate:

a. **Job Placement Counseling:**

1. During the initial meeting with the individual, discuss steps the individual may take to improve job readiness, and assess independence in job seeking (use generic application, role play interview, as needed).
2. Discuss the employment goal and work environment preferences.
3. Discuss the pros and cons of disclosure of the disability in an employment setting, using the **Beginning the Job Search: Consent for Disclosure (RS-8f)**.
4. Provide guidance regarding reasonable accommodations requests – refer to the **Reasonable Accommodations Guide** found in the **Counselor Toolkit**.
5. Assure that the individual is familiar with locally available resources and can access software and internet sites related to job search.
6. Discuss sources for job leads and networking (e.g., family, friends, newspapers, DORS office, WTC, websites, etc.).
7. Discuss the resources of and access to the local American Job Center.
8. Assist individuals with writing a professional resume that can be submitted to potential employers both electronically and via hard copy.
9. As appropriate, begin to develop a 30- or 60-day **Placement Plan (RS-7e)**, emphasizing and documenting the individual's responsibilities and the DORS counselor's role.
10. Encourage the individual to keep a log of job seeking activities.
11. Provide the individual with information on job openings that match the individual's skills and abilities.
12. Contact and follow up with employers on behalf of the individual to discuss job opportunities, if appropriate.

b. **Benefits Counseling** – Refer individuals who receive disability benefits (SSI, SSDI) to benefits counselors so they can ascertain the impact of income on benefits, including health benefits.

c. **Health Benefits** – Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program. Provide information, as appropriate, about the EID program, which enables Marylanders with disabilities who work and meet certain other requirements to receive comprehensive health benefits through Medicaid for a very modest fee.

d. **Job Hotlines** – Use job hotlines, as appropriate, including the accessible Job Line operated by the National Federation of the Blind, the Maryland Job Service (DLLR) and the U.S. Department of Labor. The Job Line can be reached at 410-949-0020 within Baltimore and 1-800-765-8692 outside of Baltimore.

e. **Placement Offices** – If the consumer has received post-secondary training, access the services of the placement office of the institution.

- f. **ADA Awareness** – Be sure consumers are aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and resources including the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center.
- g. **Job Seeking Skills Training** – Provide training in a group or individual setting (DORS office, WTC) on effective job search techniques, including resume preparation, interviewing skills, mock interviews, etc.
- h. **Informational Interviewing** – Refer the individual to meet with workers doing the kind of work in which the individual is interested to get more information about the job, its challenges and benefits.
- i. **Job Club** – Consider starting a job club in the office to support a group of individuals who are seeking employment.
- j. **Tax Credits** – Explain the Maryland Disability Employment Tax Credit (MDETC) to the individual. Complete and issue the Voucher in accordance with established procedures. Be sure that the individual understands that using the voucher is their choice as its use clearly identifies to the employer that he/she is a person with a disability.

Provide information about any other available tax credits for which the individual and/or employer may be eligible, and assist with the certification process.

- k. **Federal Employment/Special Options Eligible List** – Assist the consumer in applying for federal and/or State positions under these authorities, as appropriate (see **Section 912**).

**Note:** All individuals who complete the QUEST internship program are eligible for the State's Special Options Eligible List.

- l. **Job Coaching** – Assess the individual's needs for short-term job coaching to assure employment success (see **RSM 2, Section 715.07**).
- m. **Job-Related Support Services** – Provide or arrange support services necessary to the individual on the job (see **RSM 2, Section 717**).
- n. **Internships and/or Volunteer Placement** – Consider and discuss with the individual internships, such as those offered through QUEST (see **RSM 2, Section 718**), and volunteer positions in order to further develop the individual's skills, abilities and confidence.
- o. **Temporary Employment** – Consider and discuss with the individual whether temporary employment would be appropriate to help enhance skills, provide "real work" experience, develop business references, and perhaps lead to a permanent job.
- p. **On-Job-Training (OJT)** – Develop On-Job-Training (OJT) opportunities (see **RSM 2, Section 715.06**).
- q. **Job Analysis** – Arrange a job analysis at a potential workplace to identify appropriate jobs for the individual.
- r. **Federal Bonding Program** – Consider utilization of the Federal Bonding Program for individuals who may have "high risk" factors in their background.

