

Job Developers and Job Coaches in the Workplace Learner's Guide

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Overview

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) supports employers in creating workplaces that are diverse and inclusive of employees with disabilities. The Job Developers and Job Coaches in the Workplace training is designed to provide employers with an understanding of the resources available to assist an employee with a disability in finding and retaining employment as well as provide support for the business. This learner's guide identifies best practices and strategies for using job developers and job coaches in the workplace. **The information included is for educational purposes, is not an exhaustive list, and is not intended as legal advice. Employers should follow the health and safety guidelines which apply to them, including those specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, when integrating ideas and accommodations into the workplace.**

Finding OOD Services

There are several different ways an employee with a disability can access OOD services. Employers can reach out directly to the Business Relations Specialists for assistance in getting an employee with a disability connected to OOD services. OOD also has an online self-service portal called OODWorks.com that can walk an individual with a disability through the application process. The portal contains information about what OOD services are and includes a short self-assessment to help the person determine if these services might be helpful. The person can apply for services through the portal and an OOD staff person will reach out to schedule an appointment. Another option is for an individual to call 1-800-282-4536 and request information about OOD services.

OOD Process

Each person who applies for OOD services goes through a process to determine if they are eligible to receive services. The Vocational Rehabilitation process includes:

- Determining if an individual is eligible. To be eligible, the person must have a disability and that disability is causing a barrier for them to get or keep a job.
- Selecting an appropriate job goal based on their skills and abilities.
- Determining the services needed to achieve that goal – and these services are individualized for each person based on their job goal and their needs.
- Providing necessary services, which can include training or other services to prepare that person for employment. These services are generally provided by community partners and other service providers.

OOD Services

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) within OOD provides individuals with disabilities services and supports necessary to help them attain and maintain employment. Disabilities may include physical, intellectual, mental health, or sensory disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are customized for each individual through assessments and one-on-one meetings with professional VR Counselors. There are many different VR services available and some of the most common types include:

- Assessment,
- Job Seeking Skills Training,
- Job Development, and
- Job Coaching.

OOD Business Relations Specialists

OOD's Business Relations team provides a number of no-cost services to employers to assist them in building and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce, including:

- sourcing of qualified candidates with disabilities,
- providing no-cost disability etiquette and awareness training for employers which can help them create a diverse and inclusive culture,
- providing consultations for employers to help them understand how to make their worksite more accessible,
- increasing worker retention by assisting employers to help connect employees with disabilities to OOD vocational rehabilitation services, and
- providing resources and information about ADA and tax incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Job Developer Role

The role of the Job Developer is to help guide the candidate through the preparation and job search phases. This involves:

- getting to know the candidate and their interests and skills,
- educating the candidate about the positions available in the local labor market and the qualifications needed for those positions,
- helping the candidate develop career seeking skills, including searching for jobs, resume writing and interviewing, and
- matching the skills and interests of the candidate with employers looking to hire qualified candidates.

Knowing the Job Seeker

As previously mentioned, the Job Developer has two customers, the employer and the job seeker. Just as the Job Developer needs to gain a thorough understanding of the employer, they also need to understand the job seeker's skills, interests, positive characteristics, preferences, potential needs, and available supports. The Job Developer creates a Job Seeker profile to help the job seeker develop a brand and be used to best match the job seeker with potential employers.

Directing the Job Search

While every job seeker and job development plan is unique, there are common activities included in an efficient job searching process. This begins with helping the job seeker develop an employment goal and then define the activities needed to reach that goal. This can include developing an application template, creating a resume, providing interview preparation and mock interviews, developing a business target list, setting application goals, and scheduling informational interviews with employers. In

addition, it may include identifying specific barriers to employment and developing plans to overcome these barriers. Barriers may include transportation and benefits issues. Methods to remove barriers may include providing reasonable accommodations, such as assistive technology, and any needed jobsite supports.

Job Developer Best Practices During COVID-19

There are several factors a Job Developer needs to consider while assisting employers and job seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic. First among these is ensuring all services are conducted in a safe manner. Most meetings between the employer and Job Developer can be conducted over the phone or through a video call. The informational interview and tour of the job site can be conducted virtually.

Technology can offer innovative ways for Job Developers to reach job seekers and employers. For example, it is a great idea to conduct interview preparation and mock interviews virtually. This is particularly important as many employers are conducting interviews virtually during the COVID 19 pandemic. Job Developers can help job seekers explore different occupations virtually through the Department of Labor's video library. This library includes hundreds of different types of career videos organized into 16 career clusters giving the job seeker a sense of many different career options. There are Skills and Ability videos to help a job seeker understand the skills required for different positions. Also, there are Work Option videos to help a job seeker understand the skills required for non-traditional careers.

