Employment Manual
for the
Pennsylvania
Community Mental Retardation Program

Fiscal Year 2005-06 Edition

Issued by:

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- The Employment Committee of the Office of Mental Retardation Planning Advisory Committee
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An Employment Manual
for the
Pennsylvania Community Mental Retardation Program

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Introduction

The purpose of this Employment Manual is to provide information to promote employment for people served in the Pennsylvania community mental retardation program. This program is composed of 47 County based service Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR) Programs across the State that provide an array of home and community based services and support.

The Manual is intended for the use of direct support and other professionals that work to promote employment outcomes, including Supports Coordinators, employment specialists, provider agencies, and staff who work with the community mental retardation program, such as District Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) counselors, and School District/Intermediate Unit teachers and school officials. The Manual is also a useful resource for families and advocates who are interested in promoting employment outcomes for people in the community mental retardation program.

This Manual subscribes to the common values and missions of the numerous state and local education, consumer, and adult service agencies that offer employment supports for people with mental retardation and other disabilities. It is intended to be current with existing standards and policy, and may be modified to reflect future changes and local conditions.

The Manual was first initiated in 2002 as a result of OMR-Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) recommendations for standard practices and information around employment. A workgroup represented by the State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (PARF), the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), and the Department of Education developed the initial text. The Manual was expanded in 2003 to include recommended practices for coalitions promoting employment for students in transition to adult life.

This Fiscal Year 2005-06 version of the Employment Manual includes new information, including:
- New Individual Support Planning (ISP) practices that community mental retardation programs are expected to follow in Fiscal Year 2005-06. These new practices begin on page 7 and include use of an Employment Supplement to the ISP which is included in Attachment 3
- New interim PUNS criteria for people in need of employment services on page 16
- New information on funding that begins on page 19
- New information on quality management that begins on page 43

A copy of this Manual is available by contacting the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Retardation, a County or Regional OMR Employment Point Person or the OMR Customer Service Line at 1-888-565-9435. Contact information for Employment Point Persons is provided in Attachment 2.

Employment Talking Points

The following talking points are for introducing employment in the mental retardation program to people who receive services, families, employers, school teachers and officials, and the public.

<u>Employment means a job in the community that the person wants and can perform, with or without accommodation and support</u>.
- When we talk about employment today, we mean having a job or vocation in the community that pays at least minimum wage
- Whether the work is part-time or full-time, in a plant, office or a start up business in the family garage, employment needs to match the person's abilities, career goals and aspirations

<u>Employment is an essential part of self-determination for many people</u>.
- Employment is a way for people to achieve their personal dreams of success, respect and control
- Having community employment can be an important part of one's self-identity and value in society today
- People enrolled in the mental retardation program have choices in the types of jobs they obtain, and in the providers who render their support and services

<u>Barriers that kept people from employment are coming down</u>.
- As a result of changes in Federal and State laws, people with disabilities do not have to limit their work hours or earnings to keep their health care benefits like they did in the past, and can retain much higher levels of their work income and personal savings than they could before
- Employers cannot discriminate against people because of their disability. More and more businesses employ people with disabilities because of the value they bring to the work place
- Coworkers accept and respect people with disabilities on the job, and can contribute to helping people learn new skills
- Community work sites are safe places to be, and can be accommodated when needed

<u>People with disabilities are successful workers</u>.
- Jobs that were out of reach in the past for people with disabilities are today accessible thanks to new technology, new laws, and better teaching methods. Even more opportunities promise to be available in the future
- Qualified job coaches and employment specialists are available to assist people who need assistance in locating, preparing for and successfully managing the job of their choice
- Success is also supported by government programs, which provide real incentives for people with disabilities to work, keep more earned income for their personal use, and retain their needed benefits

County MH/MR Program Employment Resources

Supports Coordination

The Supports Coordinator is responsible for assisting people locate, coordinate and monitor employment and other services in the community mental retardation program. Each person who receives services has a Supports Coordinator. The Supports Coordinator can assist people/families in:

- Understanding the process that is followed to obtain employment services and support
- Including employment outcomes and employment services in the ISP and Budget Process
- Coordinating and arranging transportation to and from work
- Introducing them to providers of employment services from which to choose
- Coordinating employment services with other community agencies, such as the District Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Monitoring services at the job site to ensure health/welfare, satisfaction and outcomes
- Understanding the person's rights to mediation, fair hearing and appeal if waiver funded services are not provided to their satisfaction
- Advocating to obtain needed services and supports

Providers of Employment Support

Providers of employment support offer job coaching and other employment related services. Provider roles vary based on the person/family's needs, and can include the following responsibilities:

- Assisting in selecting the type of work the person will do
- Arranging transportation to and from work
- Helping the person understand the employer's expectations on the job and being sure that the person is ready and equipped to be successful
- Assisting in learning and completing job responsibilities
- Ensuring the work site is adapted to meet the person's needs with ramps or assistive technology
- Introducing coworkers and helping the person feel comfortable at the work site
- Being sure that health and safety issues are addressed, including personal care needs at the work site
- Ensuring that the person's earnings are appropriately reported

Providers of employment support can be a vocational facility, an independent job coach, an employment agency, a union or trade association, an employer, or even a coworker who meets the following minimum requirements:

- 18 years of age with the necessary training and experience to provide services
- Pass a criminal history clearance

- Have services overseen by a qualified mental retardation professional, such as the Supports Coordinator

When the provider of services is the person's employer or coworker, the County Program can only pay for services above and beyond what the employer would normally be expected to provide as part of the business. Examples of such support are personal care assistance on the job, job coaching that requires an extraordinary amount of supervisory time, and disability management that requires ongoing adjustment to the person's work space or machinery accompanied with retraining.

Health Care Quality Units (HCQUs)
HCQUs are established across the State to assist the community mental retardation program in managing people's health care. HCQU personnel can also assist employers in understanding what type of accommodations people will require on the job to address conditions, such as seizures, associated with their disability. Arrangements for contacting HCQUs are made through the County MH/MR Program.

Employment Point Persons (EPP)
Each County MH/MR Program has an assigned Employment Point Person (EPP). EPPs can answer questions about State and County policy and procedures, refer unresolved policy and funding questions to the Office of Mental Retardation and provide ongoing information about employment events, trends and information. The EPP is also a resource for people who want to get more involved in employment services and supports through area coalitions, boards and councils. A list of current County and Regional Office of Mental Retardation EPPs is contained in Attachment 2.

People Receiving Services, Their Family and Friends
The most important resources for the community mental retardation program are the people who use its services, their families and friends. In many situations, employment opportunities can be found without relying on the community mental retardation program through the family's or person's friends, school and business contacts. Support in finding and keeping a job can be provided informally by a person's friends or coworker without relying on a funded service. Even when employment services are provided by the community mental retardation program, relatives and friends play a key role in contributing to the person's job success by helping in areas of reporting income, preparation for work, transportation, etc.

Other Community Employment Resources

The agencies described in this chapter offer employment related services for people with disabilities in the community. A supports coordinator can assist in making referral to these agencies.

Advocacy Associations.   Area chapters of the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Pennsylvania and self advocacy associations such as Speaking for Ourselves and Centers for Independent Living offer support for persons and families. The ARC of Pennsylvania created a self-determination manual that includes a chapter on employment which is available by contacting the local ARC listed in the local phone directory or the ARC-PA website at www.thearcpa.org.

Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO). People age 14 to 64 receiving SSI and SSDI can access the area Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) Office for advice in managing their Social Security benefits while they are working. Counselors offer strategies to enhance self-sufficiency and financial independence, and can help people and their families determine how employment earnings will affect their benefits over time. A list of BPAO contacts is included in Attachment 2.

Business and Community Service Associations.   Chambers of Commerce and community service associations such as the Elks and Kiwanis can be a source of jobs, funding, contacts and information sharing. The Business Leadership Network (BLN) has information on employers across the state with job opportunities for people with disabilities. For more information on the BLN, contact the Director, Stacy Liddick, at (717) 763-0968) or http://www.blnofpa.org.

County Assistance Offices (CAO). CAOs are located in each County and major cities to help people arrange for Medical Assistance, Food Stamps and other benefits. CAOs also manage MAWD or Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, which allows workers with disabilities to retain their Medical Assistance benefits while earning much higher levels of income than they were allowed in the past. More about MAWD is explained on page 25 and in Attachment 4. A listing of local CAOs can be found in Attachment 2.

District Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). District OVR Offices are located across the state to assist people with disabilities who want to be employed. People must apply to the OVR for a determination of eligibility before services can be offered. Services are authorized based on an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that is developed with the OVR counselor. OVR offers funding for intensive work training, job coaching, assistive technology, training and education, incentive programs for employers and other services necessary for the achievement of the job goal.

Employment Agencies. Employment agencies in the community are a source of temporary and full-time jobs. Some employment agencies specialize in job finding for people with disabilities and many have job openings that people with disabilities can fill.

Internet job seekers can find disability related information at www.Monster.com as well as other on line job sites. Employment agencies are listed in newspapers or the phone book.

Government. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as other local and Federal government agencies, provides employment information tailored specifically for people with disabilities. See: www.scsc.state.pa.us/askaquestion.asp#disabilities for further information regarding employment opportunities with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for people with disabilities.

Newspaper Ads and Publications. Probably the most common source to find job openings are newspaper ads that offer an array of possible career and job choices. The "want ads" section is a great source of information for the types of jobs that may be available in the community. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry also has annual publications on the type of job opportunities available across the State. Copies of these publications are available at the District OVR Office.

Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy. Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy (PP&A) has information about employment rights of workers with disabilities and can make referrals to obtain legal information and advice related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Ticket to Work, and other right to work laws. PP&A can be contacted at (800) 692-7443 or www.ppainc.org.

PA CareerLink Centers. Also called "One Stops," CareerLink centers are a community resource for job finding, employment related education and assistance. Some District OVR Offices are housed in PA CareerLink Centers. PA CareerLink Centers may be able to help in finding summer jobs for youth, and have various types of financial support to promote job training by employers. To locate the nearest PA CareerLink Center, visit www.servicelocator.org,or call 1-877-872-5627.

