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| Title: | Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Job Readiness Training and Work Adjustment Services |
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| Approved: | Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director  |
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| Supersedes: | N/A |
| History: | N/A |
| Review/ Implementation | Begin Review – 12/4/19 Implement Revisions By – 6/4/20 |

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for the provision of job readiness training and work adjustment services in accordance with appropriate federal (e.g. Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]) and state law (i.e. Ohio Revised Code [ORC], Ohio Administrative Code [OAC]), Governor directives and executive orders, other governing agency (e.g. DAS, OBM) policy or guidance, and/or Executive Director expectations.

Refer to the AWARE Manual for more detailed instructions regarding the management of cases in AWARE.

II. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to all Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Staff and VR Contractors.

III. DEFINITIONS

Refer to “Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions” (80-VR-99.A).

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

1. OOD shall provide information to individuals and if applicable, their parent or legal guardian throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process as required by law (e.g. rights and duties). This information shall be provided, in writing, and when appropriate, in the individual's native language or through an appropriate mode of communication.

2. AWARE shall be updated with pertinent conversations, recommendations, justifications, approvals and/or other actions taken in relation to this procedure.
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall obtain supervisory approval, if required, via use of an “Activity Due” in AWARE.
 - i. If supervisory or management approval is required during the VR process, the supervisor or manager shall document their approval in AWARE.
3. If any OOD Staff are a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC-certified) and will be directly involved with an individual’s case, he/she shall complete the “Professional Disclosure Statement” (80-VR-01.E).
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractors who are not a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) are exempt from this requirement.
 - b. Once completed, the “Professional Disclosure Statement” shall be reviewed and signed by the individual and, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, and the CRC-certified VR Staff or VR Contractor.
 - i. Once signed, the statement shall be scanned into the AWARE Participant Module, as a Case Note, with the category “Professional Disclosure Statement” and summary title “Signed.”
4. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall refer to the use of comparable benefits in “Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases” (40-FIN-01-06) and “Vocational Rehabilitation Assessment Services” (80-VR-11-01) for additional guidance.
5. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall refer to “Vocational Rehabilitation Fee Schedules” (80-VR-10) and the VR Provider Manual for service requirements, rates, definitions and technical guidance when considering Job Readiness Training (JRT) or Work Adjustment (WA) services for an individual.
6. To ensure informed choice, VR Staff or VR Contractor, shall follow the direction “Vocational Rehabilitation Informed Choice” (80-VR-07-01) and discuss the need and duration of JRT or WA services and potential providers with the individual and, if applicable, the parent or legal guardian.
7. When an individual is being paid a vocational training stipend and is a recipient of Social Security benefits (e.g. SSI), VR Staff or VR Contractor shall discuss the possible impact of earnings while participating in JRT and Work Adjustment (WA).
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow the direction of “Work Incentives Planning Services” (80-VR-11-15) for additional information.
8. When a student with a disability is participating in a Summer Youth Career Exploration (SY-CX) and/or a Summer Youth Work Experience (SY-WE), VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow the direction in “Transition Services” (80-VR-11-12).

B. Host Site Development

1. JRT Host Site Development

- a. Site Development on the VR Fee Schedule shall not be utilized to develop a JRT host site.
- b. Prior to the development of a new or additional host site, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall exhaust all available options for occupational skills training, including existing JRT host sites or other local training programs consistent with an individuals' employment goal.
 - i. VR Staff or VR Contractor who are approached by an outside party (e.g. an employer/business, provider, school) interested in developing a new or additional host site for JRT services, shall follow 1.b.
- c. When existing services are not available or appropriate, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall consult with his/her Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor (VRS) or in the case of VR Contractor, a designated local OOD VRS to determine if there is an individual or group need to develop a new host site.
 - i. When it is determined that the need exists for an individual rather than a group, VR Staff of VR Contractor should consider other specific occupational skills training options (e.g.. apprenticeship, industry specific training) and follow direction in "Occupational Skills Training" (80-VR-11-10).
 - ii. When it is determined that there is a group need for a new JRT, the OOD VRS shall consult with his/her Area Manager for approval to move forward with developing a new JRT host site.
- d. Once approved, a local JRT team shall be assembled.
 - i. For school based JRT, the Supported Employment and Transition Unit Supervisor shall coordinate with the Ohio Department of Education representative to assemble a local team to review the new request and assist in the implementation of school based JRT services.
 - ii. For non-school based JRT, a designated OOD VRS shall assemble a local team to review the new request and assist in the implementation of JRT.
- e. The JRT local team shall include, at a minimum, the persons listed below.
 - i. OOD Area Manager (AM).
 - ii. Business Relations Specialist (BRS).
 - iii. VRS.
 - iv. Assigned VR Counselor.
 - v. Host Business Liaison.
 - vi. A Provider who is mutually agreeable to OOD and the host business.

