



OPTIONS
FAMILY OF SERVICES

**SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES**

WELCOME!!

Welcome to OPTIONS' Supported Employment Services. It is our goal to provide you with the help you need to develop your vocational skills and find a job. This handbook will let you know how Supported Employment works. If you still have questions after reading the handbook, please feel free to ask the OPTIONS Supported Employment staff about them.

You will not be discriminated against because of your race, color, creed, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, ancestry or national origin. You are free to choose OPTIONS as your Supported Employment Services provider and can transfer to another provider for any reason.

What is Supported Employment?

Supported Employment helps adults with disabilities to find and keep paid jobs in the communities where they live. OPTIONS will help you to develop behaviors, attitudes, skills, physical endurance and productivity necessary to be successful in getting and keeping a job. This program is funded by the California Department of Rehabilitation.

How do I get into Supported Employment?

First of all, you must have a desire to work, be at least 18 years old, be considered safe in the community, and meet government work eligibility requirements.

Second, if you are receiving services from Tri-Counties Regional Center, you must contact your caseworker to refer you to the Department of Rehabilitation for services. You will need to complete an application at that time. The authorization process will take several weeks, depending on how quickly we can get the necessary records. When the Department of Rehabilitation gives us the "O.K.", we will be authorized to help you find a job.

If a person has a criminal record, OPTIONS will fully cooperate to the extent required by law. Information will be provided to any enforcement agency that is formerly involved assuming there is documentation of such involvement. An example would be the probation department in which case OPTIONS would obtain a copy of the court order regarding probation. Confidential information which is not public record will remain confidential and not be disclosed without the permission of the persons involved.

How much will I get paid?

This is an important question. When placed in a job in the community you will make at least the minimum wage. If you choose to work on a Group Supported Employment Work Crew, you will be paid according to your productivity. That means you will be timed on the tasks you are asked to do according to state regulations. When you get your paycheck, there will be some deductions for state and federal taxes. All people who are employed have these deductions on their paychecks. Some of these taxes pay for your Supported Employment Services. So, when you get your paycheck, you may not make quite as much as you thought. The OPTIONS Supported Employment staff will help you understand these deductions.

How often will I get paid?

You will be paid at least twice a month. Some employers pay weekly, some pay every other week, and others pay twice a month. Group Supported Employment pays every other week.

Will my earnings affect my SSI benefits?

Yes. Social Security Insurance (SSI) is a check many people with disabilities receive monthly to help with living expenses. A general rule is that for every two dollars you earn, your benefits will be reduced by one dollar. So, even though working may reduce your SSI benefits, you are going to have more money if you work. An OPTIONS staff person will talk to you about your SSI benefits before you start working.

Sometimes you can reduce the effect your job has on SSI benefits through a “PASS” plan.

What is a PASS Plan?

A PASS plan allows you to save money for specific things like transportation to and from work. The money you save will be deducted from the amount of your job earnings that is counted against your SSI benefits. The PASS Plan must be approved by Social Security and the Department of Rehabilitation.

What about holidays?

Your employer will decide which holidays you will be able to take off with pay. You will get the same holidays as anyone else who works with you for the same company.

Is there a fee for Supported Employment?

The Department of Rehabilitation will pay for your services so they will not cost you anything.

What do I need to do to prepare to get a job?

You will be invited to attend a six week preparation course called Career Exploration Workshop. This 6 week course, taught by OPTIONS Job Developer, provides life long skills training. You will be taught how to determine the right type of job match, how to complete an application and will learn important interview skills. You will also be assisted in developing a resume. The dress for this workshop is business casual and punctuality is crucial. If you need transportation to these classes, staff will assist in arranging it for you.

How long will it take to find me a job?

That depends on what type of job you are interested in and how many jobs are available in your areas of interest. It is important that you get a job you like. “Staff will help you decide what kind of a job is best for you. They will help match a job to your interests, abilities and desires.” It usually takes a few weeks to find the right job, and in some cases it may even take a few months.

What happens when a job is found for me?

We do not find the job for you, but help you find your own job. What this means is that we will give you job leads and current information about any Group Supported Employment positions available. You will have to fill out applications and go to interviews for jobs you are interested in. We will help you in finding a job, but we do not just “give” you a job.

