

Adult Activities Support Services

Introduction

Westside Regional Center believes that individuals should engage in meaningful adult activities. These activities should assist individuals to reach maximum potential, to pursue personal interests, and to fulfill responsibilities. They should lead to the ultimate goal of maximum life quality and satisfaction. Westside Regional Center also believes that each individual should enjoy as great a level of independence as desired and possible. Individuals should be involved and included in their own community.

To achieve these support objectives, Westside Regional Center adopts a person-centered planning approach, strategically combining natural and paid supports tailored to the unique needs of each individual. We actively engage in planning and service coordination activities to develop creative solutions and expand the range of available options and opportunities for the individuals we serve.

Westside Regional Center encourages individuals to select supports that assist them to engage in adult activities that approximate those of adults without disabilities, while incorporating their choices, purposes, and objectives. The activities of most adults typically involve one or more of the following: learning; working; contributing to others; engaging in leisure, social, or creative activities; caring for personal needs or the needs of others by shopping, running errands, exercising, etc. In alignment with federal expectations, these activities should take place in natural community settings when possible. Flexibility should be applied to the purchase of service options, so that the broad range of needed activities can be incorporated into the planning for each individual.

Westside Regional Center also encourages flexibility in scheduling adult support activities to be responsive to the preferences and needs of each individual. Scheduling should not limit individuals to a restrictive schedule (for example, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Service standards following this introduction apply to existing adult day services and will incorporate the basic standards outlined above.

Competitive Integrated Employment Services

Competitive Integrated Employment Service models provide support with achieving and retaining CIE through provision of individualized support that leads to meaningful and competitive paid work in integrated work environments. WRC expectations of Competitive Integrated Employment Services the following:

1. Supporting individuals with obtaining meaningful jobs in which they are working alongside other employees without disabilities. Jobs are in natural work settings in the community.
2. Earnings are minimum wage or above, and/or customary for type of work performed. Employment opportunities developed may be full-time or part-time employment. This can include self-employment or micro-enterprises. Employees with developmental disabilities receive the same benefits as other employees in their workplace.
3. Job development will be guided using a person-centered approach.
4. Support provided in the workplace is as non-intrusive as possible with the ultimate goal of increasing natural supports. Outside assistance from program staff should be reduced or minimized according to individual's need. However, long-term minimal follow-up may be provided to assure maintenance of employment and to assist with job changes or crisis situations.
5. Employees are accepted, included, and involved in the social fabric of the workplace.
6. Service agencies employ a positive, business-oriented approach, and strive to locate jobs that enhance the status and image of the employees.
7. Service agencies are outcome oriented, with innovative, flexible approaches to achieve results. Creativity in selection of jobs, in use of support, and use of adaptive technology are employed to remove barriers to employment. Vital statistics are compiled to show effectiveness.
8. Readiness is not a pre-requisite for employment. These services are not a continuum through which individuals move to the next step. It offers a variety of opportunities and approaches to meet individual needs and expectations.
9. These service agencies will be strong advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities to have access to their community and to be fairly compensated for their work.

Some of the Employment Services currently available include:

1. **Individual Competitive Employment.** Individualized employment opportunity in full or part-time work for which minimum wage or above is earned. Support provided onsite is not intensive and is time limited.
2. **Supported Employment.** Provides support with identifying individualized employment opportunities in competitive integrated settings. Work may be full or part-time, depending on the needs of the individual. Types of support offered typically include support with accessing Department of Rehabilitation, job search, applying for jobs, developing a resume, preparing for job interviews, providing job support via job coaching, assist in establishing natural supports in the workplace, and other types of support as needed to promote job retention.
3. **Group Supported Employment.** A group of individuals (maximum of four) work in close proximity to each other (sometimes called enclaves, or work crews). Earnings are minimum wage or above. Work can be either full-time or part-time. Group supported employment is not typically considered CIE and is no longer supported by the Department of Rehabilitation.
4. **Paid Internship Program (PIP).** Provides an opportunity to increase vocational skills and abilities. Goals include acquisition of experience and skills for future paid employment. Internship itself is intended to lead to a full or part-time paid employment in the same job. Individuals participating in a paid internship opportunity shall be paid at or above minimum wage and equal to the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities. Internships are predicated on the person-centered planning process.

Note that all Employment Services take place in competitive integrated work settings and individuals earn at least minimum wage or above for the work performed. Agencies may vary in approaches to job development. Some teach self-directed job search skills. Some may also offer assistance with money management and budgeting, social skills related to the job, and the setting of employment goals. Some also provide travel/mobility training. WRC has adopted an Employment First policy in which integrated, inclusive, and competitive employment will be given the highest priority for working age individuals served. As Employment Services are an innovative and growing service area, new models beyond those referenced are anticipated to develop over time.

Policy

Consistent with the Lanterman Act, inclusive and competitive work will be the first option considered by planning teams for every WRC working age adult. Integrated, inclusive and competitive employment will be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability.

WRC believes that beginning at an early age, individuals should have basic employment goals and learn skills that increase their ability to obtain employment in the future. To help with this, the staff of WRC will advocate for more employment readiness opportunities through the public school system.

Innovative approaches that achieve the outcomes of employment in community work settings alongside members of the general public are encouraged. WRC acknowledges the value of volunteerism in building individuals' engagement in the community. However, due to wage and labor laws we are not able to have individuals volunteer for jobs that would otherwise be paid. Volunteer opportunities, if being used as a step towards employment, should only be offered if they will lead to a paid position within a short period of time, no longer than six months. In alignment with WRC's Employment First Policy, individuals exiting the public school system will be provided with information on options for Competitive Integrated Employment services. Competitive Integrated Employment support may include time to explore and make decisions about potential job opportunities, to go through the interview process, to prepare for travel, clothing requirements, etc. Supervision of activities while waiting for a job, or during non-work hours if the employee is working part-time, will be provided under other service categories.

The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) provides funding for some Supported Employment services, which are aimed at finding Competitive Integrated Employment. However, individuals funded under DOR must meet certain criteria. WRC can pay for Competitive Integrated Employment Services for those who do not qualify for similar services funded by DOR. Furthermore, WRC will continue to advocate for inclusion of individuals with all types of support needs in services offered by DOR. If DOR will pay for a portion of a service for an individual, then WRC will purchase other services the individual may require during their day.