## 905 Reasonable Accommodation

In relation to the ADA, reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the

application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodations can range from a modified work schedule, to a raised work station with space for a wheelchair, to computer screen enlargement, to a quiet workspace away from office traffic and noise. Many individuals with significant disabilities will require reasonable accommodations to participate in employment services, apply for jobs, and succeed in employment.

**Note:** While **job coaching** can be an important support for individuals with disabilities as they begin a new job, it is **not** considered a “reasonable accommodation” by the ADA. An employer would never be expected to provide or pay for job coaching services for an employee with a disability. DORS counselors should provide job coaching to individuals as they enter employment, as needed, according to established agency policy and procedures in **RSM 2, Section 800**.

### **905.01 Counselor Role**

It is part of the specialized responsibilities and expertise of DORS counselors to:

- a. Discuss and maintain awareness of reasonable accommodation needs of individuals from the time of application through employment.
- b. Advise the individual about the procedures involved in requesting reasonable accommodations (see **Section 905.02**).
- c. Be familiar with resources that can support determination and provision of appropriate accommodations.
- d. Facilitate provision of non-technical reasonable accommodations.
- e. Work with CRPs, Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) at DORS Workforce & Technology Center (WTC), and employers, as appropriate, to identify and implement complex, technical reasonable accommodations for consumers as applicable.

### **905.02 Requesting Reasonable Accommodations for Interviews and Employment**

- a. The DORS counselor shall discuss, support and assist with the request for reasonable accommodations, assuring that the individual understands the implications regarding disclosure of their disability. Counselors should review the **Reasonable Accommodation Guide** in the **Counselor Toolkit** and use it as appropriate.
- b. In order to request a reasonable accommodation, an employee must disclose to the employer that they have a disability and need an adjustment or change at work. The request does not have to include the words “reasonable accommodation” or “ADA” and does not have to be made in writing, although a written copy is recommended to document the request.
- c. Once a reasonable accommodation is requested, an employer may ask the employee for documentation about the employee’s disability and functional limitations and engage the employee in identifying the appropriate reasonable accommodation. The DORS counselor shall assist in providing such documentation consistent with the request of the consumer. **Such documentation should only be provided to the employer’s human resource department, not to the employee’s supervisor.**

### **905.03 Resources for Reasonable Accommodations**

- a. In the event the DORS counselor is uncertain how to proceed with a request from an individual regarding assistance with reasonable accommodations on the job, the DORS counselor shall request consultation with their supervisor and shall review information available online through the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) regarding the request. RTS at WTC can provide general consultation regarding reasonable accommodations.

- b. Once the individual has disclosed the disability, requested reasonable accommodations of the employer, and confirms permission for the DORS counselor to discuss the request with the employer, the DORS counselor shall contact the employer and offer to provide assistance in identifying appropriate accommodations.
- c. After consultation with the employer, if the reasonable accommodations involve complex, technical solutions beyond the expertise of the DORS counselor, the DORS counselor shall contact RTS at WTC, provide their initial assessment of accommodations needed, and request an on-the-job worksite consultation.

## **906 Placement Follow-up**

Once the individual has obtained CIE, the following activities should be considered in order to assure that the individual is successful in retaining the job for a minimum of 90 days following job stabilization. The level of involvement of the DORS counselor with the employer depends on the wishes of the individual and whether the employer is aware that the individual is a recipient of DORS services.

### **908.01 Follow-up Activities**

- a. Enter the employment information in an Employment Record in AWARE™ to move the case into "Service-E" status.
- b. Evaluate, using appropriate DORS resources, the need for reasonable accommodations and, as necessary, assist in restructuring the job station or providing assistive devices.
- c. Arrange a schedule of follow-up contacts with the supervisor and employee to assess progress and/or identify problem areas, if appropriate.
- d. Talk with the employee outside of work or visit the employee at the worksite to evaluate job performance and satisfaction on the job.
- e. Consult with the individual and, if involved, the CRP regarding whether job stabilization has been achieved and, if so, enter the Employment Stable Date in the Employment Record in AWARE™.
- f. Discuss whether post-employment services are or will be needed.
- g. Document contacts in the AWARE™ Case Note section.