There may be times when it is appropriate to visit the employer onsite. When that is best, provide the Job Developer with the same safety guidelines used with all visitors.

Job Coaching Role

Job Coaching traditionally utilizes a set of instructional strategies for training employees with disabilities in the workplace. These instructional strategies are most effective and less likely to isolate the employee from co-workers and supervisors when the employer leads their development. Job Coaching supports should be provided through the least intrusive method possible. This takes an understanding of the employee's support needs, the employer's support needs, and the demands of the workplace.

Instructional Strategies:

- Job Duty and Task Analysis
- Developing Natural Supports
- Natural Cues
- Compensatory Strategies
- Prompting procedures
- Reinforcers
- Self-management procedures
- Fading
- Long Term Supports

Job Duty Analysis and Task Analysis

To effectively coach and train the employee with a disability in the workplace, the Job Coach needs to have a thorough understanding of the position. This is achieved by completing a job duty and task analysis, which involves a collaborative process between the Job Coach, employer, and employee. These analyses include identifying the areas in which various job tasks are performed, determining the essential and non-essential job functions, establishing a work routine, identifying natural supports and natural cues in the workplace, and designing appropriate training and support strategies.

The job duty analysis starts with identifying the job's major duties, the estimated time required to complete each task, and the sequence in which duties are performed. Next, this information is used to analyze the skills required to perform each major duty. The Job Coach may interview the employee, co-workers, or supervisors to identify the skills, tools and equipment needed. This helps the Job Coach consider how the task can be organized or modified specific to the needs of the employee with a disability.

The task analysis enables a Job Coach to establish a baseline for each task to measure qualitative and quantitative performance gains and identify areas that need to be addressed. After the Job Coach has identified the major job duties, skills associated with each duty, and needed supplies and tools, they can develop a written task analysis for each skill. Each step in the task analysis is stated in terms of an observable behavior. The Job Coach may build into the task analysis natural cues and compensatory strategies.

Developing a job duty analysis and a task analysis of each skill serves as the foundation for job-site training. Once this is accomplished, the employee with a disability and Job Coach can determine which skills the employee knows how to perform, and which will require further instruction. In addition, this analysis will afford the Job Coach the opportunity to analyze the worksite and identify the natural cues and supports that are available to the employee.

Natural Supports

All employees use natural supports to achieve success at work. Helping an employee with a disability gain support of co-workers can be the difference between their success and failure. Natural supports may include: a co-worker mentor who assists an employee in learning the job, a supervisor who monitors work performance, a co-worker who assists the employee in developing social relationships, orientation training or other company-sponsored training events, an employee assistance program, and other strategies. Again, these are natural supports all employees utilize to be successful at work. The role of the Job Coach is to help identify these supports and then work with the employee with a disability to determine which supports are effective and develop a plan to facilitate support.

Often, facilitation of natural supports is achieved through modeling appropriate social interactions. Training co-workers and supervisors on proper techniques can enable them to become proficient in assisting the employee with a disability. One example includes directing co-workers and supervisors to ask questions directly to the employee with a disability instead of the Job Coach. Here are some examples of areas a Job Coach might consider when identifying and selecting natural supports:

- What are the possible workplace support resources?
- Which strategies match the learning style and needs of the employee with a disability?

- What is the employee's, employer's and co-worker's preferences in supports?
- Which support options result in or promote the employee's independence?

Initially, identifying and discussing the various support options with the employee with a disability, employer, and co-workers is the Job Coach's role during job-site training. Gradually, co-workers and supervisors can assume this responsibility as the Job Coach transfers his/her support to the resources naturally occurring in the workplace. In most instances, a combination of strategies will be selected to promote the employee's success. In addition to natural supports, a combination of these supports may also be beneficial: natural cues, compensatory strategies, prompting and reinforcers, self-management procedures, fading, and long-term supports.

Natural Cues

Have you ever been walking through a grocery store and heard an announcement over the loudspeaker for employees to check the hot and cold product temperatures in the deli section? This is an example of a natural cue. A natural cue represents some feature of the work environment, job tasks, or activities which signals to an employee what to do next. Typically, a natural cue is one that the employee can see, hear, touch/feel, or smell and has not been changed or added to the worksite by the Job Coach. Examples may include the color of a cleaning supply, an on/off indicator light, a buzzer on the service door, the telephone ringing, or an announcement over a loudspeaker. The role of a Job Coach is to assist the employee with a disability in identifying and reacting to natural cues appropriately.

