



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.

We will not treat you differently because of your race (including protective hairstyles and hair texture), religion (including religious belief, observance, dress or grooming practices), creed, color, sex, sex stereotype, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions (including breastfeeding), age (40 years or over), sexual orientation, gender, gender identification and expression, transgender status, transitioning employees, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including cancer), genetic characteristics, genetic information, family care, reproductive health decision-making, marital status, registered domestic partner status, enrollment in any public assistance program, status as military, or as a veteran or as a qualified disabled veteran, status as an unpaid intern or volunteer, ancestry, citizenship, national origin, protected medical leaves (including a request for or approval of leave under applicable leave of absence laws), domestic violence victim status, political affiliation, reproductive health decision-making, which includes, without limitation, a decision to use or access a particular drug, device, product or medical service for reproductive health, or any other classification protected by law ("Protected Characteristics"). We also won't let anyone else treat you differently because you have any of those Protected Characteristics, or you know or live with someone who they think has any of those Protected Characteristics.

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 and the Regional Center.

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

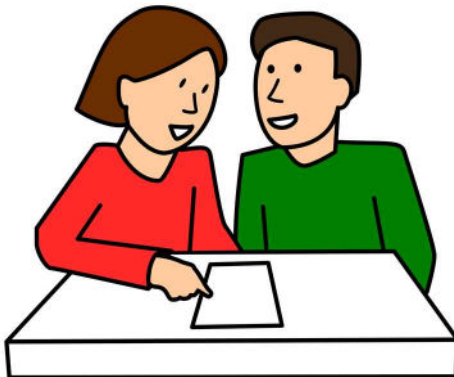
In 2014, the President of the United States updated the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to stress the importance of education, training, credentials, and skills; of helping people with barriers to employment; of meeting the needs of employers; of increasing the success and economic self-sufficiency of workers;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

Paid Internship Program (PIP)

A Paid Internship Program (PIP) is available to job seekers served by Tri-Counties Regional Center who want to work full or part-time, become self-employed, start a small business, or develop skills as an apprentice. Students may be eligible if they are age 18 or over. The program may last for up to one year or up to 1040 hours, whichever occurs first. While interning, you will be paid a competitive wage, and employer costs are covered. The intent of the program is to increase opportunities for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

- **Step 1:**

This process starts with Employment Site Facilitation (ESF), looking for the right internship for you. Similar to job development, we will help identify ideal work environments, if any supports are needed, create a resume, talk to business owners and managers, and prepare for interviews.

- **Step 2:**

After identifying an internship, the Vocational Supervisor will submit a request to TCRC to begin the PIP. While TCRC sets up the internship on their end, you will begin the hiring process and work on setting up your employment goals with the Vocational Supervisor.

- **Step 3:**

Start working! Once the PIP is approved by TCRC and OPTIONS has all the paperwork in place, the internship can begin usually about 2 weeks after an internship is found.

State Internship Program

Department of Rehabilitation has collaborated with the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to launch the Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) State Internship Program (SIP).

- This program provides an alternate eligibility process for people with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities to gain employment with the State of California. This program allows the implementation of a more extensive and assistive "on-the-job-certification" approach compared to the standard LEAP certification and exam methods.
- This program grants each selected applicant to receive a paid internship, on-the-job coaching, and career guidance on their way to receiving a prosperous career in civil service.
- During this internship, qualified interns will develop the skills and abilities needed to meet the minimum qualifications of their intended job description. Upon completion of the LEAP SIP, each successful applicant can obtain their list eligibility for hire by the State of California to apply for State agency position

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. Often the information will be taught on a 1:1 basis—just you and the Job Developer.**

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 their 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.



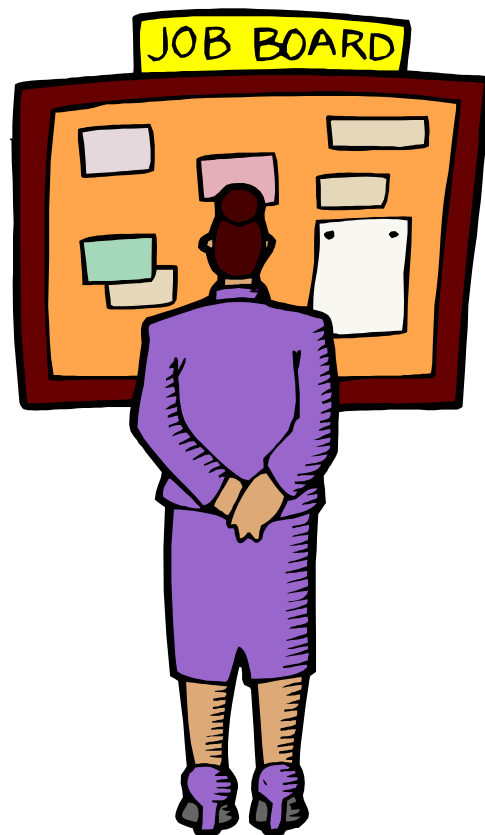
It is important to understand that your job developer does not find the job for you, but helps you find your own job.

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. 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.



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.

Calling Out or Taking Time Off

We hope you never have to but we all have to call out from time to time.

- Interns (PIPs) are OPTIONS employees and we ask that you please follow the OPTIONS policy. When possible, please give your employment site supervisor notice at least 2 hours before your shift starts.
- If you are expecting to work with a job coach that day please make sure they know they will not be needed by either contacting them or the Vocational Supervisor.
- Interns have 24 hrs of sick leave so be sure to tell the Vocational Supervisor so you will be paid for your time missed. The vocational supervisor is responsible for reviewing your timesheets and needs to know whether or not you worked. Sick leave can be used for immediate medical concerns or planned doctor appointments.

On the weekend, if you need to call out but are unable to contact your job coach or your job coach has not shown up to work with you and you need help, you can call OPTIONS On Call: 805.558.4587

Are you planning a vacation? Please let your job coach know at least 2 weeks before. This helps us plan ahead to make sure everyone has the support they need.



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. 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 you 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:

Vocational Services Supervisor

1201 Palm Street

San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

805 772 6066 or 805 458 1487

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 or the Regional Center.
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.

What if I have a concern or problem?

If you have an issue or concern you can:

A) Speak to your Job Coach about the concern and see if they can help.

B) You can also speak to your supervisor to resolve the problem. If your supervisor is not able to help you within 1 week then:

C) You can speak to the department supervisor. If the department supervisor is not able to help you within 1 week then:

D) You can speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If the CEO is not able to help within 1 week you can then:

E) Write a formal letter to the CEO. They must respond back to you within 20 business days of getting your letter, and will include an outlined plan to solve your concern. If the matter is still not resolved then:

F) Write a formal letter to the OPTIONS Board Members. This letter must have all the actions taken to try and resolve the concern. The Board Members may meet to discuss your concern within 10 days of receiving your letter. If Members decide not to take any action, they will send you back a letter saying why within 20 days. The board's action on particular concerns/issues will be final.

G) If you still need help then contact the appropriate State Agency case worker. The CEO or Program Director can provide to you the name, address and telephone number of that case worker. If the issue is still not resolved then:

H) You can contact the Developmental Disabilities Area Board IX (805) 682-8374 to get help. They may be able to help if no resolution has been given. If they cannot provide help then:

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