Social Security Offices. One of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) highest priorities is to help people with disabilities achieve independence by helping them to take advantage of employment opportunities. The SSA posts up to date information on its web-site at www.socialsecurity.gov/work which is also the source for obtaining copies of the Red Book, a standard reference guide to employment support for people with disabilities. Their toll free number at 1-800-772-1213, TTY/TTD: 1-800-325-0778 is the best way to get questions answered and to get in touch with a local Office contact.

Ticket to Work Employment Networks. In 2003, Pennsylvania became one of the third tier of States to participate in Ticket to Work, a Social Security Administration (SSA) program that encourages people who receive SSI and SSDI to return to work. The ticket allows people to choose a qualified employment network (EN) to provide their job training and support. For further information on Ticket to Work, contact MAXIMUS at www.yourtickettowork.org or your area SSA office.

Practices to Promote Employment

This portion of the Employment Manual discusses planning, budgeting, interagency coordination, and monitoring practices that can be adopted to promote employment outcomes within the community mental retardation program. The practices begin with registration into the County MH/MR Program, proceed through the Individual Support Plan (ISP) process, and end with the actual delivery and monitoring of services. The practices are discussed in the sequence that they typically occur, although some variation is expected based on differences among community mental retardation programs across the State. Some practices, which are highlighted, are being established for all County MH/MR Programs during Fiscal Year 2005-06. A one page summary of the standard practices is provided at the end of the chapter on page 18.

Developing Interagency Practices Through Coalitions
Since employment supports for people with disabilities require coordination between various agencies and employers, County MH/MR Program led coalitions are recommended for developing standard practices to promote employment outcomes for people in the community mental retardation program. Coalitions need to include providers of employment and vocational training services, support coordinators, the district OVR and School Districts/Intermediate Units which transition young adults into adult life. Other key coalition members consist of people receiving services and their families, representatives from the advocacy community, the business community and the community at large, including public transportation authorities and public officials.

Standard practices established by area coalitions are the recommended approach to an accountable and cost-effective employment support system in recognition of the fact that no one agency can be successful without the cooperation of the others. Coalition developed standard practices are especially useful in:
- maximizing available resources
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different agencies
- addressing issues that affect multiple agencies
- ensuring services and practices are person centered and outcome based
- promoting community participation and interest in employment outcomes

An example of coalition established standard practices is contained in this Manual. The school to work transition practices on pages 29 through 41 were initially developed and refined by the Lehigh Valley Coalition.

The Role of Supports Coordination
The Supports Coordinator plays a key role in locating, coordinating and monitoring employment support through the ISP process. Many of the practices discussed in this section rely on the Supports Coordinator to share information around employment with people receiving services and their families, and to coordinate effectively with other agencies. To avoid unnecessary duplication and overburdening the Supports Coordinator, it is critical that potential areas of overlapping responsibilities with providers of service and other agencies be identified and addressed. The Supports

Coordinator is <u>NOT</u> expected to be an employment specialist, job coach or benefit counselor, but is expected to assist people and their families in locating and coordinating the various community employment resources they need. Recognizing and clearly delineating the lines of authority between Supports Coordinators, providers and other agencies will lead to an efficient employment support system.

<u>Introducing Employment During Registration Into MH/MR Program</u>
People register in the mental retardation program before services can be authorized and funded by the County MH/MR Program. The following standard registration practices are recommended so that people and families are introduced to the kind of employment support that the mental retardation system can offer:

The recommended practices in this area consist of the County designee, who may be a registration worker or Supports Coordinator, explaining that:

- Community employment is considered a high priority for people in the mental retardation program, especially for youth and young adults transitioning into adult life
- Barriers to employment have come down for people with disabilities so that people can now earn much more than they could before, while keeping their health care benefits and eligibility for services
- Community programs have been successful in assisting people find jobs that they enjoy by giving examples of the types of jobs people have found
- The County MH/MR Program can help the person in finding employment and in obtaining needed support to find or keep their job, such as transportation services
- Employment services and supports are considered as part of the ISP and Budget that is developed with the Supports Coordinator. The Supports Coordinator will discuss employment opportunities, assist the person/family in choosing a provider if needed, and monitor any employment services that the County authorizes.

<u>Beginning in January 1, 2006, all County MH/MR Programs will be expected to have this practice of introducing employment during the registration process in place and implemented for:</u>
> ***<u>1). All persons who are moving to the community from a State Center</u>***
> ***<u>2). All youth and young adults age 16-26, who are transitioning to the mental retardation system after graduating or leaving school</u>***

<u>Discussing Employment in the Individualized Support Process (ISP)</u>
Before the ISP is developed, it is recommended that the Supports Coordinator devote 15 to 20 minutes for an initial discussion on employment with the person and his/her family. The Employment Brochure in Attachment 3 can be used as a discussion aide or shared with the person/family to take with them after the meeting. The discussion does

not need to occur as a stand alone meeting, and can be woven into other information sharing.

Discussion points for this practice are expected to include:
- <u>How employment expectations for people with disabilities have changed in recent years with the introduction of work incentives, self-determination, and more effective teaching methods</u>. For example, MAWD makes it possible for people with disabilities to retain their MA benefits and earn and save more than they could in the past.
- <u>How employment fits with the principles of self-determination</u>. Choice, success and control are key features of the OMR principles which people can realize through employment.
- <u>How people in the community program have found satisfying jobs to meet their individual needs and goals</u>. Personal stories about people that have jobs would be relayed.
- <u>How people and families have choices about employment supports</u>. The Supports Coordinator would describe the names of provider agencies which provide supported employment services and what type of services they offer.
- <u>How the person and family feel about employment as part of their future</u>. This would touch on employment concerns, the person's work history and what type of work the person might pursue now and in the future.
- <u>How employment services would be arranged</u>. This would relay the process people and families would follow to obtain a job.

People and families who are unsure about pursuing an employment outcome can be introduced to other people in the community program who are currently employed and to potential job finders who can address specific issues and concerns. Having a practice that gives people the opportunity to discuss employment and sample different jobs with providers and current workers is recommended.

<u>Beginning January 1, 2006, all County MH/MR Programs are expected to have this practice of discussing employment in the ISP process in place and implemented for</u>:
> ***<u>1). All persons moving to the community from a State Center</u>***
> ***<u>2). All youth and young adults age 16-26, who are transitioning into the community program from school</u>***
> ***<u>3). All persons enrolled in a vocational or adult training program who are considering employment supports through their annual ISP process</u>***
> ***<u>4). All persons who receive waiting list initiative funding for a new adult vocational or training service</u>***

Completing the Employment Supplement and Other Assessments for the ISP
After introducing employment, the Supports Coordinator needs to assess the person's work history, career objectives and other aspects related to employment support to determine if the person has an employment goal or outcome that needs to be included

in the ISP. To ensure that employment support is considered in the ISP process, OMR is recommending use of the Employment Supplement contained in Attachment 3.

The person and family can complete the Employment Supplement on their own or with assistance. Staff at State Centers will assist people moving to the community from a State Center. Non-state ICFs/MR can provide this assistance as well. Once completed, the Employment Supplement becomes a part of the person's ISP and is updated as employment related information changes. Support coordinators should not be expected to complete this for the person when there are staff from other programs available to provide assistance, like direct support professionals from a residential or adult training program.

The Employment Supplement is intended for anyone with an interest in employment and should not be limited to people who meet a certain skill set, work performance level in a vocational program, or OVR eligibility criteria. While work performance in a vocational training center can be a good indicator of person's ability in certain jobs, there are many other types of work which require a different skill set than those developed in the vocational setting. Community based work assessment and transitional work experiences, such as mobile work crews and enclaves, can be better indicators of ability for community based jobs, but even these opportunities cannot always predict a person's success. Predictors of success in employment have been shown to be the person's desire to work and the support the person receives.

A key aspect of the Employment Supplement is that it leads a person to consider whether employment support should be included in their ISP. When an employment outcome in the Employment Supplement is chosen, the Supports Coordinator is responsible to ensure that the person's ISP in HCSIS reflects this outcome in the employment outcome box indicated on page 2 of the ISP, Version Date 8/27/04. See Attachment 3 for a copy of this page in HCSIS.

Other standardized employment assessment tools can be used in conjunction with, or in instead of, the Employment Supplement. Written releases may be required to obtain this information from other agencies. Other assessments include:
- The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) provides useful information to the Employment Supplement, but should not be used as a substitute for the Employment Supplement.
- For students and recent graduates, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that contains work reports and assessments related to the student's post school employment outcome can be substituted for the Employment Supplement. The IEP must be replaced by the Employment Supplement within 12 months of the student's graduation or leaving school.
- For OVR customers, a current Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) that contains a community based work assessment can be substituted for the Employment Supplement. The IPE must be replaced by the Employment Supplement within 12 months of OVR services being ended.

Beginning January 1, 2006, all County MH/MR Programs are expected to complete page 7 of the Employment Supplement in Attachment 3 for:
> *1). all persons moving to the community from a State Center*
> *2). all youth and young adults age 16-26, who are transitioning into the community program from school*
> *3). persons enrolled in a vocational or adult training program who are considering employment supports through their annual ISP process*
> *4). all persons who receive waiting list initiative funding for a new adult vocational or training service*

Coordination with the Office of Vocation Rehabilitation (OVR)

The Supports Coordinator is responsible to meet with the OVR district representative as soon as possible after the person chooses an outcome in the Employment Supplement. Based on this meeting, the person/family can be advised to meet with an OVR Counselor or district representative to complete an OVR application. During the OVR meeting, the person/family should receive information about OVR eligibility and services, along with an overview of the OVR provider network and individual planning process.