### **908.02 Job Change After Employment Stabilization**

- a. After an individual achieves job stabilization, it is not necessary to restart the 90-day period prior to successful closure under the following conditions:
  - 1. The individual makes a voluntary lateral or promotional job change with the same or a different employer.
  - 2. The individual begins the new job within two weeks of leaving the previous job.
  - 3. The individual does not require additional services to achieve job stabilization in the new position.
- b. It is necessary to end the original employment record due to reason "continued employment" and enter a new employment record as "Continued From" the previous employment record in AWARE™.

- c. Job Loss – If the individual loses a job, an end date must be entered into the employment record. "Continued Employment" may be used if the individual achieves employment within two weeks of losing the previous job. If the individual does require services to achieve job stability in the new job and does not move to another job, the Employment Record must be edited.

## **909 Outreach to the Employment Community**

In order to develop a positive, collaborative relationship between DORS and local businesses, and to ultimately improve employment prospects for individuals with disabilities, DORS counselors, Business Service Representatives, and managers, will actively promote the services that DORS can provide to businesses. Activities will be undertaken to enhance the relationship of the business community as a DORS customer, including the following:

- a. Contact businesses in order to obtain information about job possibilities.
  - 1. Build professional relationships with staff of businesses and learn about their needs.
  - 2. Offer assistance to businesses by arranging or conducting training on disability awareness and/or the ADA.
  - 3. Let businesses know about employment information on the DORS website.
  - 4. Use business language rather than human services terminology. Consider time pressures of businesses in making contacts and arranging meetings.
- b. Hold weekly meetings for DORS staff to report on job development efforts, share job leads and provide support.
- c. Maintain awareness of the workforce needs of businesses in your community through corporate publications, the newspaper business section, labor department publications, and ongoing partnerships with local businesses.
- d. Consider making general presentations to familiarize businesses with disability issues and DORS benefits and services. Examples of support materials include DORS brochures and videos, and the DORS Annual Report.
- e. Consider membership in business-oriented community groups and make presentations to such groups regarding employment for individuals with disabilities.
- f. Consider participation in a career or job fair.

## **910 Sharing Job Leads**

A system will be established at the local office or unit level to respond to, share, and follow up on job leads and to assure follow-up contact with the employer. All DORS staff will immediately document and disseminate job lead information using e-mail or other means. Unit staff will be responsible for following up with businesses regarding job opportunities as quickly as possible, whether or not DORS staff can refer a particular individual for consideration, in order to enhance the possibility of development of an ongoing relationship with the employer.

- a. The Employer Module in AWARE™ enables DORS staff to search for and better manage employer records. This is an excellent resource for researching to determine what employers have hired DORS consumers.

- b. Through Employer Notes, DORS staff can enter useful information about employers – good contact people, services or training the employer might need, experiences with the employer, etc.
- c. Pages within the Employer Module will also enable authorized DORS staff to enter multiple locations for an employer, as well as multiple contact people and services that have been provided to that employer (e.g., staff training, technical assistance).

## **911 Consultation with Business Service Representatives**

Consider consultation with Business Service Representatives if additional assistance is required in helping an individual to find and retain suitable employment.

Individuals attending training programs at WTC will be provided job placement services through the WTC Employment Services office upon completion of their training program.

## **912 Special Placement Programs: Federal and State**

At both the federal and State level, there are special hiring authorities to promote employment of individuals with disabilities, which may increase employment opportunities for DORS participants.

### **912.01 Disclosure of Disability**

DORS counselors shall discuss with individuals that usage of special hiring authorities would indicate to hiring managers that they are individuals with disabilities. If they do not want to disclose their disability during the hiring process, they should apply through the competitive process.

### **912.02 Federal Schedule A Hiring Authority**

The federal Schedule A Hiring Authority is a valuable tool to help the federal government recruit qualified individuals with disabilities. See **Attachment 900-1** for certification procedures and appointment techniques for federal selective placement.