- vii. Assigned Rehabilitation Program Specialist (RPS) from OOD's Provider and Contracts Management Unit, if applicable.
- viii. Additionally, school based teams should also include, if applicable:
 - a) OOD Supported Employment and Transition Unit Supervisor;
 - b) County Board of Developmental Disability (CBDD) representative; and
 - c) Ohio Department of Education (ODE) representative.
- f. When determining the need to develop a new host site for JRT, the local team should consider, at a minimum, the variables below.
 - i. The need for services, including:
 - a) existence of other programs that provide similar JRT services in the area which may include occupational training programs;
 - b) whether there is an unmet need in the area for a new or additional host site for JRT services; and
 - c) the potential number of individuals in the area who have an identified need for JRT.
 - ii. Appropriateness of an identified potential host business for JRT services including whether:
 - a) the identified potential host business has both the capacity and diversity of complex repetitive work tasks to accommodate multiple rotations that include different employment opportunities;
 - b) competitive integrated employment opportunities with the host business site are in alignment with the employment goals of the individuals and in-demand jobs in the area; and
 - c) JRT is the most effective way to meet the training needs for an individual's skill gain while also meeting the potential host businesses' current and future hiring needs.
- g. If the local team determines the new host site for a proposed JRT to be viable and appropriate, the team will start planning for implementation.
 - i. Curriculum Development and Implementation of a School Based JRT
 - a) Planning for school based JRT services should begin no later than September of the year prior to the upcoming school year for implementation the following school year.
 - b) The school based JRT local team shall review and approve the curriculum.

1) If the JRT service is for Project SEARCH, the Supported Employment and Transition Unit Supervisor, in collaboration with ODE, will consult with Project SEARCH National to obtain information regarding the licensing process and training requirements.

ii. Curriculum Development and Implementation of a Non-School Based JRT

a) The non-school based JRT local team shall review and approve the proposed curriculum prior to implementation.

2. WA Host Site Development

a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall explore established WA host sites that are accessible and available to the individual prior to authorizing for Site Development from the VR Fee Schedule.

i. If it is determined that Site Development is needed, VR Staff or VR Contractor may authorize for this services.

C. Job Readiness Training (JRT)

1. JRT should be designed to address employment barriers and include several short-term rotations within a business.

2. The training is provided as a group service, to teach transferrable job skills as well as soft skills (if needed).

a. JRT shall not be utilized as an assessment.

3. While the training has a curriculum that should designate a specific duration, the actual length of the training shall be based upon the individual's progress.

4. VR Staff or VR Contractors shall ensure providers understand that they are expected to remain onsite and provide direct instruction and observation for the full duration of the service.

5. The training should support the employment goal identified on the IPE.

a. For transition youth with an employment goal of "Vocational Exploration of [Name of Employment Goal]" the school based JRT selected should align with the students specific areas of interest.

6. Types of JRT

a. School Based JRT

i. School based JRT is for students eligible for VR services who are enrolled in a secondary school and are not expected to be job ready at graduation.

- a) When a student with a disability (hereafter referred to as a student) has participated in a summer work experience or another Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS), VR Staff or VR Contractor may use the student's performance during the most recent service to determine if the student will be job ready prior to graduation.
 - ii. A student may participate in a school based JRT during his/her last year of high school eligibility.
 - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall work with the locally assigned transition services team to select students who are appropriate for school based JRT.
 - b) VR Staff or VR Contractors shall ensure that the student and, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian understands that the work experience may be unpaid.
 - iii. In situations where school based JRT services are not accessible or do not meet the student's needs, VR Staff or VR Contractor may consider non-school based JRT.
 - a) Prior to using a non-school based JRT for a student, VR Staff or VR Contractor should discuss its appropriateness with his/her VRS.
 - b) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall document the student's decision regarding the use of a non-school based JRT service in an AWARE Case Note.
 - iv. School Based JRT Meeting Requirements
 - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall participate, at a minimum, in monthly meetings (in person, if possible), with the provider and the student and if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, to:
 - 1) review progress;
 - 2) discuss the current and/or upcoming JRT rotations; and
 - 3) explore the need for job development when nearing the end of the JRT if a job opportunity is not available.
- b. Non-School Based JRT
- i. Non-school based JRT services are for individuals who are eligible for VR services and are no longer enrolled in a secondary school. These are individuals who typically have:
 - a) never worked and need to develop work skills in order to become job ready; or
 - b) an established work history but may have been out of the workforce for a significant period of time and needs to develop or update work skills to become job ready.