If determined eligible for OVR services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed as the basis for funding and services. Not all persons who apply will be approved for District OVR supported employment services. If OVR services are not available, waiver or other community mental retardation funding can be used to support the person's employment outcome. The Supports Coordinator can assist the person in following up with the OVR Counselor or district representative if there are questions or concerns.

The need for follow-along services/funding needs to be discussed with the OVR district representative as the IPE is being developed. Without the guarantee of needed follow-along services by the community mental retardation program, OVR may not be able to authorize supported employment service for the person. Follow-along services may include Community Mental Retardation Program funded job support and other related services, such as transportation assistance to and from work.

Beginning in January 1, 2006, all Counties are expected to complete the ISP-HCSIS screen indicating the person's OVR contact information for:
> *1). all persons moving to the community from a State Center*
> *2). all youth and young adults age 16-26, who are transitioning into the community program from school*
> *3). persons enrolled in a vocational or adult training program who are considering employment supports through their annual ISP process*
> *4). all persons who receive waiting list initiative funding for a new adult vocational or training service*

This HCSIS screen is found on the menu bar of the Version Date 04/07/2005 by navigating: INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN: FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION: FUNCTIONAL LEVEL: *EDUCATION/VOCATIONAL INFORMATION*. Only complete this screen when the District OVR Counselor is assigned.

Coordination with Family and Residential Providers of Service
The Supports Coordinator may be relied on to ensure that the person's job is coordinated with other aspects of life. This can require meeting with the person's family, ISP team and other service agencies to coordinate scheduling, earnings and other related matters. It is important that the person has the needed support to be successful on the job and that all parties appreciate and fulfill their role in contributing to the person's choice, success and self esteem through employment.

Through the ISP process, families or residential program staff may be relied on to:
- Ensure the person is dressed appropriately for work
- Arrange transportation to and from work
- Provide transportation or assistance in learning how to use transportation
- Assist the person in making lunch or snacks
- Assist the person in organizing and reporting their earnings
- Bring employment related concerns to the attention of the Supports Coordinator

Entering Employment Information on the ISP in HCSIS
The finalized ISP in HCSIS (Version Date 8/27/04) contains an Employment Section for documenting the person's current employment status, employer, employment goals and other information. The HCSIS Screen is found on the menu bar under INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN: FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION: FUNCTIONAL LEVEL: EMPLOYMENT.

Beginning January 1, 2006, all County MH/MR Programs are expected to have this screen completed for:
> ***1). All persons who have employment services authorized after January 1, 2006, including persons receiving job support and transitional work services***

The definition of terms for this section of the ISP in HCSIS is as follows:
- Employment: Enter yes only if the person is employed, full or part time, or self employed for a minimum of 10 hours a week, or self-employed. People receiving job support and transitional work services (enclave, work station in industry, affirmative industry) are recorded with a "yes" only if the person earns or is expected to earn at least minimum wage. People receiving only job finding services are not considered employed for purposes of the ISP.
- Frequency (Full-time or Part-time). Full-time means an average of at least 31.5 hours per week. Part-time is anything between 10 and 31.5 hours.
- Position: Self explicit.
- Employer: If the person is not employed but is a recipient of services, indicate the service agency that supports the person. If self-employed, note: Self.

- Address: Self explicit.
- City, State Zip: Self explicit.
- Does this consumer have employment goals (Yes or No). Enter yes if the person has an employment goal indicated on the Employment Supplement or other active work assessment tool, regardless of his/her current work or non-work status or age.
- Comments: This can include information on the plan for monitoring services; next review date; roles of informal caregivers, OVR supported employment time frame and expectations, etc.

Finalizing Employment Services in the ISP

Once coordination with OVR is initiated, the Supports Coordinator can finalize employment supports in the ISP when funding is available. When funding is not available, see the Section on PUNS, page 16. Finalization of the ISP also requires that a qualified provider be chosen by the person, and that the type, frequency and duration of services be identified.

Sometimes the person's ISP can be finalized before coordination with OVR is completed, such as when a person needs support to prepare for an immediate job opening or to learn a new job task that cannot wait for the OVR application process to be completed. In situations such as these, MR Bulletin 00-95-23 (See Attachment 1) allows the County MH/MR Program to authorize waiver funded employment support from the date of referral to OVR until the date OVR funding is actually made available. Base funding can also be authorized in this manner.

The Supports Coordinator may confront a situation where a person receives both OVR and the County MH/MR Program funded supported employment services in the same year. In these situations, the ISP should be written to reflect the frequency and duration of services for each agency, along with the providers of service for each agency. Joint funding providers with a Ticket to Work Employment Network (EN), a School District/IU or PA CareerLink would be documented in the ISP in the same way.

The finalized ISP needs to consider whether the person will be able to work full or part time. Some people who accept part time employment may need other types of support when the person is not on the job, such as vocational training, a job club or other support. Some people may choose a couple of part time jobs, or to begin their own business in their spare time at home. Others will require a respite situation or some other place to be until family or direct support professionals are available to pick them up after work. The Supports Coordinators may need to ensure that people are able to return to a prior service or program if a job opportunity is not successful.

People/families should be encouraged to choose their employment support provider as early in the ISP process as possible. People/families can be introduced to providers of employment support while they are still in school or in vocational service settings.

Arranging Transportation
The Supports Coordinator needs to ensure that transportation needs are addressed during the development of the ISP and in monitoring. Job choices are sometimes dictated by transportation options and the person's ability to use them. Learning to use a bus, subway or other form of transportation to work can be included in the person's ISP as part of a transitional work, job finding or job support funded service. Family and friends are sometimes available to provide rides to work. If the person/family/friends cannot arrange transportation, options include:

- Waiver or non-waiver (base-allocation) funded transportation provided as part of a residential provider's rate
- Waiver or non-waiver funded transportation that includes mileage reimbursement for coworkers and others, or bus and subway tickets
- Title XX funding
- County base allocation funding
- Family Resource Services funding when granted as a Special Innovative Service by the OMR Regional Office pursuant to 55 PA Code Chapter 6350.27
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's shared ride or reduced shared ride programs for people with disabilities (PwD) in some rural Pennsylvania Counties
- Deducting the person's cost for transportation as an Individual Work Related Expense (IWRE) for SSI and SSDI recipients

A sample IWRE that includes a deduction for transportation is included in Attachment 4. A PwD summary that includes contact persons is contained in Attachment 2.

Reporting Social Security (SS) and Medical Assistance (MA) Earnings
While earned income can affect a person's eligibility for Social Security, Food Stamps, Public Housing and Medical Assistance benefits, State and Federal programs make it feasible for people to retain much more of their earnings than they could in the past without losing needed health care benefits and services. In taking advantage of State and Federal work incentives, people must report their earnings and assets or savings.

The Supports Coordinator needs to ensure that income reporting responsibilities are assigned before supported employment services are authorized and while the person continues to be employed. When the person is not able to do this reporting without some assistance, family members, residential direct support professionals, guardians, and/or supported employment agencies can provide needed assistance. These responsibilities should also be monitored by the supports coordinator on a regular basis.

Contrary to popular opinion that people with disabilities are penalized for working, the following table shows that an SSI recipient's ability to retain income increases as he or she earns more, even while SSI cash benefits are decreased.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
■ EARNINGS	0	300	500	830	1000	1243
■ SSI	579	471.5	371.5	206.5	121.5	0
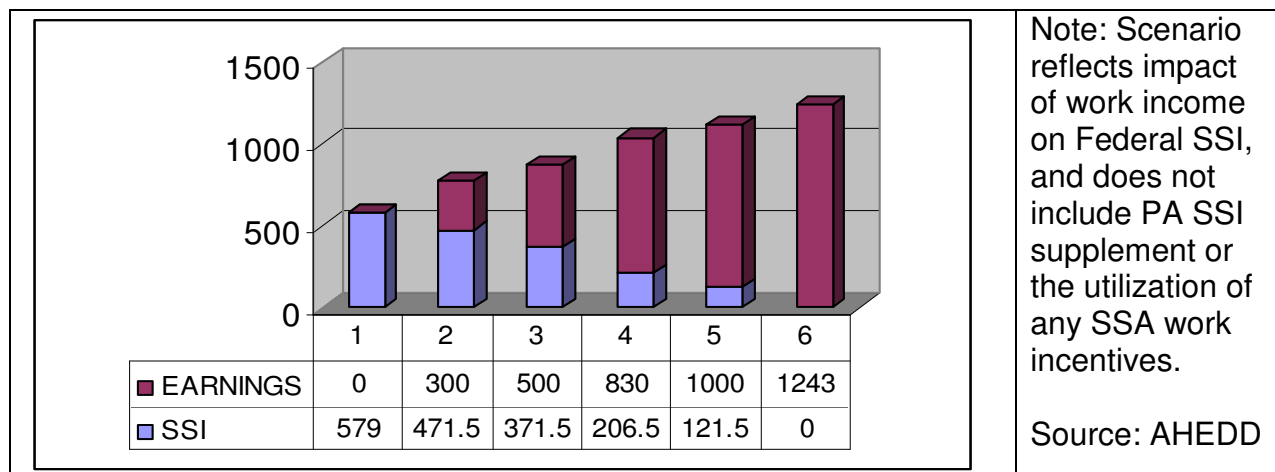
Note: Scenario reflects impact of work income on Federal SSI, and does not include PA SSI supplement or the utilization of any SSA work incentives.

Source: AHEDD

The two main community resources for obtaining information on reporting requirements are the County Assistance Office (CAO) and the Office of Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO). The Supports Coordinator can refer people to the BPAO or CAO as soon as they express interest in employment, and can accompany the person/family to meet with benefits counselors as part of their coordination role. A listing of CAO and BPAO contacts is contained in Attachment 2. A listing of local CAOs can also be found on the web at:
http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/General/AboutDPW/DPWOrganization/OIM/003670281.htm

The County Assistance Office is available to provide information and assistance to people about their earned and unearned income limits under Medical Assistance and about Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD). The CAO worker will be able to remind people of income reporting requirements and to explain MAWD, or Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities. People with SSI and SSDI benefits automatically receive Medical Assistance eligibility. Information about MAWD can be obtained on the web at:
http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/disable/medicalassist/003670301.htm

Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) is available to counsel people with disabilities receiving SSI and SSDI about earned and unearned income limits and help them manage their earnings over time. BPAO counselors are especially helpful in providing an earnings profile for SSI and SSDI recipients so they will know what affect earnings will have on their Social Security benefits. A sample worksheet that BPAO customers receive is contained in Attachment 4.