What happens if I am sick?

Your employer depends on you to do your job; therefore, if you are sick and cannot work for any reason, you must call your employer as soon as you know you cannot go to work.

I got a job! Now what happens?

The Supported Employment Program Manager will introduce you to your job coach. Your job coach will help you with all aspects of your new job, including buying work clothes, if needed; teaching you how to get to and from work; and understanding the work rules/procedures, scheduling, and routine safety procedures.

If you choose a job with an employer in the community, your job coach will initially be with you all of the time when you are at work. As you become more comfortable with your job and your co-workers, and are able to finish your work duties to your employer's satisfaction, the job coach will spend less and less time with you. If you choose to join a Group Supported Employment Work Crew, your group will have a job coach at all times.

What are follow-up services?

Once you have learned all of your work duties and the job coach no longer needs to be with you every day, you will receive what we call “follow-up services”.

Your job coach will visit you at work at least one time every week to talk with you and your boss about your work performance. When you are not at work, we can provide you with work-related services like counseling, Social Security assistance, help in shopping for work clothes

and supplies, social skills training, and coordination of services with other agencies that help you.

Can I have visitors?

Most people who work do not have visitors at their job. If it is important for you to have someone come to see you while you are working, you should discuss this with your employer before the visitor arrives.

What happens if I lose my job?

If you lose your job, we will make sure that you have services similar to those you had before you started your job. If you lost the job due to no fault of your own, then we will work with you to find you a new job.

If you were fired from your job, we will sit down with you to talk about the reasons you were fired and discuss your future employment opportunities. If you want more information about this, you can ask an OPTIONS staff person to read and explain the OPTIONS policy on transferring and re-entry to you.

What should I do if I get hurt at work?

If you are injured while you are at work, or if you notice anything in the workplace that you think is unsafe, notify your on-site supervisor and/or your job coach immediately. They will help you get medical care and take action to fix unsafe conditions.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a list of your rights and responsibilities while you participate in this program:

RIGHTS:

1. You have a right to learn things that will help you do your best at your job; things like how to get to work; how to solve problems; and how to get along with your co-workers.
2. Your ID Team will put together an Individual Service Plan or "ISP" for you. The ISP explains the behaviors, adaptive living skills, and vocational goals that you will be working on while in Vocational Services. You will be an important member of your own ID Team.
3. You may request an ID Team meeting at any time.
4. When you get a job through OPTIONS' Vocational Services, you will be paid at least minimum wage for your work.
5. You have a right to have people treat you with respect and care.
6. OPTIONS' staff will treat you the same as everyone else.
7. You have a right to look at your records at any time. You are encouraged to have OPTIONS' staff present to help explain the contents to you.
8. You have a right to request reasonable accommodations at work. Your Vocational Services' staff will assist you with this.
9. If you do not like what we do, you have a right to talk to the following people about it:

Christina Hutchison
OPTIONS
P.O. Box 877
Morro Bay, CA 93443
(805) 772-6066 or
(805) 772-1019 x101

Justin McIntire
OPTIONS
P.O. Box 877
Morro Bay, CA 93443
(805) 441-3276

You may also want to talk to your Department of Rehabilitation Counselor:

Name: _____ Phone#: _____

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. You are with us because the people at OPTIONS believe they can help you. If we cannot help you, we will assist you in finding someone who can.
2. You cannot remain in the program if you do not work on the objectives that are written in your Individual Service Plan (ISP).
3. When you are not doing what we think you can do to help yourself, we will request an ID Team meeting to talk about this issue.
4. OPTIONS can only provide the services that have been authorized by the Department of Rehabilitation.
5. You are responsible for following the policies and procedures of your employer.
6. We ask that you give us information that will help us to help you. You are responsible for being honest in your communication with Vocational Services' staff.
7. You are required to give us thirty days notice if you want to leave the program.
8. If you want services that are not provided by OPTIONS' Vocational Services program, you must pay for these yourself or find someone who will pay for them.
9. Allow your co-workers to have time and space to themselves.
10. Respect your co-workers and your co-workers' personal property. Do not use things that belong to them without their permission.
11. Cooperate with OPTIONS' Vocational Services' staff and show them respect - they are trying to help you.

