

2017



Vocational Development

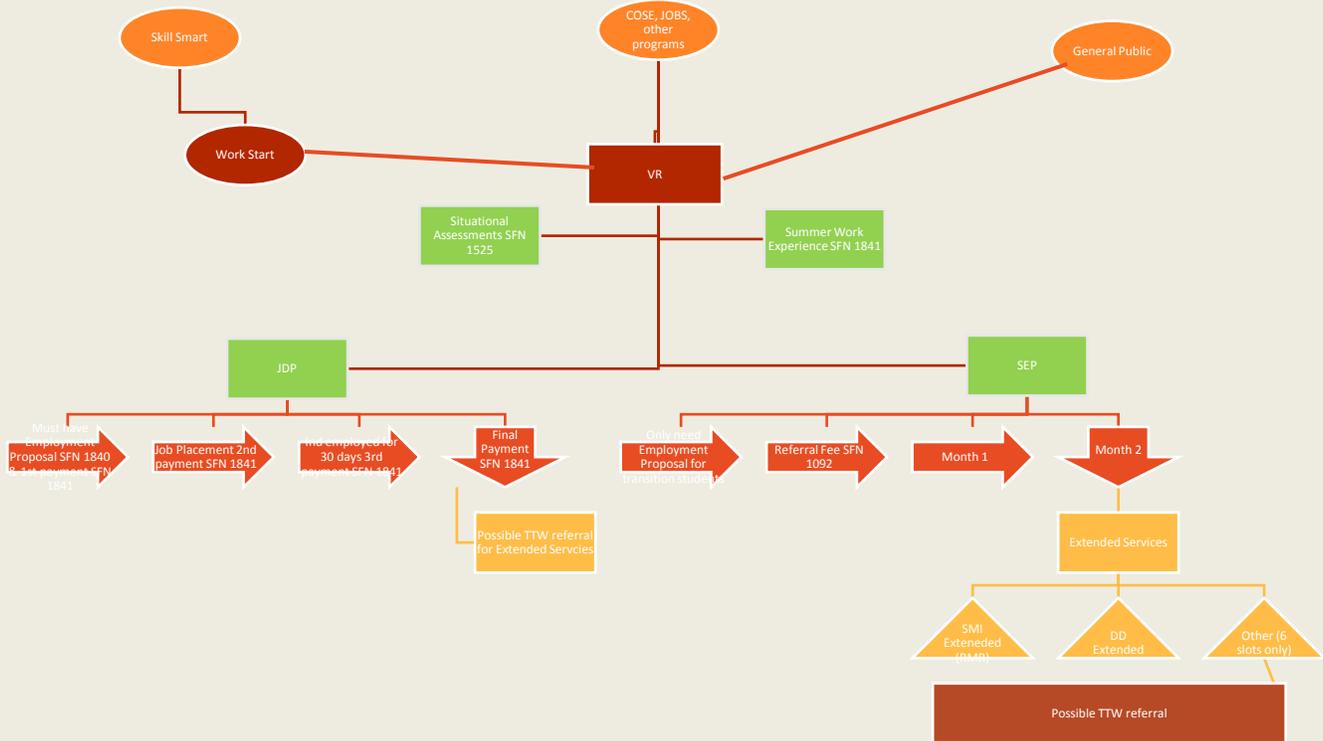
TRAINING MANUAL

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FLOWCHART



The Vocational Rehabilitation flowchart represents the ideal continuum of care for Community Options Employment Programs. The ultimate goal is to move customers from Community Options Employment Programs, to Vocational Rehabilitation, to Extended Services. As the flow chart shows, there are numerous ways to navigate through the continuum of care but the overall goal is to get customers to Extended Services where they will receive lifelong supports.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

WHAT IS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION?

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a process which enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment or other useful occupation.

The ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's primary mission is to assist North Dakotans with disabilities to improve their employment opportunities and to assist North Dakota businesses in finding solutions to their disability-related issues.

HISTORY

The Vocational Development program was the first service Community Options offered to customers. This program offers personalized services to individuals needing assistance with pre-employment, employment, and post-employment services. Community Options provides job development, job placement, on-site job coaching and follow-along services to individuals referred from the ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Vocational Development Program strives to gain and maintain competitive employment for all referred individuals. This program supports individuals with all severities of disabilities to allow them to become more self-sufficient. Each individual is able to select their choice of employment; therefore, individually, personal choice and control are respected and promoted. Whenever possible, natural supports will be developed and encouraged.