Locating Services
The Supports Coordinator is responsible for assisting the person in choosing the provider of services who will provide the job finding, support or transitional work services that the person needs. Finding the right job with the right support for the person is generally a function of the provider of employment services, not the Supports Coordinator. Locating employment related services, such as transportation, can also be

delegated to families, residential and employment service providers through the ISP process, and are not services that are provided by the Supports Coordinator.

Monitoring Services
The Supports Coordinator will need to establish the protocol for monitoring employment services as part of the ISP process, in collaboration with OVR, providers of service, the employer and the person/family.

Monitoring an employment service consists of reviewing the person's health and safety on the job, person/family and employee satisfaction, employer satisfaction and cost-effectiveness and outcomes. The manner in which monitoring is done should not disrupt the person or coworkers on the job and can sometimes be accomplished without going to the job site. If monitoring at the work site is done, visits must be arranged with the employer. OVR funded services do not need to be monitored by the County Program.

Monitoring cost-effectiveness of services requires a Supports Coordinator to ensure that the duration and frequency of employment supports are appropriate and conducted in a way that maximizes the use of available resources. Monitoring needs to ensure that:

- Resources are used efficiently, e.g., having one job coach assigned to support different people at a certain job site can be more efficient than having multiple job coaches at the same site
- People are learning their jobs tasks and becoming as independent as possible in all aspects of their work life
- Supervisory staff and coworkers are providing reasonable accommodation and a supportive environment in which to work
- Support duration and frequency are matched to the person's needs and available resources. Services can be reduced and eliminated as the person becomes more acclimated to his/her job and enhanced when support needs to be increased
- The person/family is satisfied with the work situation and employment related services, such as transportation
- The employer is satisfied with the situation, and that concerns are promptly and effectively addressed
- The person/family is reporting income to the Social Security Administration and/or County Assistance Office as needed

PUNS
PUNS (Priority of Urgency of Need for Services) is the statewide practice used in the community mental retardation program to document unmet need for services and support.

The Supports Coordinator is expected to ensure that a person's unmet employment services need is included in PUNS. All persons who cannot obtain funding to achieve a goal established in the ISP must have a PUNS completed for the services they need.

In anticipation of changes in PUNS during Fiscal Year 2005-06, Counties are authorized to apply the following interim criteria for unmet employment related services and support needs until final PUNS criteria are established:

PUNS Status	Interim 2005-06 PUNS Criteria
Emergency	*The person 1) needs to maintain his/her current full or part time community employment when OVR funding is not available, or 2) a funding commitment is needed by the County MH/MR Program for follow-along supported employment to secure OVR funding for intensive supported employment funding.*
Critical	*The person is expected to need follow-along supported employment funding within the next 12 months, taking into account OVR funding availability.*
Planning	*The person is expected to need supported employment funding from the County MH/MR Program in the next 1 to 5 years, taking into account the availability of OVR funding.*

Summary of County Planning, Budgeting, Coordination, Service Delivery and Monitoring Practices to Promote Employment

Practice	Persons/Agencies Involved:	Timing and Reference
Introducing employment to people and families	County registration worker with people (age 14 and over) and family	As part of registration of youth and adults in the MR program – prior to ISP development (See page 8).
Introducing employment in the ISP process	Supports Coordinator with people (age 14 and over) and family. This practice can include referral to discuss employment options with current workers and potential providers of service.	As part of introducing the ISP process to people and families – prior to the selection of providers or services in the ISP (See page 8).
Completing Employment Supplement to the ISP	Supports Coordinator with youth, young adults and adults, including people moving into employment from a vocational facility	Prior to development of ISP (See page 9).
Coordination with OVR	Supports Coordinator and OVR Counselor with all persons who might qualify for OVR funded supported employment	Prior to finalization of ISP, except if services are needed on an emergency basis (See page 11).
Entering ISP related employment information in HCSIS	Supports Coordinator for all persons with an employment goal indicated on the Employment Supplement	Prior to ISP finalization with updates when employment information changes (See page 12).
Finalizing Employment Services in the ISP	Supports Coordinator with County Program and ISP Team	Leading to authorization by the County Program (See page 13).
Arranging Transportation	Supports Coordinator with ISP Team and Providers	Before services are delivered (See page 14).
Reporting SS and MA earnings	Supports Coordinator, BPAO, CAO, SSA, ISP Team	Prior to services being authorized (See page
Locating Services	Supports Coordinator and person/family in cooperation with providers and OVR	After services in the ISP are authorized by the County (See page 16).
Monitoring Services	Supports Coordinator, OVR or designee of non-MR service funding source	At least once a year for non-waiver recipients, and once a quarter for waiver (See page 15).
PUNS	Supports Coordinator ensures that PUNS is recorded for unmet employment services needs	Based on services and outcomes designated in the ISP process (See page 16).

County MH/MR Program Funding

People have multiple options for funding supported employment and employment related services in and outside of the mental retardation program.

Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waiver Funding

Both the Consolidated Waiver and the Person/Family Directed Supports (PFDS) Waiver include supported employment as an eligible service. These waivers have the same service definitions that are applied to non-waiver funded services. Three separate service definitions compose supported employment:

Job finding which means services directed towards supporting people in transition to integrated competitive employment through work that occurs in a location other than a facility subject to Title 55, Chapter 2390.

Job support which means services directed towards supporting people in maintaining integrated competitive jobs of their choice, including training in job assignments, periodic follow-up and/or ongoing support.

Transitional work which means direct services provided to support people in transition to integrated competitive employment through work that occurs in a location other than a 2380 or 2390 licensed facility, including mobile work, a work station in industry, affirmative industry, apprenticeship and enclave.

Current service definitions and procedure codes for waiver funded employment services are in Attachment 4.

Employment Related Services

The Consolidated and PFDS Waivers also permit the use of waiver funding for employment related services, such as career oriented education (Consolidated Waiver only), transportation to and from work, adaptive supplies and equipment and nursing/ specialized services at the work site. Examples of these waiver related services are contained in Attachment 4.

Waiver Services that Do Not Require an OVR letter

While most supported employment services funded under the waiver require an OVR determination letter pursuant to MR Bulletin 00-95-23, certain employment related services and supports do not since the services are outside the current scope of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The following services authorized by a County MH/MR Program do not require an OVR determination letter:

- Funding for emergency or short term on the job services that are not included in the person's current OVR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), including stop gap funding as described in MR Bulletin 00-95-23, transportation to job sites not anticipated in the IPE, and adaptive equipment or other services not anticipated in the IPE
- Funding needed to support a student in a summer job or after school job before the person graduates from high school
- Funding needed for services of a therapist or nurse at the work site

- Funding needed for an ambulance to take the person from the work site to a hospital in case of emergency. (Consolidated Waiver Only)
- Funding needed for in-home supports related to employment such as assistance in completing job training and assignments at home
- Funding for habilitation supplies and equipment that are not covered by OVR in the IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) such as adaptive eating utensils or a modified computer keyboard at work
- Funding for follow-along support after the individual OVR funding has been discontinued
- Funding paid directly to the person's employer or Employment Network (EN) under Ticket to Work for job support provided by the employer, EN and/or a coworker who is employed by that employer or EN. (OVR does not fund employers to provide supported employment, but the waivers do.)

Clarification on Waiver Funding for Supported Employment and Employment Related Services

The following points of clarification are in response to questions raised about employment funding under the waiver. If there are any questions about this information or additional funding barriers, please contact your Regional Waiver Coordinator.

WAIVER SERVICE AREA	CLARIFICATION	CITATION
General	1. Supported employment is a funded service in both the PFDS and the Consolidated Waiver.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12
General	2. Supported employment is a waiver service that must be available in all County MH/MR Programs. No county or provider is authorized to claim that a waiver excludes employment support under either the PFDS or Consolidated Waiver.	MR Bulletins: 00-96-08 00-00-03
General	3. Supported employment is available to a waiver recipient, regardless of whether or not he or she previously lived in an ICF/MR.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12 00-98-04
General	4. Waiver can fund a person to receive more than one habilitation service in the same day, week or month, such as part time supported employment and part time vocational training	MR Bulletin: 00-03-12
General	5. The County cannot limit a person's choice of a qualified provider to providers in a particular County. The County is responsible to provide the person with information on providers of supported employment in adjacent counties	MR Bulletin: 00-00-09
Transportation	6. Transportation is a waiver eligible service to a supported employment site and to a job site for a person who is competitively	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12

	employed. A job site is considered a community setting as defined in the waivers.	
Transportation	7. Residential programs can use waiver funding to transport a person to and from a supported employment or competitive job site as part of their residential habilitation rate or as a separate transportation service.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12
Transportation	8. Supported employment or vocational services providers can use waiver funding to transport a person to and from a supported employment or competitive job as a separate transportation service. Under the current service definitions, transportation is not supposed to be included in the supported employment rate.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12 00-02-07
Transportation	9. Waiver funding can be used to reimburse a coworker's mileage cost to a job site as a transportation service up to the mileage allowance established by the State in the approved waiver.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12
Waiver Funding When the Provider of Employment Support is a Ticket to Work Employment Network (EN)	10. The county can authorize an Employment Network (EN) under Ticket to Work to be a provider of waiver supported employment when the EN has extraordinary costs associated with its job training, as defined in OMR policy.	MR Bulletin: 00-95-23
Funding When the Provider of Employment Support is the Person's Community Employer	11. The waiver recognizes the person's non EN employer as an eligible habilitation provider. Waiver funding can be used to reimburse the employer for extraordinary costs as defined in OMR policy.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12 00-95-23
County responsibility to fund employment services when OVR services are not available	12. The county is responsible to authorize supported employment when this service is authorized in the ISP and OVR funding is not available. People who choose employment services who are not determined eligible for OVR services are still eligible for supported employment services funded under the waiver and must receive funding for this service when it is authorized in the ISP.	MR Bulletins: 00-96-08 00-00-03 00-95-23
MH/MR Funding without an OVR letter of determination	13. The county can authorize certain types of supported employment services without an OVR determination letter. See examples on page 19.	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12 00-96-08 00-95-23
MH/MR Funding to Supplement Services in the OVR IPE	14. The county is authorized to use waiver funding for services which are not included in the person's IPE without requiring an OVR determination letter as long as the service is waiver eligible and included in the	MR Bulletins: 00-01-02 00-02-12 00-96-08 00-95-23