The **Schedule A Letter (RS-8a)** is available in AWARE™ and in **Employment Resources** on InDORS.

Supervisors and managers shall address requests by individuals with disabilities not served by DORS for Schedule A certification – see **Attachment 900-1** for information about procedures and the Schedule A form letter.

### **912.03 Special Options Eligible List – State of Maryland**

The Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBAM), Office of Personnel Services and Benefits (OPSB) maintains a Special Options Eligible List (SOEL) of individuals with disabilities seeking State employment who meet minimum qualifications of a job classification. DORS consumers who complete a QUEST internship are eligible for the Special Options Eligible List (SOEL).

The following procedures should be followed in exploring whether the Special Options Eligible List could be of assistance in placement activities:

- a. If the individual seems to qualify for the Special Options Eligible List, or if they have completed a QUEST internship, complete the AWARE™ SOEL Letter, and forward the request letter to Personnel Analyst, DBAM, OPSB, 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, ref. Special Options Eligible List.



- b. Determine which State positions are appropriate for the consumer. Make sure that there is evidence that the consumer meets the minimum qualifications and can perform the essential functions of the classification. Information regarding current job opportunities, career information, and application procedures and forms are available for immediate access on the [State Jobs website](#). For further assistance, contact the Personnel Analyst of the Recruitment and Examination Unit of OPSB, who can review the individual's work history and educational background and suggest possible classifications for consideration.
- c. Assist the individual in completing the required on-line application (one for each job classification), as appropriate, and participating in the competitive examination if possible. See SOEL procedures and instructions in the **Employment Resources** section of InDORS.
- d. Contact the OPSB Test Administrator if there appears to be a need for accommodations for the examination process. The Test Administrator will confirm whether required accommodations can be provided.
- e. Individuals certified to the Special Options Eligible List will receive a letter from the OPSB confirming their certification; the DORS counselor will receive a copy for the record of services.
- f. For further assistance, contact the Personnel Analyst of the Recruitment and Examination Unit of OPSB, who can review the individual's work history and educational background and suggest possible classifications for consideration, and answer other questions.

### **913 Purchase of Job Development/Placement Services**

Job development/placement services purchased from CRPs, including short-term job coaching providers, DDA-supported employment providers, and BHA-supported employment providers using a traditional service model and ACT (not EBPSE), supplement job placement services provided by DORS counselors. DORS counselors may authorize CRPs to invoice hourly to provide job development/placement services. (See **RSM 2, Section 715.07**.)

DORS only pays for job development services leading to CIE which have been previously authorized by a DORS official, using Main VR funds. Note CIE Review Requirement for specific positions in "c" below.

- a. **Referral for Job Development/Placement Services** – Staff shall use the **Employment Services Referral (RS-7f)** form to make a referral to a provider offering this service, unless the CRP has their own referral form. A copy of the signed **IPE** and the signed **Beginning the Job Search: Consent for Disclosure (RS-8f)** shall be sent with the referral.
- b. **Authorizations for Job Development Preparation Hours** – Prior to authorizing job development hours ("c") below, DORS may authorize up to eight hours for job development preparation. Depending on the needs of the individual, job development preparation activities may include up to two hours for job placement plan development (see "e." below) and up to six hours for resume development, interview preparation and cover letter creation.

**Note:** Job development preparation hours may **not** be included on the same authorization as job development hours.

- c. **Authorizations for Job Development Hours:**
  - 1. Up to 60 hours for job search assistance, authorized in 20-hour increments, may be used for job development. The DORS counselor may authorize the first two increments; after 40 hours are completed, authorization for the third 20-hour increment requires approval of the DORS supervisor. Authorization beyond 60 hours require (1) written justification of the CRP and (2) the approval of the DORS regional director, with a staffing scheduled as determined by the DORS regional director.

