

Provision of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) - Supported Employment By an Employment Service Organization (ESO)

This Appendix defines general expectations applicable to the provision of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment Services by an Employment Service Organization (ESO) to eligible appropriate individuals funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

I. Service Description

IPS is an evidence-based model of Supported Employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities (Category 1) with a primary diagnosis of serious mental illness or substance use disorders. IPS helps people living with behavioral health conditions work in regular jobs of their choosing. IPS services are provided in a working alliance with mental health services and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) focusing on the individual's strengths and is based on the philosophy that work is treatment and leads to improved recovery outcomes. IPS is based on a 25-item fidelity scale and the following practice principles:

- A. Eligibility Based on Individual Choice (Zero Exclusion): Anyone who wants to work can participate in the program, and job seekers are not excluded based on diagnosis, symptoms, or history.
- B. Focus on Competitive Employment: The employment specialist helps job seekers look for competitive integrated employment.
- C. Attention to Individual Preferences: Services are based on the job seeker's preferences and choices.
- D. Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services: Services are integrated with mental health treatment teams to provide job seekers with collaborative, professional support.
- E. Rapid Job Search: Employment specialists help job seekers apply for employment quickly, rather than providing lengthy assessments or counseling.
- F. Systematic Job Development: Employment specialists develop an employer network and relationships based on job seekers' interests.
- G. Personalized Benefits Counseling: Professional counselors provide job seekers with information about how employment may affect their government benefits.
- H. Time-Unlimited and Individualized Support: Job seekers get personalized support after obtaining employment.

II. Scope of Services

- A. The Provider shall provide the following services to eligible individuals in accordance with IPS Fidelity Standards. Additional information regarding these services can be found in DARS Services Descriptions. Specific reporting requirements are noted in the Reporting and Billing section of this Appendix.

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1. **Career Profile:** The purpose of the Career Profile is to engage with the participant, develop a trusting relationship with the participant, and to gather relevant information to assist in identifying employment goals and individualizing the IPS service delivery. The Career Profile is a “living” document intended to assist in meeting the employment and support needs of the participant. Development of the Career Profile should begin as soon as possible once a participant identifies an interest in employment and has been referred for IPS Services. The Career Profile is to be completed by the IPS employment specialist over the course of multiple meetings. Sources of information include: the person, the mental health treatment team, client records, and with permission, family members and previous employers.

The information collected should be used in assisting in a job search, provide insight into employment or educational goals and determine how supports may be planned and provided once the participant obtains employment. It should contain detailed information and reflect the choices, including disclosure of disability, preferences, and interests of the participant. Using this information, the service provider should develop an action plan for job development honoring the stated preferences of the participant.

2. **IPS Job Development:** Job Development in IPS uses a systematic approach to assist the participant to achieve the highest wages possible and find the best job match given the participant's strengths, abilities, capabilities, informed choice, concerns, priorities, interests, and resources. IPS Employment Specialists help individuals seek jobs directly, and do not provide extensive pre-employment assessment and training, or intermediate work experiences. The job process begins early, within 30 days of starting IPS services. This rapid job search is supported by IPS Employment Specialist developing relationships with employers through multiple face-to-face meetings. Employment Specialists take time to learn about the employers’ needs and the work environment while gathering information about job opportunities that might be a good fit for individuals they are working with.
3. **Career Stabilization and Maintenance:** These supports are planned for early in the employment process, are personalized, and follow the individual for as long as they need and want support. The focus is supporting the individual in becoming as independent as possible, and seeking to involve family members, co-workers, and other natural supports. These supports can be provided on the job site or off site and focus on the continued acquisition and development of skills needed to maintain employment (i.e. - addressing absences, personal leave, dealing with crises, conflict resolution skills, budgeting skills, financial literacy, and asset development.) The time frame for the provision of supported employment services is no longer than 24 months, unless, under special circumstances,

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the eligible individual and the VR Counselor agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome as identified in the IPE.

- 4. Extended Services:** The definition of “extended services” according to CFR 361.5 (b)(20) “means [long-term follow-along] services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment and that are provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part and 34 CFR part 363 after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the designated State unit.”

The purpose of extended services is to provide ongoing support services that are necessary to help an individual maintain a job or to restore stability as necessary after DARS case closure. Ongoing meetings with the individual and monthly contact with the employer are required for routine support, to monitor the individual’s work performance and adjustment, and to determine at the earliest time when destabilization appears to be occurring. The type and frequency of contact must be provided on a sufficient basis based on participant need, to ensure that the participant is maintained in employment.