	ISP.	
Residential Service Agency Responsibilities	15. Waiver funded residential service providers are required to adjust their staffing and program schedules to accommodate a person's employment. Budget changes resulting from these adjustments need to be considered as part of the ISP process.	MR Bulletins: 00-02-04 6000-90-06
MAWD Eligibility	16. Waiver funded persons can continue to receive waiver and other MA funded services as a MAWD recipient.	MR Bulletin: 00-03-11
Visiting Nurse, Specialized Therapies, Adaptive Equipment in Work Settings	17. Visiting nurse, specialized therapy and adaptive equipment services can be provided to persons at their work site if authorized in the ISP.	MR Bulletin: 6000-90-05
Mediation, Fair Hearing and Appeal	18. Any decision to deny, reduce or alter approved employment support services in the plan is subject to mediation, fair hearing and appeal.	MR Bulletin: 00-00-09
Support for jobs in other states	19. People in supported employment can receive support on jobs in a contiguous state by a qualified provider.	MR Bulletin 00-01-02 MR Bulletin 00-02-12

Non-Waiver Funding for Employment Support

People registered with the County Mental Retardation program can also access non-waiver funding sources for employment services and support, as summarized in the following table:

MR System Funding	Clarification	Citation
Family Resource Services and Family Driven-Family Support Services	1. Regional OMR approval is expected for using Family Resource funding to support a person's employment as a special innovative service.	55 PA Code Chapter 6350.27
SSBG Title XX	2. People can receive SSBG funding for community employment and related services, although funding is limited	OMH Bulletin: OMH-94-10
ICF/MR	3. People in ICFs/MR can receive supported employment as an active treatment habilitation service under special post-eligibility treatment of income rules.	MR Bulletin: 00-95-04
Base allocation	4. County MH/MR Programs can authorize base funding for job finding, job support and transitional work.	MR Bulletin 00-03-12

Generic and Community Based Funding for Employment Supports

Coordinating generic and community based funding for employment supports can be crucial in assuring that people have the employment support they need. The following list includes major funding sources that can be linked with community mental retardation program resources.

Program or Funding Source	Employment Use	Conditions/Requirements	Contact
OVR for Supported Employment and employer programs	Funding for supported employment, continuing education, and employer programs	Approved Application to OVR and Services Authorized in IPE (Individual Plan for Employment)	OVR District Office
Ticket to Work	Funding to Employment Network to provide job training	Applicant must be accepted by the employment network	A list of area employment networks can be found at: http://www.yourtickettowork.com/endir
IU/School District	Job shadowing, job experience, employment preparation, vo-tech	Student must be enrolled in special education with IEP that includes a post school employment outcome	IU or School District
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Part time employment opportunities for low – income people age 55+	Person must be at least age 55	PA CareerLink or 1-800-872-5627
PA CareerLink	Assistance to job seekers, including summer jobs for students, and payments to employers providing job training	No special requirements. PA CareerLink welcomes all	Area PA CareerLink Office. To locate nearest office, contact www.servicelocator.org or 1-877-872-5627

Work Incentives for People with Disabilities and Their Families

In addition to the program funded resources to promote employment, numerous work incentives are included in Medical Assistance and Social Security for people with disabilities to use their personal resources to find and keep their jobs. These individual work incentives can be engaged with or without program funded resources.

Funding Source	Employment Use	Conditions	Contact
MAWD (Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities)*	A type of Medical Assistance eligibility that allows people with disabilities to work, save, and earn substantially more than they could under any other MA program and continue to keep their Medical Assistance health care coverage and eligibility for long term care services such as HCBS waivers.	People apply for MAWD through County Assistance Office which determines their eligibility. MAWD recipients pay a monthly premium which takes into account both earned and unearned income. Waiver recipients keep their waiver services and receive MAWD.	County Assistance Office MAWD contact or BPAO
IRWE (Impairment Related Work Expense)	Allows SSI/SSDI recipients to deduct personal work related expenses, such as transportation or work clothes, from the income reported to SSA	SSA approval	SSA Office or BPAO
PASS (Plan for Achieving Self Support) Account	Allows SSI recipients to deduct a portion of earnings in order to achieve to save for a vocational goal, such as a car to use for work purposes	SSA Office approval	SSA Office or BPAO
Continuing SSI eligibility under 1619B	Allows continuing SSI eligibility for recipients whose earnings exceed substantial gainful	SSA Office approval	SSA Office or BPAO

	activity ($850/month in 05/06)		
Expedited Reinstatement	Provides a 5 year safety net to return to SSI when a person is terminated from his/her job for disability related reasons	SSA Office approval	SSA Office or BPAO
Student Earned Income Exclusion	Allows a Monthly deduction up to $1,460 (CY 05) for students under age 22 receiving SSI who work	SSA Office approval	SSA Office of BPAO
MA Qualifying Trust/ Special Needs Trust	Allows earnings or savings to be set aside in trust for personal purposes that are not covered by MA services, such as starting up a business, buying a home, or taking a vacation. The trust funds are not counted as MA assets.	MA Qualifying Trusts have information on qualifications, reporting and eligibility.	Local Chapter of the ARC of PA or the State ARC of PA at 717-234-2621. Achieva, formally the ARC of Allegheny, has the Family Trust that can be reached by contacting 412-995-5000.

*
MAWD, or Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, was established by the Pennsylvania legislature in 2001 and became effective in January 2002. MAWD is a significant work incentive for people with disabilities and can be used for Waiver funded recipients, as well as other people enrolled in the mental retardation system. MAWD allows people with disabilities to retain their Medicaid health care and home and community based waiver benefits while they are employed and earning significantly higher levels of compensation than would be permitted under other Medical Assistance coverage. MAWD requires the person to contribute a premium equal to 5% of net income towards the cost of Medical Assistance coverage. The amount of the premium is very reasonable and does not detract from the increased earnings people can expect to retain under MAWD. Another benefit of MAWD is that people can retain earnings, or savings accounts, up to $10,000, which is higher than the resource limit under other Medical Assistance coverage. See current MAWD policy in Attachment 1. Promotional and related information materials on MAWD, including two CDs geared to employers and people/families are available by contacting AHEDD at 866-802-4333.

Employer Resources and Incentives

Various Federal and State programs, including those listed below, offer incentives to business and industry to employ people with disabilities. Providers of employment and OVR services are generally knowledgeable about these employer incentives and can be delegated to coordinate them with the appropriate government agency.

Program	Description	Funding Source	Contact
Ticket to Work			
Federal Tax Incentives	Work Opportunities Tax Credit equals 40% of first $6,000 in wages of prior VR customers, with allowances for part time employees up to 25%	DOL/IRS. Two forms must be completed by employer: IRS Form 8850 and USDOL ETA Form 9061. Forms must be postmarked no later than 21 days after the person starts working	Tax Credit Unit 12th Floor, L &I Building Harrisburg, PA 17120 www.doleta.gov (search word WOTC) or 1-877-828-2050
	Disabled Access Credit provides a tax credit of up to $5,000 for businesses with no more the 30 full-time employees and gross recipients of less than $1M to remove barriers, pay for interpreters and acquire specialized equipment	US Department of Labor/IRS. Requires employer to file IR Form 8826	IRS Office Or 1-800-TAX-FORM
	Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Tax Reduction allows business to deduct up to $15,000 in costs to make business accessible	Section 190 of the IRS Code. Also see IRS Publication 535 on Business Expenses, Chapter 11	IRS Office Or 1-800-TAX-FORM
Pennsylvania Incentives	Employer Incentive Program (EIP) Tax	OVR. Reauthorized under Act 63 of	Labor and Industry Tax Credit Unit no

	Credit Provides tax credit to employers who hire people under welfare to work and VR programs up to $7,200 over 3 yrs.	1999 Amended to include people who have received services under state and VA, VR programs.	later than 21 days after the new employee starts working.
	Independence Capital Access Network (ICAN) provides grants to small businesses to accommodate employees with disabilities for up to $50,000 per year	OVR	OVR District Office or 1-800-442-6351
Other Resources	Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides free services to employers interested in hiring people with disabilities	JAN is supported by the US DoL.	1-800-ADA-WORK www.jan.wvu.edu

Braided Funding for Individualized Supported Employment

The cost of individualized supported employment, compared to facility based vocational and adult training has been recognized as a barrier to achieving employment outcomes. Using current statewide average costs, the following table illustrates how combining various funding sources, also called "Braided funding", can make individualized supported employment a reality by using existing resources.

Funding for Facility Based Vocational Program (240 days of service a year)	1st Yr. Funding for Individual Supported Employment (240 days a year.)	2nd Yr. Funding for Individual Supported Employment (240 days a year)
Source: MH/MR: $8,808	Source: OVR. $2,000 - $4,000 for 1st 90 days of intensive supported employment and community based assessment.*	Source: MH/MR. $8,808 for 204 hours of supported employment at $43.00/hr. for 150 days
	Source: MH/MR. $8,808 for 204 hours of supported employment at $43.00/hr for 150 days	Source: IRWE. People on SSI contribute $10.00/day to pay for transportation

	Source: IRWE. Person on SSI contributes $10.00/day to pay for transportation	Source: OVR. Employer Incentive Program Tax Credit provides employer with $2400
	Source: OVR. Employer Incentive Program Tax Credit provides employer with $2400	

* OVR funding is available for intensive supported employment for competitive positions for the first 90 days of employment based on OVR eligibility criteria, customer need, counselor approval, and funding availability. Supported employment contracts are negotiated between the OVR counselor and the amount of each contract varies based on the position desired and customer need.