2. The DORS counselor shall assist to the greatest degree possible the job developer/vocational team in developing jobs and identifying potential employers. Prior to authorizing an initial 20-hour allotment, the counselor, the consumer and the provider may document and agree upon the activities to take place using the **Placement Plan (RS-7e)**.
3. **CIE Review Requirement** – Before a CRP uses DORS funding to assist a consumer to obtain or maintain a position funded by an AbilityOne or Maryland Employment Works contract or a position with a CRP as the employer of record, the job developer must verify by referring to the **DORS website** that DORS has reviewed and approved the position as CIE. If the CRP is unable to identify a specific position for which a vacancy is known, the CRP may inquire with DORS or the employer of record to determine if a **CIE Review Request Form** has been submitted. If a review request has not been submitted, DORS staff or the CRP may encourage the employer of record to submit a review request. Only an authorized representative of the employer of record may request a CIE review. (See **Attachment 900-2, DORS Competitive Integrated Employment Verification Procedures**.)
- d. **Authorization for Interview Assistance Hours** – Interview assistance will be included on job development authorizations as a separate line item. This service may be authorized in five-hour increments, and may include assisting an individual during job interviews, including phone interviews, and/or transporting the individual to and/or from an interview, when necessary for the consumer to participate in the job interview. This fee may not include time spent waiting for an individual to complete a job interview if the job developer is not allowed by the employer to be present during the job interview.
- e. **The Provider’s Job Development/Placement Plan** – The CRP will develop with the consumer a Plan consistent with the consumer’s **IPE, DORS Placement Plan (RS-7e)**, if applicable, and referral information from the DORS counselor, in terms of the employment goal, work hours per week and other relevant factors, as applicable. It must contain the description of the job development services to be provided and the provision for periodic monitoring to ensure progress towards meeting the employment goal. The CRP’s Plan will include provision of such services as:
  1. At least weekly face to face job search assistance.
  2. Assistance with job leads (e.g., internet, American Job Center, newspaper).
  3. Interview coaching and support.
  4. Maintaining a log of job search activities.
  5. The DORS Counselor may also request additional job seeking activities to be provided by the CRP and documented on the **Placement Plan (RS-7e)**. These may include job trials/job shadowing; assistance with applications; assistance with employer follow-up (e.g., thank you letters after interviews); use of personal employment network in job search; and resume update.
- f. **Job Development/Placement Progress Reporting** – After the person served has completed the first month of job development and monthly thereafter, the CRP will complete the **Employment Services Progress Report (RS-7d)**. The report is required each month whether the CRP is sending an invoice to DORS or not. The CRP must include written justification on the **Employment Services Progress Report (RS-7d)** for providing fewer than six hours of service in a month.

## 914 Purchase of Short-Term Job Coaching Services

### 914.01 Short-Term Job Coaching

Short-term job coaching services may be purchased from CRPs for individuals who require time-limited services to maximize their likelihood of maintaining employment. These services shall be included on the **IPE**, with an estimated DORS cost for the service based on the number of hours indicated in the **Job Coaching Fading Schedule (Attachment 800-3)** for the individual's targeted number of hours worked per week, as indicated on the **IPE**.

- a. **Referral for Short-Term Job Coaching** – Staff shall use the **Employment Services Referral (RS-7f)** form to make a referral to a provider offering this service, unless the CRP has their own referral form or the CRP provided job development/placement services, as indicated above.
- b. **Authorizations for Short-Term Job Coaching Hours** – DORS only pays for job coaching services leading to job stabilization in CIE which have been previously authorized by a DORS official.

Once employment is obtained, short-term job coaching may be provided at the job site or off-site, if requested by the individual, leading to job stabilization.

The counselor may authorize either or both of the following at the same time:

1. Short-term job coaching during the first month, consistent with the **Short-Term Job Coaching Fading Schedule** indicated for the number of hours the consumer is anticipated to work in that month.
2. **Employment Stability Follow-Along Fee**, payable once job stabilization has been documented to ensure continuation of employment stability (see **Section 915.02**).

After short-term job coaching has commenced, with justification documented in case notes, the counselor may:

1. Increase the number of hours authorized to be used during the first month not to exceed a total cost of \$5,000 (for example, requests to use more hours during the first month may be justified when an individual has several days of training, requiring job coach involvement more than 75% of the time in the first week).
2. Accommodate a request for additional weeks to use the hours authorized for the first month per the **Short-Term Job Coaching Fading Schedule**. (For example, requests for additional weeks to use the hours authorized for the first month, per the fading schedule, may be justified when an individual does not work the scheduled number of hours anticipated during the first month.)