The Provider shall work with the DARS counselor to arrange and/or provide ongoing and extended support services following the portion of supported employment time limited services sponsored by DARS.

Ongoing planning and collaboration with the individual, VRC and IPS Team is essential in ensuring thorough and individualized supports are provided. The team will work with the individual to identify potential extended support services that may be needed prior to obtaining a job and again once a job is obtained.

People are exited off the IPS team when they like their jobs and no longer feel that they need IPS services. Most people receive job supports from an IPS specialist for about a year; however, some individuals may need support from the IPS team less than a year and some may need more than a year. Some individuals will receive extended services through LTESS funding, some may utilize Waiver funding, some may receive follow along from other services and supports including the mental health treatment team, a family member, employer, etc.

If LTESS funding is utilized for Extended Services, the LTESS case can be closed once it is determined the individual no longer needs support and has been transitioned to step-down supports. LTESS funding requires the provider be approved to receive an allocation from LTESS and has agreed to the requirements noted in the DARS vendor agreement appendix E.

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- B. Effective planning and collaboration with mental health and VR is imperative in the provision of IPS Services. Frequent contact with mental health treatment teams and VR Counselors helps practitioners work as a team to assist people with their employment goals. IPS Employment Specialists arrange to participate in mental health treatment team meetings at the mental health agency and share documentation for the team to work together to help with employment.

Clients benefit from the combined resources and expertise from both VR Counselors and IPS Employment Specialists. IPS Employment Specialists and VR Counselors meet in person at least once each month to share information and ideas to help people achieve their goals.

III. IPS Reporting and Billing Requirements

- A. Timely provision and payment of IPS services requires collaboration between DARS and the Provider. Written authorization for Services is required prior to service delivery.
- B. DARS shall provide timely authorization for services, as well as expedient processing of bills and reports received.
- C. The provision of summation reports is required following the purchase and provision of IPS Services.
- D. IPS outcomes are authorized and paid according to the terms outlined in the following chart:

Service/Outcome	Code	When to Authorize	Deliverable	Payment
IPS Career Profile	IPS1	Provider submits RFA following case staffing/VRC acceptance of referral. VRC issues Career Profile authorization within 5 business days of VR case being open and in application status. VR Application status & beyond.	Career Profile Report*	
IPS Job Development (Job Search Plan)	IPS2	Provider submits RFA for job development once VRC confirms VR case is in Service status.	Job Search Plan*	

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Service/Outcome	Code	When to Authorize	Deliverable	Payment
Day One Employed	IPS3	Provider submits RFA for Day One Employed once Employment Details are confirmed.	Job Support Plan*	
Day 30 Employed	IPS4	Provider submits RFA for Day 30 Employed upon completion and submission of Day One reports and billing information.	30 Day Employment Report	
Day 60 Employed	IPS5	Provider submits RFA for Day 60 Employed upon completion and submission of Day 30 reports and billing information.	60 Day Employment Report	
Successful Employment Outcome	IPS6	Provider submits RFA for Successful Outcome at the time the VRC and ES agree the individual is stable in employment.	Transition Plan*	

***Provider may use DARS specific forms or equivalent provider forms aligned with IPS fidelity requirements.**

IV. Staffing Requirements

- A. Providers who are delivering IPS services must agree to have qualified personnel, as determined by the provider’s internal policy & procedure, credentialing, governing body and/or accreditation requirements, to complete the services.
 - i. It is expected that IPS Employment Specialists will be required to take the IPS Employment Centers online practitioner skills within 6 months of the start date of the employment specialist. If an employment specialist has previously been certified by the IPS Employment Center, they will have met the requirement.
 - ii. In addition to the above, the Team Leader must complete the IPS Supervisors Skills Course available online through the IPS Learning Center. The IPS Supervisors Skills Course must be completed within six (6) months of the effective date of this agreement. New Team Leaders must complete the IPS Supervisors Skills Course within six (6) months of being appointed to the Team Leader position.

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- B. Provider staff will work with Virginia DARS and/or Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) IPS Trainers to develop training plans for staff to complete initial IPS training before providing IPS services as part of this agreement. Training documentation must be maintained and be readily available for any VR monitoring activity.