Employment Practices for Students in Transition to Adult Life

Summary
The Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act for 2004 (IDEA-04) defines transition as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability within a results oriented and individualized process that focuses on the functional achievement of the child's move from school to adult life. The coordinated set of activities is based on the student's needs, preferences and interests and should include the development of employment and other post-school objectives, along with functional vocational evaluation when appropriate. Employment supports, including job shadowing, career planning and other work experiences, have increasingly become an integral part of the transition process in School Districts and Intermediate Units (IU) across the state.

OMR recommends that transition planning for students with mental retardation, while not mandated by IDEA-04, begins to focus on the students' desired post school outcomes by age 14. By age 16, when transition planning is mandated, the planning process should feature multi-year planning that involves joint planning with the school and adult agencies, including the County MH/MR Program and the Office of Vocational Programs.   Transition responsibilities for County MH/MR Programs are currently provided under a Memorandum of Understanding among the Departments of Education, Public Welfare, Labor and Industry and Health.   A copy of the State Memorandum of Understanding is in Attachment 1.

County MH/MR Program responsibilities for youth and young adults in transition are outlined in OMHSAS Bulletin-00-04, titled: The Roles and Responsibilities of County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Programs in the Development of a Child's Individual Education Plan. Under this bulletin, County MH/MR Programs are authorized to use community mental retardation funds to support employment and other services needed by children in special education as long as the funding is used to provide services that fall within the allowable costs as specified in the MH/MR Act and the Fiscal Manual for the County MH/MR Program (55 PA Code Chapter 4300). Services must also be contained in the person's ISP. A copy of this bulletin is contained in Attachment 1.

Counties can authorize Medicaid waiver funding to support employment services needed by youth and young adults in special education programs based on the same criteria. An example would be funding for supporting a student on a part time or summer job, such as a paper route. Before waiver funding can be used for a service that is contained in the student's IEP, the School District or Intermediate Unit representative must certify that funding under IDEA is not available. Written documentation must be included in the person's record. For additional information on school to work transition and the IDEA, please refer to: http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us, and http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html.

Recommended Agency Practices

The following agency practices were developed and tested by the Lehigh Valley Employment coalition composed of School District, OVR, transportation, provider, County MH/MR Program, support coordinator and advocacy agency representatives. The practices were first tested in Fiscal Year 2003-04 and revised in Fiscal Year 2004-05. A summary table is at the end of the section.

A. <u>Age 14 and 15 Agency Practices</u>. **The practices occur in the school year that the student turns 14 years of age, which can begin in middle school, but is generally the student's first and second year in high school.**

<u>IU/School District</u>:
- Links with the junior/middle school to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education but who may benefit from planning with the adult mental retardation services system
- Invites student to participate in IEP process
- Checks that students meeting mental retardation program criteria are registered with County MR Program
- Refers family to County MR Program, if not registered
- Identifies course of study for post school outcomes and tentative graduation date with student, family and teacher. These features subject to change based on IEP.
- With at least one month lead time, invites County MR Program designee to attend IEP meeting for students who are either 1) registered in the mental retardation program or 2) determined to by the IU/School District to be a candidate for County MR Program services, based on MR program eligibility criteria.
- Invites others who may be significant to student's achievement to attend IEP meeting, e.g., Career and technical education, wrap-around provider
- Organizes teacher orientation focusing on adult agency services, practices and eligibility
- Forwards student assessment forms to County MR Program, OVR and other adult service agencies at the beginning of the school year to consider changes and promote efficient record sharing
- After IEP meeting attended by County MR, obtains information releases from family to disseminate student's assessment and other relevant information to the County MR Program

<u>County MH/MR Program</u>:
- Designates Supports Coordinator(s) or other representative to attend early IEP mtg. The County ensures that the representative participates in at least one IEP meeting during the student's first two years in high school.
- On invitation of School District/IU, Supports Coordinator or other County MR representative attends IEP meeting where he/she:

- o Explains employment and other community mental retardation services, ISP process, and eligibility in the community mental retardation system
- o Provides family with a packet that includes information on employment and other services and supports, advocacy/parent agencies offering family peer support during the transition, <u>AND</u> the name of the County MR contact person if Supports Coordinator is not already assigned
- o Initiates ISP process when the student/family is expected to need community mental retardation services (not including Supports Coordination) in the next two years
- o Works with student and family to identify any unmet needs, including those needs related to employment based on desired post school outcomes. If there is not sufficient funding to provide for these needs, the MR representative completes a Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) form with the person and family
- Participates in orientation to teachers, explaining mental retardation services, PUNS process, ISP process, eligibility, and transition roles and responsibilities. Orientation content is developed with adult service provider representatives who may be invited to accompany the County MR representative.
- Advises School District if assessment forms need to be changed and meets to discuss as necessary
- Distributes family packet of information to School District for dissemination to teachers and administration
- Provides IU/School District with current MR program eligibility criteria

<u>Office of Vocational Rehabilitation</u>:
- Participates in teacher in-service, providing information on services, eligibility and work incentives for persons with disabilities such as MAWD, Ticket to Work and other employment Resources such as SSI/SSDI Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) and PA CareerLink
- Provides IU/School District with current OVR eligibility criteria
- Advises School District if assessment forms need changes and meets to discuss as necessary

<u>Other Agencies</u>:
- Advocacy agencies confirm with IUs and School Districts availability to provide peer support to family and students during the transition process
- Advocacy agencies ensure that organization representatives have understanding of transition processes
- Advocacy agencies participate in teacher orientation, providing information on the type of peer support that is being offered to families and how to access it
- Provider agencies contribute to information for family/student packet.

B. Agency Practices That Occur Two Years Before Graduation Year. These practices generally occur for students age 16 and 17.

IU/School District:
- Meets with student, family, teacher, transition team representative and adult service representative(s) to finalize annual IEP based on student's desired post school outcomes
- Checks on student's enrollment in County MR program, referring family and student to MH/MR program if needed
- Invites student's Supports Coordinator or County Representative to attend IEP meeting. Develops action plan with Supports Coordinator on IEP Statement of Coordinated Services and Activities form.
- Offers unpaid "work experience," work assessment and/or other employment option(s) in line with student's desired post-school outcome of employment. Employment options are offered to students with severe mental retardation and multiple impairments, including students who do not meet OVR eligibility criteria.
- Invites OVR to participate in student's final transition (IEP) meeting of the school year to introduce OVR services, application and IPE process and eligibility
- Clarifies action steps with OVR representative based on desired post school outcomes
- After the IEP meeting attended by OVR, obtains written release to send OVR a copy of work assessments for students applying for or expecting to qualify for OVR services
- Shares copy of student's work assessments with County MR Program and OVR
- Reviews student's progress and, if appropriate, suggests changes in expected graduation date to family/student based on updated outcomes/ career opportunities/adult service funding
- Explores out-of-school program curricula for students expected to stay in school after age 18, including curricula involving students attending area colleges, trade schools, business and community service agencies
- Ensures information provided by adult service agencies, such as information on Social Security benefits, MAWD and Ticket to Work is shared with students and families, including contacts for additional information at CAO and BPAO
- Provides County MH/MR Program with information on students in IU/special education who decide to leave and "drop out" of school so the County can follow-up on their need for MH/MR services

County MH/MR Program:
- Assigns a Supports Coordinator to each student who is expected to need community mental retardation services above and beyond support coordination after graduation

- Supports Coordinator:
  - Attends Transition meeting(s)
  - Updates PUNS with person's family based on IEP and student assessments and advises IU/School District and parents of most current PUNS status
  - Updates family and student on services and system changes, including employment changes
  - Updates family and student regarding summer job opportunities that can be supported with community mental retardation funding
  - Informs School District designee and family on PUNS status
  - Ensures School District assessments are included in the student's ISP.
  - Provides student and family with packet of information regarding post-school employment options

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation:
- Assigns OVR district representative(s) to transition.
- Provides IU/School District with copies of information to distribute to students with disabilities. Information consists of current brochure and outreach information on MAWD, PA CareerLink, BPAO, and CAO.
- OVR district representative
  - Attends IEP meetings of students expected to apply for OVR services
  - Provides information to family/student about services, application and planning process and eligibility
  - Updates family and student regarding summer job opportunities through OVR, CareerLink, etc.
  - Invites students who may meet OVR criteria to consider OVR application
  - Creates file for student assessment information to consider at the time of application review and IPE development
  - Provides family/student with a packet of information including contact information

Other Agencies:
- Advocacy agencies offer family support in transition

C. Agency Practices that Occur One Year Before the Year of Graduation. These practices would apply to students who are at 17, 18, 19 and 20, depending on their year of graduation.