As a VR service provider, Community Options provides the following programs:

- Situational Assessment
- Job Development Placement (JDP)
- Supported Employment Program (SEP)
- Summer Work Trial Experience
- Trial Work Experience and Extended Evaluation (Not listed on flowchart)
- Short-Term On-The-Job Supports (Not listed on flowchart)

REFERRAL PROCESS

Community Options Director of Services (DOS) staff receives all referrals from VR. Upon receipt and review of the referral information from the referral source, the DOS will provide the referral to the assigned Employment Specialist (ES).

Each service is identified with the State Form Number (SFN) which accompanies each referral.

- Situational Assessment referral = SFN 1091
- JDP referral = SFN 1092
- SEP referral= SFN 1092
- Summer Work Trial Experience= SFN 1092
- Trail Work Experience and Extended Evaluation = SFN 1094
- Short-Term On-The-Job-Supports = SFN 1841

PROTOCOL FOR NEW REFERRAL

1. Assigned to an ES from the DOS.
2. VR referrals will be JDP or SEP services; in certain circumstances a referral for Trial Work Experience and Summer Work Experience.
3. If a customer is referred through JDP services, a meeting will need to be set up with the VR counselor, customer, and ES to complete an Employment Proposal.
4. If a customer is referred through SEP services, an Employment Proposal is required for students with disabilities who are receiving SEP. **It is optional for all other individuals.**
5. ES enters the referral information into the database.
6. Case notes will begin with the receipt of referral. Case notes should continue for any and all contact. Case notes should include appointment date, time, and location or if the referral was returned, for what reason and on what date and time.
7. ES should contact the customer by the 5th day to schedule the first meeting (always contact the VR counselor to find out how to proceed, some counselors like to meet as a group first)
8. ES should be in communication with the VR counselor to update them on the status of the case from the referral process to the closing of the case. Communication is a big piece in providing effective support and management to every customer.

Before the first meeting, ES should enter the information on the referral into the database. ES should be entering as much information as they can into the database based upon the information provided by the VR counselor prior to meeting with the customer.

If a JDP or SEP customer fails to attend the first scheduled meeting, the ES should attempt to contact the customer to reschedule the appointment. If the customer fails to attend a scheduled intake twice, the ES should contact the VR counselor to inquire on the next step. ES should be informed by the VR counselor on what needs to be completed with the inactivity of the customer.

RELEASES OF INFORMATION

Releases of Information (ROI) should be completed at the first meeting. ROI's need to be completed and signed for all agencies, individuals, companies, etc. that the ES will contact on behalf of the customer. If a ROI is not obtained, an ES cannot provide information in regards to the case.

ROI's need to be completed and signed for the following at time of intake:

- Referral Source
- Emergency Contact
- Potential Employers
- Current Employer (need to have name of current employer/one for every employer)

If a customer brings a family member or friend to the intake or any appointment, an ROI needs to be completed. If the ROI is not signed off on, the ES must ask the non-customer to wait for the customer outside the office. Other needs for an ROI would be: school, probation officer, medical professionals, therapist, mental health providers, daycares, housing, etc.

ROI's are only good for one year and need to be updated prior to the expiration date. It's always good practice to update releases at all intake appointments and a few months prior to the expiration date.

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Situational assessments are a process for assessing and evaluating work-related behaviors in a controlled environment. The situational assessment is distinguished from other types of assessments due to the ability of Community Options to control and vary the task so the client can be assessed under a variety of conditions or situations. Although any type of task or situation may be used, real work is most often used in order to add relevance. Situational assessments are an optional service, and the need for it will be determined by the VR counselor on a case by case basis. The findings are documented and a report is sent to the VR counselor for review and approval for payment. The VR counselor may authorize up to three assessments.

Situational assessments are usually 2-4 hours each. An SFN 1091 and authorization will accompany the referral to Community Options if a situational assessment is requested by the VR counselor. The Employment Specialist will complete SFN 1525 for each assessment.

JOB DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

Job Development and Placement (JDP) Services are time limited services with the expectation that the client will become successfully employed in integrated, competitive employment. Community Options role is to assist the client in attaining the job and developing essential work skills. Once the work skills have been developed, Community Options will phase out and assist the client in developing natural supports. These services are short-term and are intended for those who require some support and assistance up front, but who will not require ongoing supports once the VR case is closed.