IV. IPS Fidelity Process

IPS Teams must meet fidelity standards as evidenced by the Supported employment Fidelity Review Manual found at <https://ipsworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Final-Fidelity-Manual-Fourth-Edition-112619.pdf>. Fidelity Reviews, based on the 25-item Supported Employment Fidelity Scale will be conducted by a team of fidelity reviewers (IPS Employment Center Consultant(s), IPS Trainer, other personnel trained in how to conduct fidelity reviews).

In lieu of CARF accreditation for IPS services only, existing ESOs may provide IPS Services based on the achievement of good fidelity within one year of being approved to provide services. If good fidelity is not reached within one year the IPS appendix portion of provider agreement will not be renewed. Requests for extensions due to extenuating circumstances may be submitted to the DARS Director of Employment Services and Special Programs

- A. New teams must undergo a fidelity review within 6-8 months of implementation.
- i. A score of less than one hundred (100) will require the Provider to complete a Fidelity Action Plan to improve the fidelity score. The Fidelity Action Plan must be submitted to DARS IPS Specialist & Trainer by the agreed upon date determined at the fidelity report out.
 - ii. The Provider participates in Fidelity Reviews every six (6) months until a score of one hundred (100) is achieved. The Provider has up to one year to achieve a score of 100.
- B. Existing Teams-Once a new team achieves a fidelity score of 100 or above, that team is considered an existing team and must:
- i. Participate in fidelity reviews at least annually (every 12 months); and
 - ii. Maintain a minimum score of 100 or above to maintain the ability to continue to provide IPS services.
- C. As part of the fidelity review process, the Provider agrees to the following:
- i. To make agency personnel available for interviews and other methods of information gathering by the fidelity review team.
 - ii. To allow access to client records and documentation by the fidelity review team.

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- iii. To allow members of the fidelity review team to observe mental health team meetings and the IPS unit meeting.
- iv. To make employment specialists available to conduct employer contacts during the review so that reviewers can determine what strategies are used in job development.
- v. To invite IPS clients and family members (with job seeker permission) to be interviewed by the fidelity review team.
- vi. For agency leaders/supervisors to be available for a short interview with the fidelity review team.
- vii. To develop, along with the IPS trainer, a written plan for improved fidelity.

V. Interdepartmental Collaboration

The Provider maintains active collaboration with DARS and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) for the provision of IPS employment services, which includes meeting and maintaining the established guidelines for IPS supported employment program. Each Provider works in collaboration with the DARS IPS Specialist and Trainer to implement and sustain IPS Supported Employment through trainings and technical assistance.

The IPS trainer participates in IPS unit meetings to help the team develop strategies based on the IPS approach. The trainer attends at least one (1) IPS unit meeting every month during the first six (6) months of implementation and participates in mental health treatment team meetings to help practitioners consider employment for people who are not working and to help improve integration of services. The trainer attends at least one (1) mental health treatment team meeting every quarter during the first six (6) months of implementation.

The IPS Employment Specialist and the IPS Team Leader work alongside the trainer while developing employer relationships. The IPS trainer helps with employer relationships monthly or quarterly depending on the needs, and employment outcomes of the IPS team and participates in Provider quarterly steering committee meetings for IPS supported employment.

VI. Vocational Rehabilitation Support

Staff from state vocational rehabilitation (Director, Employment Services and Special Programs and IPS Program Specialist/Trainer) will provide support for this project.

Examples of this support include:

- Providing information about sources of revenue for the program
- Providing training and technical assistance to IPS program

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- Providing IPS fidelity reviews with the purpose of improving outcomes
- Developing a state learning collaborative for IPS
- Assisting with efforts to improve collaboration between IPS sites and Vocational Rehabilitation offices.
- Utilizing a statewide steering committee to examine barriers and facilitators to IPS programs.
- Including input from family members, participants, and advocacy groups in efforts to implement IPS programs.

VII. Confidentiality

Fidelity reviewers, trainers, consultants, and vocational rehabilitation staff will sign confidentially agreements provided by the agency.

VIII. Outcomes

The Provider will collect quarterly employment/education outcomes and share with the state mental health and state vocational rehabilitation agencies. These outcomes are shared with the IPS Employment Center and other agencies that are implementing IPS as a learning tool. The IPS trainer is to review IPS program outcomes with the IPS supervisor and agency leaders to develop plans for improved outcomes.