Compensatory Strategies

A compensatory strategy is a change in the environment or the employee's behavior to enable the employee to accomplish a task in another way due to a limitation related to the disability. For example, some compensatory strategies for an employee with a cognitive disability might include memory aids, additional time to complete tasks, verbal rehearsals, checklists, and location markers. Adding compensatory strategies to job-site training can enhance an employee's ability to learn and perform work tasks independently. In some instances, using a compensatory strategy can eliminate instruction and enable the employee to perform activities they otherwise could not. Compensatory strategies must be designed with input from the employee with a disability, employer, and co-workers. In addition, care should be given to the design and construction of materials to ensure they do not stigmatize the employee. Materials should be accessible for all employees in the work environment and be accepted by the work culture where they are used.

Prompting & Reinforcers

When an employee is unsure of the next step in a task, and a Job Coach provides direction, that is known as prompting. Types of prompting can include verbal prompts, gestures, modeling, and partial physical assistance. The best practice is to provide prompting in the least intrusive manner possible for task completion. For example, a verbal prompt to provide direction to the employee may be all that is needed and moving on to more intrusive prompts can be avoided. Reinforcers are the positive effects resulting from successful task performance and are most effective when they occur naturally. Examples of reinforcers include co-worker praise, supervisor approval, positive written supervisor evaluations, pay raises or bonuses, and so forth. In some instances, a naturally occurring reinforcer will not happen with enough frequency for the employee to understand the relationship between the reinforcer and the work task. A Job Coach may use a more tangible reinforcer and then gradually fade the reinforcer as the

naturally occurring ones become meaningful. For example, a vending machine located in the cafeteria may be used to reinforce with the employee where he or she can get a snack on a break.

Self-Management Procedures

Self-management usually entails instructing the employee to independently self-monitor by using natural cues, external cues and prompts, compensatory strategies, assistive technology devices, and so forth. This instruction can be provided by the Job Coach, co-workers, or the supervisor depending on the situation. For example, a co-worker may instruct the employee in using a timer to monitor production while the Job Coach may assist the employee in developing a self-reinforcement strategy to use when they meet a production standard.

Fading

When instructional strategies are implemented effectively, the need for a Job Coach is gradually reduced. Determining the appropriate rate of fading is a collaborative process between the employee, Job Coach, and employer and will vary from one employee to another. The goal of a Job Coach is always to provide services in the least intrusive manner possible and fade as quickly as is appropriate to foster the employee's independence and self-reliance. A Job Coach will develop a plan which includes fading and allows for changes to be made as needed to ensure proper support is provided.

Long Term Supports

Long Term Supports occur after the Job Coach has faded from the worksite. The nature and amount of support needed will vary from employee to employee and employer to employer. Factors that influence both the level and the type of supports that are ultimately used by an employee with a disability are related to employment satisfaction, expanding job duties, and career development. Job Coaches are often brought back to a worksite to facilitate job changes, train on new skills, or for crisis intervention. OOD has the dual mission of assisting Ohioans with disabilities gain and retain employment which allows for flexibility in supporting employers and employees with disabilities.

Job Coach as a Reasonable Accommodation

Job Coaches are a common type of reasonable accommodation to enable an employee with a disability to be successful at work. Job coaches specialize in assisting employees with disabilities to learn and accurately perform job duties. Job coaches provide one-on-one training tailored to the needs of the employee. The process begins with the job coach completing a job analysis to identify work tasks. Next, the job coach works collaboratively with the employer to customize a plan to train the employee to work independently and perform work tasks effectively.

Benefits to the Business:

The process of recruiting, training, and retaining a new employee is both a commitment of time and expense for employers. Job coaching can support the success of these efforts by enabling the employee with a disability to become a successful member of your team. Here are some examples of the benefits of using a job coach:

- Assist with training according to employer standards,
- Identify cost-effective assistive technology, and

- Analyze job site and job tasks to identify supports.

Here are some examples of Job Coaching Situations:

A food service worker with an anxiety disorder works in the kitchen of a restaurant preparing food and cleaning.