ii. Non-School Based JRT Meeting Requirements

- a) VR Staff or VR Contractor should participate in meetings (in person, if possible), every two (2) weeks with the provider and the individual to discuss the need for non-school based JRT and items listed in Section B.6.a.iv.
 - 1) When an individual is not job ready after two (2) months of non-school based JRT, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall discuss the following:
 - 1.1 specific barriers that still exist;
 - 1.2 techniques being used to mitigate barriers; and
 - 1.3 revised goals, if determined necessary.
 - 2) If at any time during the biweekly meetings it is determined that an extension of non-school based JRT is necessary, beyond two (2) months, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall document the discussion justifying the extension in an AWARE Case Note .
- b) Supervisor approval for an extension of JRT shall be documented in AWARE, and is required, at a minimum, every month after the initial extension of the service.

7. JRT Outcomes

- a. The JRT host business has an expectation to hire individuals that may be a good fit for the specific job skills learned, if a position is available.
 - i. When it becomes evident that the individual is not going to be hired at the JRT host business, VR Staff or VR Contractors may refer the individual to job development services (e.g. performance-based job development).
 - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor may authorize On-The-Job Support (OJS) services to facilitate the transition from JRT services to employment when hired at the host site.
 - b) VR Staff or VR Contractor should consider how the skills learned through JRT will be utilized when identifying other employment opportunities with employers offering the same or substantially equivalent occupations requiring similar training and skills.
- b. When an individual in a JRT is not able to make progress toward job readiness, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall meet with the provider, the individual, and if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian to discuss:
 - i. documented evidence that the individual is not able to make progress;
 - ii. what barriers still exist;
 - iii. what interventions were used but did not work; and

- iv. what needs to be accomplished by the individual to prepare for competitive integrated employment at a later time.
- c. When an individual is not job ready, other service options may be considered, if appropriate.

8. JRT Quarterly Monitoring

- a. VR Staff or VR Contractor, shall follow the direction of “Vocational Rehabilitation Provider Management Procedure” (80-VR-09-01) regarding the monitoring of JRT in addition to direction provided in this procedure.
- b. Each JRT host site shall be assigned a designated local OOD VRS.
- c. The designated local VRS shall schedule meetings, at least quarterly, with the JRT locally assigned transition services team referenced in Section B.6.a.ii.a
 - i. The VRS should facilitate discussion on:
 - a) the host business’ performance;
 - b) the availability of JRT rotations; and
 - c) any additional concerns.

D. Work Adjustment (WA) Services

- 1. WA services are designed to be individualized and focus on specific work skills, work habits, and retention skills, rather than specific occupational skills that an individual would typically learn through JRT.
 - a. WA services are not intended to directly pertain to an individual’s specific employment goal, to get an individual hired, or to create a work history.
- 2. WA services:
 - a. shall not be utilized as an assessment;
 - b. are intended as a short-term service and should not be extended for the purpose of learning specific job skills although the services may be adjusted based on the individual’s progress;
 - c. are not provided under an established curriculum; and
 - d. may be provided as an individual or group service in a competitive integrated employment setting.
 - i. When it is not feasible to provide WA service in a competitive integrated environment due to disability related reasons, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall document the reason(s) in an AWARE Case Note.

3. WA services may address the following:

- a. appropriateness of work behaviors (e.g. appropriateness of dress/hygiene);
- b. ability to accept supervision (e.g. ability to accept a request to change jobs/tasks);
- c. ability to work with others (e.g. ability to work as a team, appropriateness of work conversations);
- d. ability to work independently (e.g. ability to safely work in an environment);
- e. ability to ask for assistance when needed;
- f. issues with stamina;
- g. ability to follow verbal and written instructions;
- h. ability to learn new tasks;
- i. ability to complete work tasks (e.g. ability to move between tasks independently, ask for additional tasks, multi-task, complete work tasks regardless of interest in task); and
- j. punctuality and attendance (e.g. being on time, not calling off frequently).

4. WA Meeting Requirements

- a. VR Staff or VR Contractor should participate in meetings (in person, if possible) every two (2) weeks.
 - i. When the individual is not job ready after four (4) weeks of WA, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall conduct an in-person meeting with the individual, and the provider, to discuss the individual's progress and next step(s).
 - a) After four (4) weeks of WA, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ensure that the provider submits an updated service plan, if determined necessary, prior to providing up to an additional two (2) weeks, of WA.
 - 1) The updated service plan should document specific barriers that still exist, techniques used to mitigate barriers, and timelines to achieve agreed upon goals.
 - ii. When the individual is not job ready after six (6) weeks of WA, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall complete the following steps every two (2) weeks.
 - a) Conduct an in-person meeting with the individual, and the provider, to discuss the individual's progress and to identify specific barriers that still exist and how different strategies or techniques will be used to mitigate the barriers.
 - b) Provide a justification for the additional two (2) weeks of WA in AWARE; and,
 - c) Obtain supervisory approval which must be documented in AWARE by the VRS.