IU/School District:
- Offers continuing community based work experience for students with a post-school outcome of employment.
  - Work experience opportunities are offered to all students with mental retardation with a post-school employment outcome, including students who may not meet OVR eligibility criteria

- o Extended work experience opportunities are offered in the student's preferred career choice(s), including paid supported employment, to students who are expected to apply for OVR services
- Invites the student's Supports Coordinator and OVR representative to attend IEP meeting. Updates action steps in IED based on this meeting.
- Offers information on summer job support, if available, based on information provided by CareerLink, OVR and/or County MH/MR, municipal programs
- Organizes family fair in coordination with adult service agencies

County MR Program:
- Assigns Supports Coordinator to attend transition meeting(s).
- Support coordinator:
  - o Provides update on services
  - o Updates PUNS with person's family based on changes to the IEP and student assessments, and advises IU/School District and family of current PUNS status
  - o Participates in planning family fair, linking to MR network provider agencies, advocacy agencies and employers
  - o Participates in IEP with OVR and completes agreed to action steps
  - o If not otherwise begun, ensures person centered planning process is initiated before the end of the summer recess for students expected to need community mental retardation services after graduation. <u>This planning process includes coordination with OVR around employment services and support for students with employment as a post school outcome.</u>
  - o Places student's work assessments in ISP file
  - o Provides information on summer job supports availability
  - o Provides student and family with packet of information regarding post-school employment options

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation District Office:
- Assigns designee to attend IEP meeting for all students who are applying for or expected to apply for OVR services
- Participates in information sharing "jobs" event which offers family and students the opportunity to link with provider networks, area employers and other community agencies
- OVR designee
  - o Attends IEP meeting with MR Supports Coordinator and completes agreed to action steps
  - o Updates student and family about services, application process and eligibility, including information on MAWD, SSI/SSDI eligibility, BPAO, etc.
  - o Meets with Supports Coordinator around ISP employment service planning

Other Agencies:
- Advocacy agencies offer family support in transition

- Advocacy agencies offer family support in transition and help with employment fair.
- Provider agencies, SSA, ENs, BPAO participate in employment fair

D. <u>Agency Practices that Occur in Last Year of High School/Year of Graduation.</u> These practices generally occur with students who are ages 18-21, depending on the year the student graduates or leaves school.

<u>IU/School District</u>:
- Continues work experience for students with an employment outcome
- Holds two IEP meetings with adult service agencies to ensure service/supports are in place after graduation. One meeting will be held in the beginning of the school year and another before the beginning of the last marking period. Additional meetings will be based on need. The last IEP meeting will result in the development of an EXIT IEP. Updates Action tasks based on meetings.
- For students with ISPs and IPEs, arranges for student/family visits to potential providers, employers, and support service agencies in coordination with the County MR Program and OVR
- Forwards work assessments to OVR and MH/MR Program for ISP and IPE assessment purposes
- Verifies that students/families have updated information on SSI and SSDI and MAWD, and Medicaid Protected Trusts, and refers to CAO and BPAO if not

<u>County MH/MR Program</u>:
- Completes ISP per MH/MR Employment Manual for all for students being registered with the County MR Program
- For students who are expected to enter the waiver, ensures that OVR completes Determination Notice for supported employment so that funding responsibilities can be included in the ISP
- Confirms funding status for employment and other community services after graduation
- Ensures information on graduating students with an employment outcome is shared with employment network
- Issues emergency funding request to Regional Office if employment funds are not included in student's budget in the year of the student's graduation, copying the School District, advocacy association and OVR
- Ensures that the Supports Coordinator attends IEP transition meetings called by IU/School District
- If not already provided, provides student and family with packet of information regarding post-school employment options

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation:
- Attends IEP meeting of students who are applying for or registered with OVR. Completes agreed to tasks in Action Plan
- Completes IPE for students who have accepted applications, using student's assessment information to determine eligibility for services, career options and supported employment funding to the extent possible
- Arranges, in cooperation with the School District, for student/family to select provider agency prior to graduation
- Coordinates supported employment funding with County MR Program in accordance with Employment Manual practices, including completion of Determination Notice for Waiver recipients
- Assists the person/family in selecting an employment provider

Providers of Employment Support:
- In collaboration with the School District and adult service agencies:
  - Arranges for student to select job coach
  - Initiates employer outreach and job finding in conjunction with IU/School District and support coordinator
  - Confirms availability of employment support funding from County MR, OVR and other sources before graduation if possible

Other Agencies:
- Advocacy agencies offer family support in transition
- Employment providers prepare to render service

E. Agency Practices that Occur in the Years After Last Year of School or Graduation. These practices would apply to students who graduate, age 18-21, and to students who leave school without a degree.

The Adult Service agencies and School Districts will share post-evaluation outcome information for purposes of quality improvement. This information includes:

1) Annualized aggregate cost and utilization data of employment services for people through age 25 from HCSIS
2) Annualized aggregate person and family satisfaction data for employment and vocational services for person through age 25 from IM4Q (Independent Monitoring for Quality)
3) Annualized aggregate cost and utilization on supported employment services from OVR for customers through age 25
4) Annualized aggregate post graduation survey results from IU/School Districts.

Information will be shared with the Interagency Transition Coordinating Council and other agencies.

Summary of Employment Related Transition Practices

The chart on the following page summarizes the roles of the School District/IU, County MH/MR Program, OVR and other community agencies based on the practices described in this chapter. The summary is recommended as a handy guide for transition coordinators, Supports Coordinators and OVR administrators and counselors who do not need the specificity of functions described earlier in this chapter and want to know the basic transition roles of each agency to promote employment outcomes.

All transition services offered by OVR are based on customer eligibility, availability of funding and district guidelines for transition services. Questions and comments regarding these areas should be raised with the District OVR office.

	8th Grade or 1st Yr of HS (Age 14-15)	Second Year Before Grad Year or Age 16	One Year Before Grad Year	Final or Graduation Year
IU/School District Practices	-Invites student to IEP and develops IEP -Links with Middle School to ID students not in Special Education **-Checks on registration with County MR and refers.** -Invites County MR to IEP meeting with other agency and School District (Vo-Tech) reps. -Organizes annual teacher orientation involving VR, County MR and other adult agencies -Forwards forms to County MR and OVR for review -Obtains releases for info	-Finalizes IEP with invitations to County MR -Initiates transition Action plans with OVR and MR -Checks registration with MR -Offers work experience -Invites OVR to end of year IEP mtg. -Ensures 16 yr olds have information on SSI changes and MAWD -Shares assessment info -Suggests change in graduation date if appropriate. -Explores out of school curricula options for 18-21 yr olds	-Offers work experience on post school outcomes **-Invites County MR and OVR representative to attend IEP meetings. Updates transition Action planning in IEP.** -Organizes employment fair -Shares assessment info -Offers out of school options for 18-21 yr olds	-Continues work experience programs -Updates Transition Action Plan in IEP with OVR and MR. -Forwards student assessment information to County MR and OVR -Checks that students have MAWD, SSI, and SSDI change information and refers to OVR as necessary.
District OVR Practices	-Participates in teacher orientation -Reviews IU/District forms -Provides IU/District with current eligibility criteria	**-Assigns OVR designee to School District for students with employment outcome.** **-In last semester, OVR designee attends transition meeting and** **-Provides info to IU on SSI, MA changes, MAWD, etc** **-Initiates OVR application as appropriate** -Updates student's IPE file with IU assessments and Uses assessment to determine OVR eligibility -Provides summer job info	-Assigns designee to attend Transition team mtg. -Meets with MH/MR on employment support for children who do not meet OVR -Helps organize employment fair with ENs. -Develops IPE for eligible students -Meets on Transition Action Plan with MR and IUS district -Provides summer job info (CareerLink)	-Completes Transition action plan tasks -Attends IEP meetings on invitation of School District -Attends ISP meetings on invitation with MR support coordinator -Completes IPE for services after graduation who meet OVR criteria -Assists student in selecting provider -Signs waiver letter for HCBS waiver recipients
County MH/MR Practices	-Engages PUNS based on need -Participates in teacher orientation -Reviews IU forms -Assigns support coordinator or program designee to attend IEP on invitation of IU. -Support Coordinator or county designee explains services, PUNS, eligibility and provides info packet -Provides IU/District with current eligibility criteria	-Assigns supports coordinator for students expected to need services after grad. -Supports coordinator attends transition meeting, updates PUNS, updates family on service changes, and assists in locating summer job support if needed. -Updates ISP file with IU Assessments -Provides summer job information.	Supports coordinator attends transition meeting to discuss updates. -Updates PUNS -Ensures assessments are included in ISP file -Initiates ISP process in summer before senior yr, including coordination with OVR -Helps organize employment with provider network and advocates.	-Completes ISP for services after graduation. -Arranges for student to choose provider -Confirms PUNS for student services after graduation. Contacts Region if funds are not provided. -Completes assigned transition tasks in Action plan -Provides County and OVR employment and other information from data warehouse
Other Agency Practices	-Advocacy associations offer family support in transition and participate in teacher orientation. -Providers offer input into teacher orientation	Advocacy association offer family support in transition	-Advocacy associations offer family support in transition and help with employ fair. -Provider agencies, SSA, ENs, BPAO participate in employment fair	-Advocacy associations offer family support in transition -Employment providers prepare to render service

Recommended Family and Student Transition Practices to Promote Employment
The following recommended Family and Student practices were developed by the Lehigh Valley Employment coalition to underscore the importance of family and student participation in their IEP and the school to work practices that are created by area agencies. A graphic summary of these practices is contained on page 42.

Age 14 and 15 practices – These practices occur in the middle school year that the student turns 14 years of age, which can begin in middle school, but is generally the student's first and second year of high school.

Parents/Family
• Meet with their child to discuss future activities beyond high school
• Register with and apply for services from the County MH/MR Program to clarify their future service needs (residential, employment), and waiting list possibilities
• Meet with school representatives (transition coordinator, teachers) to discuss their child's curriculum in light of desired transition outcomes
• Alert extended family and other natural supporters that their assistance will be needed once the child leaves school
• Participate in the development of a comprehensive positive personal profile of their son or daughter. This may be accomplished through a questionnaire, an interview, or through a person-centered planning meeting.
• Meet with a Supports Coordinator from the County MH/MR Program

Students
• Meet with the family to discuss future activities beyond high school
• Meet with family and school representatives (transition coordinator, teachers) to discuss their student's curriculum in light of desired transition outcomes
• Alert extended family and other natural supporters that their assistance will be needed once the child leaves school. These people may be invited to the student's IEP/transition meeting.
• Participate in the development of a comprehensive positive personal profile for himself/herself. This may be accomplished through a questionnaire, an interview, e-portfolio or through a person-centered planning meeting.
• Meet with a Supports Coordinator from the County MH/MR Program

Practices that occur two years before graduation – These practices generally occur for students age 16 and 17.