The employee can perform all of the job's essential functions, but she tends to talk to her co-workers incessantly about her personal issues to the point that other employees complain to management. A manager talks with the employee about her conduct and explains it is interfering with work and making coworkers uncomfortable. The employee is a client of a mental health agency and offers to talk with her service coordinator about getting a job coach. The job coach teaches the employee how to talk with coworkers about impersonal topics (like the weather) and how to focus conversations on work tasks she and coworkers are performing. The job coach then helps the employee apply the new skills directly on the job and is able to fade out direct involvement after a couple of months.

A janitor at a furniture factory has a cognitive disability.

The employee's primary essential function is to sweep away the ever-accumulating sawdust, which he does very well. However, once he has performed a complete sweep of the floor, he has difficulty determining when it needs to be done again. This results in the sawdust becoming a barrier to other workers' mobility. The employee is a client of state vocational rehabilitation (VR) and his vocational rehabilitation counselor arranges for a job coach to help address the problem. After monitoring the employee's work and helping him learn to discriminate between a clean floor and one that is ready to be swept again, the job coach is able to fade out his direct involvement, but remains available to support the employee as needed.

A coffee shop cashier with low vision has difficulty viewing the cash register when it is changed to a new computer-based point of sale system.

A magnification software called ZoomText was installed on the new system. The job coach returned to the workplace to help the employee learn how to use the software. The job coach worked with the employee for about a week and then the employee was able to independently operate the new point of sale system.

Job Coach Best Practices During COVID-19

Traditionally, job coaching is provided onsite in the work environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, onsite job coaching may be minimized but still necessary. Here are some tips to consider when onsite services are needed:

- Assess whether a job coach is permitted onsite at this time. In some instances, a job coach may be considered an essential worker.
- Provide the job coach with the onsite guidelines being followed for COVID-19, personal protective equipment (PPE), and social distancing.
- Encourage the job coach to provide the support that is needed onsite while assisting the employee with a disability to implement self-management strategies.
- Encourage the job coach to instruct the employee on how to work with the job coach remotely through the use of technology, services, and applications when appropriate.

There are times when providing job coaching services onsite may not be preferred or possible. An employee with a disability may not wish to have an onsite job coach, for example, because they do not want to draw attention from fellow coworkers or be the subject of a stigmatizing belief of coworkers. At times, an employer may not be able to accommodate onsite job coaching services due to security reasons. Certainly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, onsite job coaching may be difficult to accommodate due to social distancing guidelines. When these situations occur, and onsite job coaching is not ideal, remote job coaching may be a good solution.

Remote Job Coaching

Through the creative use of technology, remote job coaching services offer new ways to provide the same support. Here are some examples which illustrate the possibilities for remote services:

- Use applications on smart devices to support task completion by programming To-Do lists, setting reminder alerts, and identifying a sequence of steps in a process.
- Use a video camera and microphone to model new job tasks, observe task demonstration, and communicate feedback.
- Use voice calls, video calls, and text messaging for the employee to communicate with the job coach for assistance with problem solving any unexpected situations that arise at work.

Regardless of the method, the goal of job coaching remains the same, to enable the employee to independently perform the job as quickly as possible. Remote job coaching gives employers an innovative way to meet their hiring and onboarding needs.

Conclusion

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) appreciates your interest in identifying solutions and resources to support a workplace that is diverse and inclusive of employees with disabilities. Each employee with a disability, each employer, and each workplace is unique and because of this, the effective strategy to create a work environment that is accessible and inclusive is unique. We hope the information shared in this learner's guide and virtual training are helpful in supporting your efforts.

Resources

Job Supports

- APSE Employment First During COVID-19 "[COVID-19 & Employment First](#)"
- Careeronestop, U.S. Department of Labor "[Career Videos](#)"
- Great Plains ADA Center. "[Job Coaching](#)"
- Institute for Community Inclusion "[COVID-19 Publications and Resources](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Accommodation and Compliance: Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Accommodation and Compliance Series: Job Coaches](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Accommodation Strategies For Returning To Work During The Covid-19 Pandemic](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Job Coaches](#)"
- Job Accommodation Network. "[Job Coaches and Support People for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities](#)"

- Job Accommodation Network. "<https://askjan.org/articles/When-Support-Persons-Hamper-the-Process-They-were-Brought-in-to-Facilitate.cfm>"
- MRDC "[Adapting Employment Coaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Employers](#)"
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. "[Services](#)"
- Ohio Employment First "[Task Analysis for Job Coaches](#)"
- The Arc, Supported Employment During COVID-19 "[Resources for Virtual Employment Supports](#)"
- University of North Texas "[Compensatory Strategies](#)"

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BUSINESS RELATIONS SERVICES MAP