5. WA Outcomes

- a. When an individual has reached his/her goals and/or is considered job ready, VR Staff or VR Contractor may refer the individual to job development services (e.g. performance-based job development).
 - i. Employers are not expected to hire an individual at the conclusion of WA.
 - a) When an employer hires an individual as a result of participation in WA services, VR Staff or VR Contractors may authorize OJS services to facilitate the transition from WA services to employment.
 - b) If a job offer is extended, as a result in participating in WA services, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ensure that the opportunity is consistent with the employment goal listed on the IPE.
- b. When an individual is no longer making progress toward job readiness, other service options may be considered, if appropriate.

E. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development

1. In addition to direction provided below, when developing and/or amending the IPE, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow guidance and direction in "Individualized Plan for Employment" (80-VR-08 and 80-VR-08-01).
2. JRT or WA services must be determined necessary to achieve the employment goal and be included on the IPE prior to authorizing for these services.
 - a. When a student is participating in a school based JRT, it shall be documented on the IPE regardless of the funding source.
 - i. When a comparable benefit is covering the cost for the school based JRT, the services shall be documented on the IPE, VR Staff or VR Contractor are exempt from adhering to the meeting and monitoring requirements within Section C.6.b.ii. of this procedure.
3. VR Staff or VR Contractor should not include both JRT and WA services on an IPE.
 - a. When it is determined that either service is needed subsequent to other, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide justification in an AWARE Case Note and obtain supervisory approval prior to amending the IPE to include the additional service.

F. Authorizing for Services

1. In addition to the direction provided below, refer to "VR Purchases" (40-FIN-01-06) for direction on creating and approving authorizations for JRT or WA services.
2. JRT or WA services shall not be authorized until the provider has supplied the following information:
 - a. location of work site/host business; and
 - b. days and times for service provision.

3. Authorizing for JRT

- a. Authorizations shall be created as detailed below.
 - i. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall authorize for JRT in monthly increments, occurring from beginning to the end of a calendar month (e.g. January 1 through January 31), with adjustments as needed (e.g. January 12 through January 31).
 - a) In the case of School based JRT, VR Staff or VR Contractor may authorize up to three (3) monthly increments on one (1) authorization.
 - b) In the case of Non-school based JRT, VR Staff or VR Contractor may only authorize one (1) month at a time per authorization.

4. Authorizing form WA Services

- a. VR Staff or VR Contractor may authorize WA services in two (2) week increments.
 - i. Within two weeks of the start of WA services, VR Staff or VR Contract must ensure that the provider completes an assessment with objectives and submits a measurable service plan including the following:
 - a) training goals and benchmarks;
 - b) outline of training techniques;
 - c) an established timeframe for adjustment of behaviors; and
 - d) list of steps and associated timeframes to transition the individual into a competitive integrated work setting, if applicable
 - ii. If the service plan is not submitted within a two (2) week timeframe, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall not authorize for additional WA services until the plan is submitted.

G. Referral for Services

- 1. In addition to direction provided below, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow direction in “Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Information and Referral” (80-VR-11-07) when completing a “Referral to Community Rehabilitation Program” (80-VR-11-07.A).
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall use the “Referral to Community Rehabilitation Program” for JRT and WA services, including the site development for a WA services site, in order to identify and document the items below.
 - i. Specific vocational barriers, including but not limited to, those listed in Section D.3.a.
 - j.
 - a) While JRT focuses primarily on job skills, VR Staff or VR Contractor may also include behavioral barriers which need addressed, if necessary.
 - ii. Any accommodations that may be needed to participate in services.

iii. Whether half or full day services are needed.

H. Violation

An employee who violates this procedure may be subject to discipline up to and including removal.

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- N/A

RESOURCES

- Professional Disclosure Statement 80-VR-01.E
- Vocational Rehabilitation Informed Choice 80-VR-07-01
- IPE 80-VR-08 and 80-VR-08-01
- Vocational Rehabilitation Fee Schedules 80-VR-10
- Vocational Rehabilitation Assessment Services 80-VR-11-01
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Information and Referral 80-VR-11-07
- Referral to Community Rehabilitation Program 80-VR-11-07.A
- Occupational Skills Training 80-VR-11-10
- Transition Services 80-VR-11-12
- Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions 80-VR-99.A
- Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases 40-FIN-01-06

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to review this procedure, on or before, the date listed in the header and if applicable, make any necessary revisions. The Deputy Director, or designee, shall document the review as required in "Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Dissemination and Acknowledgement" (10-ADM-01).