JDP Services emphasize the following beliefs and values:

- Individuals with disabilities are capable of being employed.
- Individuals with disabilities who want to work have the same right to work and earn a living wage as people who do not have a disability.
- Facilitating community employment allows individuals the fullest community participation.
- Employment options are based upon preferences, skills, and needs of the individual.
- Employer/employee consultation and support is provided after a job has been found, but are time limited and are intended to begin phasing out once the individual becomes employed.

Individuals identified for JDP Services should demonstrate:

- The motivation or desire to work.
- They can be relied on to be on time, follow through, etc. when they need to
- The capacity, either with or without support, to stay on task for a period of time generally associated with working.

The Employment Proposal (SFN 1840) must be completed by Community Options and client with the VR counselor present for input. It outlines the job development, placement, and training strategies that will be used to assist the client to become successfully employed.

JDP Services are outcome/milestone based. This includes placements where Community Options has made arrangements with an employer to have a co-worker as the job coach, and when natural supports are arranged. Payment (Employment Verification Report – 1841) will be made upon reaching certain outcomes and milestones, such as approval of a completed Employment Proposal, Job Placement (initial), Job Retention for 30 days, and Final Job Placement (achievement of successful employment and VR Case Closure “rehabilitated” after 90 days).

Once job placement occurs JDP services should typically last 3-4 months as the job coach fades out and the case is eventually closed successfully rehabilitated. There may be certain, rare circumstances where JDP services need to be in place beyond 3-4 months. In those instances the VR counselor, Community Options and client will meet to revise the Employment Proposal, listing specifics regarding what is needed, who is responsible for what tasks, etc. The VR counselor may authorize up to two additional months of service if needed for the client to stabilize on their job.

Community Options will receive the final payment only after VR is able to confirm that all closure criteria are met and the case can be closed as successfully rehabilitated/employed. If final payment is made and VR is unable to close the case successfully rehabilitated/employed, the provider must refund the full amount of final payment to VR.

Below are the three common parts to the JDP services:

- *Job Development* services are used when the VR counselor determines the individual client's need for third party representation to access employers. It includes direct employer services, outreach, and in-person interactions with employers that leads to job offers, and includes activities of prospecting, labor market analysis, appointments, and identification of employer's priority needs.
- *Job Placement* services are designed for clients who do not need intense preparation to enter the workforce. They have a signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and are job ready, but need assistance to find employment with short-term job coaching once employment is obtained.
- *Job Retention* services are follow-along services provided as direct engagement with the client and/or the employer to assist in maintaining and retaining the job once employment has begun. The job retention time period includes the 90 consecutive days after the job begins and until the client's file is eligible for a case closure as successfully rehabilitated.

JOB LOSS PRIOR TO SUCCESSFUL CLOSURE

If the client loses their job prior to being successfully employed for 90 days, the provider, VR counselor, and VR Regional Administrator will meet to discuss the circumstances surrounding the job loss. Payment for replacement will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors to be considered include the reason for the job loss, if a new Employment Proposal is necessary, did the disability worsen, is there a new disability, etc. Depending on the situation, reimbursement will begin at one of the milestone amounts. To ensure statewide consistency, all situations where job loss occurs and reimbursement will exceed the original milestone payments, the additional payment will be approved by the VR Chief of Field Services. The necessary of continuing this level of approval will be assessed every six months.

PAYMENT FOR TRAVEL TO OUTLYING AREAS

There are some circumstances where the client who is receiving JDP Services lives in and desires to work in a rural community. In those instances where Community Options must travel more than 20 miles one way outside of the metropolitan service area or city limits, whichever area is larger, VR will authorize additional payment to Community Options. Payment will be based on the approved state rate for mileage. The number of required trips will be negotiated between Community Options and VR counselor.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Supported Employment Program (SEP) is intended to provide services that lead to employment for people with the most significant disabilities who have traditionally been excluded from consideration for community employment.

SEP services are intense services to prepare clients to enter the workforce. Intervention may include one on one coaching when employment begins with gradual fading throughout the training. Service is provided as direct engagement with the client and employer to obtain, maintain, and retain employment.

SEP services should not exceed 24 months, unless under special circumstances a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been jointly agreed to by the individual and VR counselor.

