

## IPS Supported Employment

### *A Guide to Help Supervisors Ensure Individualized Job Support Plans*

Work histories provide important information for the job support plan. Encourage employment specialists to be thorough when completing the career profile. In addition to collecting dates of employment and job duties, specialists should also try to understand what the person liked and disliked about each job. Why did each job end? What did the person learn about herself as a worker? Did the person appreciate a supervisor who gave her positive feedback? If so, the employment specialist might occasionally schedule short meetings with the worker and supervisor to ask what the worker is doing well. Did the person have problems with nervousness while adjusting to jobs? If so, the specialist would plan to provide extra supports during the first few weeks of work.

Teach the IPS team how to develop job support plans by discussing them during the weekly vocational unit meeting. When someone finds a job, ask about the person's work history. What went well for the person on previous jobs, and what caused difficulties? Next ask about the person's strengths related to the new position. What job-related problems might the employment specialist anticipate (this matters because job supports should be designed to help the person avoid problems). And who are the person's supports? This is a good time to remind the specialist to include family (as defined by the worker) in the job support plan. Ask the team to brainstorm ideas for good job supports.

The employment specialist should write down the ideas that he thinks are a good fit for the person, and then discuss those ideas with his client as they work on the job support plan.

When someone is hired, ask about:

- Work history
- Strengths
- Possible concerns
- Supports

Pay close attention when people are newly employed because most people who lose jobs do so within the first 30 days of employment. When someone is hired, ask how frequently the employment specialist will see the person the first week of work and the second week of work. If the employment specialist has a relationship with the employer, how soon will the specialist follow up with the employer? It is not uncommon for employment specialists to meet in-person with new workers more than once a week. They also routinely follow up with employers after the first day of work and weekly for the first month. They do not take a "wait and see" approach, but attempt to prevent problems by providing frequent supports.

Help employment specialists learn from each job their client has. When a job ends, ask what went well. Also ask, "Looking back now, what would you do differently?" Help the specialist think about which supports might be more effective for that person for the next job.

Supervisors can ensure good job supports by coaching employment specialists over time. They occasionally participate in meetings with clients, employment specialists, and

families, while the employment plan is being discussed (field mentoring). They also review written plans and discuss job supports during individual supervision.

### Sample Job Support Plan

Person’s goal in his own words: “I want to get back into STNA (state tested nursing assistant) work. I’ve passed the test for the certification and I hope that this job working in the dietary department of a nursing home will help me transition back into nursing assistant work.”

Objectives	Methods	Dates
Javier will work 25 hours per week portioning food according to diets, and serving residents in the nursing home.	Javier will have a follow-up call with the benefits planner to talk about how much he will be earning.	April 28 at 10:30
	Employment specialist to provide rides to work for the first two weeks.	March 1- March15
	Employment specialist and Javier to meet weekly to discuss the job.	March 15- August 30
	Employment specialist and Javier to have brief meetings with his employer (for extra feedback) weekly for the first month and monthly thereafter.	March 1- March 30 & April 1- August 30
	Employment specialist, Javier, Javier’s mother, and Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, will meet to talk about the job and Javier’s long-term plans for working	March 7 & then every other month.
Javier will move into a nurse’s assistant position.	Employment specialist and Javier will talk to his boss about his desire to transfer to a nurses’ assistant position after he has worked for six months.	August 30
	Employment specialist and/or Javier will talk to human resources at the nursing home about his desire to change positions.	By Sept 15
	If it does not appear hopeful that Javier will obtain a nursing assistant job with his employer, he and his employment specialist will develop a plan to apply for those positions elsewhere.	By December 15