



OPTIONS
FAMILY OF SERVICES

Handbook

For Supported Employment



This Handbook belongs to: _____

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/or 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 attitudes, skills, physical endurance and productivity necessary to be successful in getting and keeping a job. This service is funded by the California Department of Rehabilitation.

Is there a fee for Supported Employment?

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



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.



"INFORMED CHOICE" DECISION MAKING

Once you have been made eligible for services, you and your Department of Rehabilitation counselor will begin your Vocational Assessment. This process is about gathering information to help you choose your career goal and the services you will need to attain successful employment. You and your counselor will examine your interests, abilities, aptitudes, educational achievements, work history, strengths and weaknesses. You may also be scheduled for vocational testing to look more carefully at these factors.

Informed choice means you have obtained all the information you need through the Vocational Assessment process to make sound decisions about your career path. You and your counselor will work as partners and may have several meetings to discuss the details of your employment plan.

When the process is completed, you should have a thorough understanding of your job options and an awareness of all the services available from which you may choose. You and your counselor will now be ready to finalize and agree on your Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

In 2014, the President of the United States updated the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to stress the importance of education, training, credentials, and skills; of helping people with barriers to employment; of meeting the needs of employers; of increasing the success and economic self-sufficiency of workers; and of aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

What this means:

- Persons working for sub-minimum wage may only be able to do so for a short amount of time in order to gain the skills for a job in the community. These persons will also have annual career counseling and information referrals, unless they have been referred by Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) after July 2016. These persons will have this counseling twice in the first year.
- All persons under the age of 24 cannot be placed at a site with sub-minimum wage UNLESS they have been considered ineligible for DOR services due to unsuccessful placement in a community job. Services like PVSA and Situational Assessments will be used first as well.
- The goal for everyone is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE), which means that everyone is earning at least minimum wage and working in the community.
- OPTIONS is working with this act to provide the best possible employment opportunities and training for you!

Employment Preparation & Placement Process

Situational Assessment - Employment Preparation



If you have an open case with Department of Rehabilitation and you are not sure what kind of job you want or if you are ready to go to work, you might be able to do a Situational Assessment. This is an opportunity to try different jobs and see what you like and do not like about them.

OPTIONS' Job Developer will meet with you to find out what kinds of jobs you might want to try and will then talk to different employers to see if they would let you try working there. You can try up to three jobs for usually up to 40 hours of work total. This might be a paid or volunteer job. If the job is paid, you will earn the starting wage that the job usually pays. If it is a volunteer job, you will not be paid. While you are trying out these jobs, a job coach will be there to see what areas you might need to work on and to help you as needed. The Job Coach then writes a report that shares what would be a good step to take next. Then you meet with your DOR counselor to choose the next step.

Employment Preparation & Placement Process

Career Exploration Workshop / Employment Preparation

This is a preparation course taught by OPTIONS' Job Developer. The workshop provides life-long job skills training. Individuals referred are taught how to determine the right type of job match, how to complete an application, and will learn important interview skills. **Each person will also be assisted in developing a resume.** The dress for this workshop is business casual and punctuality is crucial. You may learn:

- **Interview Skills**
- **Help Making a Resume**
- **Presentation and Hygiene**
- **Expectations at Work**
- **Social Skills at Work**



Personal, Vocational, Social, Adjustment

Personal, Vocational, Social Adjustment (PVSA) services are provided to assist a person develop or re-establish skills, attitudes, personal characteristics, interpersonal skills, work behaviors, and functional capacities to achieve and maintain positive employment outcomes. This service is authorized to address one or more barriers that are preventing a consumer from successfully completing his/her DOR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Training is time-limited, individualized, and provided in the environment where the identified appropriate behavior is needed or occurs.