Parents/Family
• Meet with school personnel to complete all components of the IEP that deal with transition
• Arrange with the student for visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers
• Update the profile of the student, described above
• Meet with representatives of OVR, adult service agencies, as well as OMR.
• Self-exploration to identify interests

Students
- Meet with student and school personnel to complete all components of the IEP that deal with transition. The student should participate as actively as possible in this meeting
- Visit specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers as developed through the IEP and ISP
- Contribute to the updated profile
- Meet with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies

Practices that occur one year before the year of graduation – These practices would apply to students who are at 17, 18, 19 and 20, depending on their year of graduation.

Parents/Family
- Meet with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition
- Arrange for additional student visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers
- Update the profile of the student, described above
- Meet with representatives of OVR, adult service agencies, as well as the County MR Program Supports Coordinator

Student
- Meet with school family and personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. The student should participate as actively as possible in this meeting.
- Visit to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers arranged by the school/family
- Contribute to the updated profile
- Meet with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies, as well as the County MR Program Supports Coordinator

Practices that occur in the last year of high school/year of graduation – These practices generally occur with students who are ages 18 – 21, depending on the year the student graduates or leaves school.

Parents/Family
- Meet with student and school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition
- Arrange for additional visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers
- Update the profile of the student, described above
- Meet with representatives of OVR, adult service agencies, as well as the County MR Program Supports Coordinator, to make final arrangements for service provision. This includes completing service plans such as the ISP and IPE

- Meet with representatives of post-secondary education or training programs to arrange for services

Students
- Meet with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. The student should participate as actively as possible in this meeting.
- Visit specific businesses, post-secondary education programs and/or adult service providers as arranged by the school and adult service agency.
- Contribute to the updated profile
- Meet with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies, as well as the County MH/MR Program, to make final arrangements for service provision. This includes completing service plans such as the IPE.
- Meet with representatives of post-secondary education or training programs to arrange for attendance, if appropriate, and/or services if applicable
- Attend and celebrate their graduation with family, friends, teachers and people who provide them support

OVR funding and availability note

All transition services offered by OMR are based on customer eligibility, availability of funding and district guidelines for transition services. Questions and comments regarding these areas should be raised with the District OVR office

	8th Grade or 1st Yr of HS (Age 14-15)	Second Year Before Grad Year or Age 16	One Year Before Grad Year	Final or Graduation Year
Parents/Family	• Meets with their child to discuss future activities beyond high school. • Registers with and applies for services from County MH/MR Program, and will clarify their future service needs. • Meet with school representatives to discuss their child's curriculum in light of desired transition outcomes. • Alerts extended family and other natural supporters that their assistance will be needed once the child leaves school. • Participates in the development of a comprehensive positive personal profile of their son or daughter. • Meets with a Supports Coordinator from County MH/MR	• Meets with school personnel to complete all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Arranges for visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Updates the profile of the student, described above. • Meets with representatives of OVR, adult service agencies, as well as OMR.	• Meets with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Arranges for additional visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Updates the profile of the student, described above. • Meets with representatives of OVR, adult service agencies, as well as OMR. • Is aware that their child is or will be of the age of majority.	• Meets with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Arranges for additional visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Updates the profile of the student. • Meets with representatives of OVR, adult service other natural agencies, as well as OMR, to make final arrangements for service provision. • If applicable, meets with representatives of post-secondary education or training programs to arrange for attendance and services as appropriate. • Arranges a graduation celebration, with invitations sent to extended family and supporters.
Student	• Meets with the family to discuss future activities beyond high school. • Along with his or her family, meets with school representatives (transition coordinator, teachers) to discuss their child's curriculum in light of desired transition outcomes. • Alerts extended family and other natural supporters that their assistance will be needed once the child leaves school. • The student will participate in the development of a comprehensive positive personal profile himself/herself. • The student will meet with a Supports Coordinator from County MH/MR Program.	• Along with the family, meets with school personnel to complete all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Along with their family, arranges for visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Contributes to the updated profile. • Meets with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies, as well as County MH/MR Program.	• Along with the family, meets with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Along with their family, arranges for visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Contributes to the updated profile. • Meets with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies, as well as County MH/MR Program. • Is aware of his/her responsibilities, as he/she turns to the age of majority.	• Meets with school personnel to update all components of the IEP that deal with transition. • Arranges for visits to specific businesses, post-secondary education programs, and/or adult service providers. • Contributes to the updated profile. • Meets with representatives of OVR and private provider agencies, as well as County MH/MR Program, to make final arrangements for service provision. • If applicable, meets with representatives of post-secondary education or training programs to arrange for services. • Along with the family, arranges for a graduation celebration, with invitations sent to extended family and other natural supporters.

Employment in MR System Quality Management Framework

The following quality management resources have been devoted to improving the quality of employment outcomes for people with mental retardation and other disabilities in Pennsylvania. People receiving services, advocates, family members and agency personnel are invited to participate in this quality management structure. Directories of current Committee members are included in Attachment #5.

OMR PAC Committee on Employment
- Purpose: Advise the State Office of Mental Retardation on improving the quality of employment outcomes for citizens in the mental retardation services system
- Membership: Self and family advocates, providers of service, State and county administrators
- Current Priorities: Policy clarification; youth in transition; technical assistance for Supports Coordinators; support for employment within the PAC
- Contact for further information: Rocco Cambria at rocco.cambria@ahedd.org or telephone (717) 763-0968.

QM Committee on Employment, Career and Vocational Outcomes
- Purpose: Utilize quality management practices and available data to promote employment, career and vocational outcomes for people in the mental retardation system, regardless of their living arrangement.
- Membership: Self and family advocates, providers of service, State and County Administrators
- Current Priorities: Establishing and reviewing performance measures to evaluate success of OMR employment initiatives; revision of County employment handbook; development of standard practices in the MR system; clarify employment related to ICFs/MR; development of communities of practice; information sharing; supports coordination tool kit development; customer satisfaction and outcomes survey development.
- Contact for further information: Melissa Allar at meallar@state.pa.us or Dana Olsen at dolsen@state.pa.us.

ACE (Advisory Committee on Employment)
- Purpose: To facilitate feedback and participation from stakeholders, consumers, advocates, services providers, State and Federal agencies related to Medicaid Infrastructure Grant activities which include MAWD outreach, mini-grants to promote employment using MAWD and County based pilots including a pilot for promoting employment for people with physical disabilities.
- Membership: Consumer Health Coalition, PA Council on Independent Living, PA Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, PA Mental Health Consumer Association, PA Protection and Advocacy, PATTAN, PA Transportation Alliance, Speaking for Ourselves, PA Providers Association, PA Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations, The Sierra Club, PA Health Law Project, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Business Leadership Network, UCP of PA, Geisinger Medical

Center, PA Developmental Disabilities Council, SSA, CareerLink, Goodwill, State agencies
- Current Priorities: Promote Ticket to Work, MAWD and related employment initiatives
- Contact for further information: Ms. Carol Tooker, MIG Director, 717-772-7815.

State Leadership Team for Transition
- Purpose: To build and support sustainable community partnerships that create opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to transition from secondary education to the post-secondary outcomes of competitive employment; education, training and lifelong learning; community participation; and healthy lifestyles. The foundation of the Team's work depends on steadfast leadership, cross-system policy development and fidelity to evidence-based, quality-driven practices.
- Membership: Representatives from State Departments of Education, Labor and Industry, Health and Welfare, families/consumers
- Current Priorities: Development of communities of practice; post-school outcomes survey; data sharing; State Transition conference; Mentoring Days
- Contact for further information: Melissa Allar, Office of Mental Retardation, meallar@state.pa.us.

Attachments

Attachment 1: State Policy and Procedures on Employment
1. Position paper: Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council Position Paper on Employment
2. MR Bulletin 6000-90-06: Policy on Employment for Persons with Mental Retardation
3. MR Bulletin 00-95-23: Coordination of Vocational Training and Supported Employment Under 2176 Waiver
4. OMHSAS Bulletin 00-04:   Roles and Responsibilities of County MH/MR Programs in the Development of a Child's IEP
5. MR Bulletin 00-03-11: Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities in the Community Mental Retardation Program
6. Memorandum of Understanding: State MOU for Students with Disabilities in Transition. (Abbreviated version)
7. MR Bulletin draft: Updated OMR Employment Policy
8. MR Bulletin draft: ICF/MR Employment Policy

Attachment 2: Resource Directory
1. County MH/MR Program Employment Point Persons
2. Regional OMR Employment Point Persons
3. OVR District Office addresses and local/toll free phone numbers
4. Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach Program (BPAO) Offices
5. County Assistance Offices
6. Local Transition Coordinating Council Directory
7. Rural Transportation for People with Disabilities Program (PwD) Fact Sheet and Local Contacts

Attachment 3: County Registration and Individual Support Planning Material
1. Employment Brochure: Take Charge of Your Future – Choose Work
2. Employment Supplement to the Individual Support Plan (05/06 Edition)
3. ISP Screens with Employment and OVR references in HCSIS

Attachment 4: Fiscal Management Information
1. MR Bulletin 00-03-12: Service Definitions and Procedures Codes Related to Employment and Related Services (Abbreviated version for Supplemental employment services only)
2. Scenario Analysis of earned income, SSI, IRWE and Impact on Consumer Income
3. AHEDD Flyer: Guide for Promoting Employment of Young Adults Receiving or Eligible for SSA Benefits

Attachment 5: Quality Management Information

Email Listing of OMR-PAC Employment Committee Members, 7/05
Email Listing of QM Committee on Employment, Career and Vocational Outcomes, 7/05
DPW Advisory Committee on Employment
Current Cost and Utilization Data on Employment and Related Services
Pennsylvania Community on Transition State Leadership Team