If the initial number of job coaching hours authorized for the first month have been used and the DORS counselor is asked for additional job coaching to stabilize the employment, the DORS counselor, in consultation with the individual and CRP, shall consider the appropriateness of the job placement and whether on-going supported employment services are required to maintain employment stability. If supported employment is recommended, the individual meets the requirements to receive supported employment services, and there is reasonable expectation that natural supports will be available to provide extended services when long-term funding is not available, written justification and Regional Director approval is required to amend an **IPE**.

- c. **Employment Services Progress Reporting** – After the person served has achieved employment and completed the first month of short-term job coaching and monthly thereafter, the CRP will complete the **Employment Services Progress Report (RS-7d)**. The report is required each month prior to job stabilization whether the CRP is sending an invoice to DORS

or not. The CRP report must document the individual's progress toward achieving employment stability.

- d. **Job Stabilization** – After an individual has achieved job stabilization, DORS funding for short-term job coaching shall discontinue, and the CRP may begin providing employment stability follow-along service.
- e. **Placement Incentives** – See **Section 915.01, Incentive Availability**.
- f. **Employment Stability Verification at 90 Days Fee** – See **Section 915.03, Employment Stability Verification Fee Availability**.

### **914.02 DORS Counselor Role**

While purchase of job development and short-term job coaching entails outsourcing, the DORS counselor shall maintain regular communication with the individual and CRP, as documented in AWARE™ case notes. Case documentation shall reflect DORS counselor oversight of the individual's progress toward job stabilization and maintenance of employment stability for a minimum of an additional 90 days. As part of the individual's employment team, the DORS counselor shall facilitate benefits planning services for Social Security beneficiaries, address requests for assistance with work site accommodations, and review monthly reports from the CRP.

### **914.03 Frequency of Job Coaching for Consumers**

Ideally, the individual who was provided job development, short-term job coaching leading to job stabilization, and employment stability follow-along services, would achieve sustained CIE with the initial set of authorizations. However, it is recognized that in some instances intervening factors may interrupt job stabilization and/or long-term employment and it may be necessary to reconsider provision of job development or job support to meet the needs of the individual prior to case closure.

The need to reauthorize job development or job coaching services after provision of short-term job coaching may indicate that the individual requires ongoing supported employment services, assuming the individual has a most significant disability (see **RSM 2, Section 800**). Prior to amending an **IPE** to add supported employment services after provision of short-term job coaching, the DORS counselor shall request written justification by the CRP and approval of the DORS Regional/Program Director. The justification must include an explanation of the change in circumstances and/or disability factors which would require additional intensive services in order for the consumer to achieve CIE.

## **915 Placement Incentives & Employment Stability Fees**

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 CRP) and Rehabilitation Communication Specialists (RCSs), finding positions beyond the standard entry-level jobs can be difficult and time consuming. To facilitate this process, DORS provides placement incentives and employment stability fees for CRPs working with consumers to obtain employment. **Note:** These incentives are not applicable when the position is funded by AbilityOne or Maryland Employment Works or the employer of record is a CRP.

### **915.01 Incentive Availability**

When job development is authorized by DORS, the CRP or RCS may request any or all of the placement incentives options listed below, when applicable. Placement incentives will be paid after the DORS consumer maintains employment stability in competitive integrated employment for at least 90 days. Employment stability does not often begin with the first day of employment.