Supported employment emphasizes the following:

- People with disabilities are capable of being employed.
- People with disabilities who want to work have the same right to work and earn a living wage as people who do not have a disability.
- Facilitating community employment allows people who have traditionally been excluded from community life the fullest community participation.
- People learn a job best on the job, not in simulated segregated environments.
- Employment options are based upon preferences, skills, and needs of the applicant.
- Jobs may be carved or created to fulfill the specific needs of an employer and the specific skills of the employee.
- Employer/employee consultation and support is provided during job search and after a job has been found for as long as the employer and employee feel it is necessary.

An Employment Proposal (SFN 1840) will be used for students with disabilities who are receiving SEP. **It is optional for all other individuals.** The Employment Proposal is developed by Community Options and the client with the VR counselor present for input. It outlines the job development, placement, and training strategies that will be used to assist the client to become successfully employed.

Community Options ES intervention time is tracked in the database and reported to the VR Counselor on a monthly basis. Clients are considered stabilized in employment if:

- They require 20% or less intervention for a minimum of 2 months before receiving Extended Services.
- They are stabilized at more than 20% intervention but less than 50% intervention for at least 4 months before receiving Extended Services.
- Once the client has reached a point of stabilization, move to “employed status” (the status may be back dated up to 90 days in the case management system).

Clients may be transferred to Extended Services when:

- Prior to transitioning to Extended Services, the team must concur that the percentage

of intervention is at an acceptable level.

- The counselor will notify client and Community Options with projected date to transfer.
- The client must be in “employed status” for a minimum of 120 Days prior to transfer (a minimum of 60 days are paid by VR and a minimum of 60 days are paid by extended Services) before successful VR case closure.

Re-Employment for Individuals in Extended Services

Re-employment will be paid by the Extended Services funding agency at the Extended Service rate. However, supported employment training and stabilization may be used for re-employment if a different disability is involved or the disability becomes more severe, provided that a change in jobs or type of intervention is also required.

TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND EXTENDED EVALUATION

Trial Work Experience (TWE) explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, consistent with their informed choice and includes experiences where appropriate supports and training are provided. When considering the eligibility of an applicant, VR counselors presume that VR services will benefit an applicant with employment. The presumption that the individual can benefit from VR services in terms of employment is not suspended during TWE or Extended Evaluation (EE), it remains the focus. However, there are occasions when the counselor may question if the individual's disability is too significant for them to benefit. This is when trial work experiences or extended evaluation are considered.

TWE and EE are provided to insure that individuals are afforded a fair and equitable determination of eligibility and for participation in VR services. VR counselors must have clear and convincing evidence that the individual cannot benefit due to the severity of the disability in order to determine if someone is too severe for services.

Clear and convincing evidence means that VR shall have a high degree of certainty before it can conclude that an individual is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. Clear and convincing evidence might include a description of assessments, including situational assessments and supported employment assessments, from service providers, Community Options, who have concluded that they would be unable to meet the individual's needs due to the severity of the individual's disability. The demonstration of clear and convincing evidence must include, if appropriate, a functional assessment of skill development activities, with any necessary supports (including assistive technology), in real life settings.

Typically, Trial Work Experiences will be done before determining eligibility, and in those cases require a written trial work plan.

Trial Work Experiences must:

- Be sufficiently varied and over a sufficient period of time (up to 6 months) to determine eligibility or ineligibility.
- Show by clear and convincing evidence that the individual cannot benefit due to the severity of the disability.
- Include support services such as assistive technology, personal assistant, etc. which must be funded by VR at no cost to the client. Maintenance (transportation, clothing, etc.) may be provided as needed.
- Be a minimum of 3 different types of community work experience assessments, each no less than 3 weeks, 4 hours per shift with a 20 hour per week minimum, and at least one week in between assessments.

Under limited circumstances, if an individual cannot take advantage of TWE or if options for TWE have been exhausted and an eligibility determination cannot be made, VR will provide Extended Evaluation services.

Extended Evaluation services must:

- Be identified in a written Extended Evaluation plan.

- Be provided in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the informed choice and rehabilitation needs of the individual.
- Provide only those services that are necessary to determine if there is sufficient evidence to conclude the individual can benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, or there is clear and convincing evidence the individual is incapable of benefiting from VR services due to the severity of the disability.
- Not last longer than 18 months.