The information will be taught on a 1:1 basis—just you and your job coach. You may learn:

- **Appropriate interaction in the workplace**
- **Grooming and hygiene as related to work**
- **Mobility training in use of public transportation**
- **Work habits and attitudes such as attendance, punctuality, phoning in if ill, returning promptly from breaks and lunch**
- **Personal budgeting, banking, and bill payment**



Job Development

Once you have successfully completed Employment Preparation, you will work cooperatively with your Job Developer to find a job that is well suited to your likes and abilities.



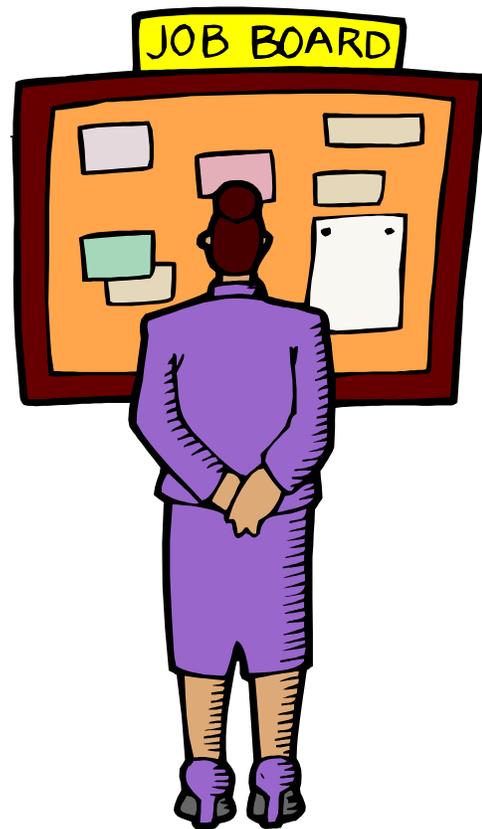
It is important to understand that your job developer does not find the job for you, but helps you find your own job.

What this means is that we will work with you to find your own job. We will work with you to find job leads and current information about any positions available. You will fill out applications and go to interviews for jobs you are interested in. **We do not just “give” you a job** but you will be fully supported by Vocational Services staff during the whole job seeking process. It is important for you to remain in close contact with your job developer and be active in your job search.

Finding a Job

The length of time it takes to find a job depends upon 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 that you like. It sometimes takes a few weeks to find the right job, and in some cases it may even take a few months or longer. You will:

- **Meet with your Job Developer**
- **Look for Job Openings**
- **Call your Job Developer**
- **Apply to Appropriate Job Leads**
- **Apply for at least two jobs weekly**



Let's Talk Money...

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 once 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 earning 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

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. Sometimes you will get extra pay if you work on a holiday. You will get the same holidays as anyone else who works with you for the same company.

What happens if I get 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.

Frequently Asked Questions



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

You will learn employment preparation skills or attend Career Exploration Workshop. This 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 may assist in arranging it for you. This course may be taught on a 1:1 basis.

How long will it take me to find 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 or more.

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.

How will I get to work?

We will start by looking for jobs closest to where you live when possible. You may walk to work or take the bus. If you do not know how to take the bus, we can work with Department of Rehabilitation to teach you how to use the bus to get to and from work. You may also have family or friends give you a ride if they are willing.

I got a job! Now what?

The Job Developer or Supervisor 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 could 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 about 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.



A few more questions....

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 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.

What happens if I lose my job?

If you lose your job, we will work with you so 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.

Your Rights

YOUR 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:

Job Developer

800 Quintana Rd. Suite 2C
Morro Bay, CA 93443
805 441 3276

Vocational Services Supervisor

800 Quintana Rd. Suite 2C
Morro Bay, CA 93443
805 772 6066 or 805 440 9551

You may also want to talk to your Regional Center Service Coordinator:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Your 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 continue to receive services 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 asked to give us thirty days' notice if you want to discontinue services.
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.

Acknowledgement

I Acknowledge...

I have received a copy of the OPTIONS Handbook and had it explained to me by OPTIONS staff.

Signature of Person Served

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian (If Applicable)

Date

Signature of OPTIONS Designated Staff Person

Date