- a. A consumer is considered to have achieved job stabilization when all of the following conditions have been met:
1. The individual is employed in CIE and has reached a maximum level of work performance, consistent with his or her unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
  2. The hours worked per week is consistent with the individual's preferred target number of work hours as agreed upon on the IPE.
  3. The individual's need for benefits counseling and worksite accommodations have been addressed.
  4. DORS services are no longer needed to "stabilize" the employment outcome or to address employee and/or employer concerns.
  5. Supported employment job coaching, specifically, has decreased to a predictable level of support which may be provided via extended services, including natural support.
  6. The individual has transitioned from intensive supported employment job coaching to either:
    - Extended services for youth with most significant disabilities funded by DORS, or
    - Extended services for either a youth or an adult with most significant disabilities funded by another provider, or
    - Natural supports
- b. **Relationship to IPE Goal** – The job placement must be related to the employment goal on the **IPE** and consistent with the anticipated number of hours of employment per week, if indicated. 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 assists a consumer to obtain employment as a cashier while involved in training to achieve an **IPE** employment goal to become a computer repair technician, the employment will not qualify for a placement incentive.
- c. **Incentive Options** – Placement incentives available include:
1. **Designated Population Incentives (\$250 each)**
    - **Ex-Offender Status** – An individual 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 includes individuals 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 **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)** – An individual is placed in a position and begins to work within 30 days from the date of the authorization.

3. **25% Above Minimum Wage Placement Incentive (\$400)** – An individual obtains a position in the area related to their **IPE** and is paid 25% above the State or local 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 above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) for blind or non-blind, as appropriate. (Reference: [ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga](http://ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga)). **Note:** Before authorizing, the DORS counselor will review requests for this placement incentive with the DORS Social Security Programs Unit.
5. **Natural Supported Employment Incentive (\$450)** – Available to a CRP (does not apply to RCS) when an individual receives supported employment services (intensive job coaching) and maintains stability in the job for 90 days after transitioning to extended services provided via natural supports. Not available when the individual has transitioned to extended services funded by a long-term funding provider (e.g., BHA or DDA) or when the individual is a youth receiving DORS funding for extended services.

Refer to the **Job Placement Incentives Fact Sheet (RS-7j)** for additional information regarding how CRPs/RCSs may access job placement incentives.

- d. Incentives are payable after the **CRP Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentives and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-7g)** or the **RCS Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentive and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-8k)** is completed and signed by the individual to verify:
  1. The accuracy of the employment information
  2. Ongoing employment stability
  3. Satisfaction with the employment outcome on or after 90 days of employment stability and provided to the DORS counselor.

Refer to the **Job Placement Incentives Fact Sheet (RS-7j)** for additional information regarding how CRPs may access job placement incentives.

- e. **Employment Stability Verification at 90 days** – See **Section 915.03** for information regarding availability. **Note:** This does not apply to RCS.

### **915.02 Employment Stability Follow-Along Fee Availability**

When authorizing a CRP to provide short-term job coaching for competitive integrated employment which will not lead to extended supported employment services provided by DDA or BHA or when authorizing a CRP to provide intensive job coaching for competitive integrated employment prior to a transition to extended services provided by natural supports, DORS may authorize a \$200 Employment Stability Follow-Along service fee.

- a. This fee will be payable with verification from the CRP of agreement between the DORS counselor and individual that the employment is stable and that no additional job coaching hours will be invoiced beyond the employment stable date.
- b. The CRP will use this fee to ensure continuation of employment stability for the next 90 days of employment until DORS is able to close the case as successfully employed and the CRP is able to invoice either for placement incentives or the \$100 service fee for employment stability verification at 90 days.

- c. If the CRP has already received an authorization to provide employment stability follow-along for 90 days after the employment stable date, then the provider may invoice for this fee when completing Part 2 of the **CRP Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentives and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-7g)**.
- d. If the need for this follow-along service was not anticipated when the job coaching authorization was issued, the CRP may request to provide this service when completing Part 2 of the **CRP Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentives and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-7g)** to document the agreed-upon stable date. If the DORS counselor agrees and issues an authorization for this follow-along service, the CRP may invoice immediately, having already provided the **CRP Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentives and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-7g)** with Part 2 completed.

### **915.03 Employment Stability Verification at 90 Days Fee Availability**

When an individual has received CRP job development for CIE and no placement incentives in **Section 915.01** are available, DORS may authorize a \$100 Employment Stability Verification at 90 Days service fee.

This fee will be payable after the **CRP Employment Verification with Request for Placement Incentives and/or Employment Stability Fees (RS-7g)** is completed and signed by the individual to verify:

- a. The accuracy of the employment information.
- b. Ongoing employment stability.
- c. Satisfaction with the employment outcome on or after 90 days of employment stability and provided to the DORS counselor.