SHORT-TERM ON-THE-JOB-SUPPORTS

There may be certain, rare, circumstances where JDP Services are not necessary or appropriate but the individual does require some short-term on-the-job supports. Those on-the-job supports are provided to individuals who have attained employment, yet need short-term support services in order to stabilize their job placement and to enhance job retention. Such services may include job coaching, follow-up and any specific job retention service requested by the VR counselor. Payment for this service is separate from JDP Service.

The VR counselor will consider the required service to address the client's individualized barriers to employment and structure the intervention accordingly. Payment for this service will be consistent with the nature of each client's need for intervention.

On-the-job supports as described above, whether prior to a successful rehabilitation or for post-employment services will only be authorized by the VR counselor.

These services are short-term and paid at an hourly rate.

SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Summer Work Experience (SWE) Program is an opportunity for students to develop soft skills in a real work environment. The most important aspect of work experience is not necessarily the nature of the work, but rather the opportunity to learn work norms and develop good work habits. The job may or may not be in the same interest area as the student's long term goal. The work experience program seeks to build skills to get the student closer to their long term goal.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A student with a disability may be determined eligible for DVR services without having a 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Students should have the opportunity to participate in at least two summer work experiences before exiting school. For students exiting school as a "typical" senior, they should have an opportunity to do a work experience during the summer before their sophomore and junior years. Senior + students (students staying in school until they are 21) should have an opportunity to do a work experience the summer after their senior year, and the summer of their senior + 1 year. Again, at least two work experiences before exiting.

PROVIDING SERVICES

Once VR eligible, students will choose a "Community Rehabilitation Provider" (CRP). Community Options would qualify as the CRP. The CRP may provide up to 15 hours of pre-vocational training during the school year, before SWE begins, if the student so desires. VR counselors and/or CRP will assist students to search for the job, train on the job, and maintain the job throughout the summer. Work must be community based, competitive, integrated, and pay at least minimum wage or above. The CRP will facilitate the pre-vocational training as requested by VR. Along with the regular training provided by the employer, the CRP will support and train the student on-site in the employment setting. This support starts when the student becomes employed and is gradually faded out as the student becomes more independent. The depth of service provided depends upon the level of need.

CASE STATUS

The customer needs to have the current and correct case status at all times to ensure that the customer is accounted for accurately. ES can change a case status tab on the database. ES should fill in all appropriate information to ensure the status is accurate. The correct case status should always be printed on the Employment Plan so the ES may have to update the status prior to printing off the Employment Plan.

The four case statuses used in the VR program are Open-Referral, Open-Regular, On-Hold, and Closed.

ON HOLD

VR may inform an ES that a case be placed on hold. When a VR counselor informs an ES of this status the ES should not work the case as they will not receive payments for the services provided. The ES should maintain contact with VR at minimum monthly during the on hold status to inquire on the status and see when services can be resumed with Community Options.

CLOSING A CASE

An ES cannot close VR services until the referring agency requests it. ES needs to print out all case notes as well as the monthly program hours to file appropriately in the file folder. After making sure all paperwork is printed down and placed in the file folder the case can be closed out under status in the database. After closing out in the database, the file folder can be filed in the closed file cabinets.

Closed case files are place in a manila envelope. The front of the envelope must contain the purged document. The form must include the customer's name, documents, and year. The customer's name must include the full name and also if the customer had name changes during the open period with Community Options. All names should be listed. All documents should be listed in this section that the manila envelope contains. Such documents include: progress notes, narratives, evaluations, employment information, etc. Lastly, place the last year in which service was provided to the customer. If the customer was open with Community Option from 2015 to 2016, the year would be 2016 on the closed case document.

VR Services: Files must be purged when:

- Customer case is closed out of SMI
- VR closes the case and we do not follow that customer into Extended Services
- Customer is deceased
- Prison life sentence

MONTHLY PROGRESS SUMMARY

All VR and Extended Programs have Monthly Progress Summaries (SFN 1101) that need to be filled out. Please ensure the following

- All summaries are completed on or before the due date given.
- If the progress summary asks about “Group Placement” or “Individual Placement”, it is always individual placement. Community Options does not provide group placements.
- When describing progress be detailed. ES need to explain what they observe and use facts to back up opinions. It doesn’t need to be length but it does need to provide a clear picture of what happened during the month, what supports were provided and how the customer is moving forward.