

Working Together To Reach Employment Goals For Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Guide #1 The Basics of VR/DD Supported Employment for Support Service Brokerage and OVRs Staff

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Support Service Brokerage Staff
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Services
Administrative & Field Staff

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Introduction

A Mandate For Partnership

Beginning in 2002, new support services and funds became available through the Staley Settlement to help individuals with developmental disabilities maintain independence at home and in their communities. The Staley Settlement represented a renewed opportunity to strengthen the partnership that brings together time-limited services provided through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) and long-term support available through Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) and DD local resources to help individuals with developmental disabilities get and keep a job through supported employment. Although there had been success in interagency or joint efforts between local Support Service Brokerage Personal Agents and VR Counselors, the service system lacked a clear model of how to service providers would best work together.

An Interagency Workgroup was established in late 2003. Members of the workgroup included Brokerage Directors, Personal Agents, VR Counselors, VR Branch Managers, family members of people with developmental disabilities, advocates for people with developmental disabilities as well as representatives from both DHS' Staley Implementation Team and OVRs' Administration Unit. Their mandate was to:

- Identify the process that would support effective services and real employment outcomes for customers;
- Develop and or identify tools that would increase staff and customer understanding and participation in the process.

This diverse membership brought varying levels of understanding of the service systems involved and varying experiences related to the success of collaboration between systems. Through honest communication and personal commitment, the workgroup members discovered that they were united in their belief that employment has great value, builds self-esteem, encourages self-empowerment and enriches the life of the worker as well as the lives of those closest to him or her.

The Products of the Workgroup

The VR/DD Workgroup is proud to share with you the following materials designed to increase understanding and success for all involved in a partnership to achieve competitive employment.

Guide #1 The Basics

Identifies the common values, process, general guidelines and outcomes that are the foundation of the VR/DD partnership to achieve supported employment for common customers.

Guide #2 The Toolkit

Identifies interagency guidelines and best practice tools for each major stage in the service delivery process.

Customers' Guide

Information provided in a user friendly manner to help persons with developmental disabilities and their families understand and make informed choices in the process of getting and keeping a job and career.

You are presently reading Guide #1, The Basics.

A Note on Terminology

Throughout these guides, individuals with developmental disabilities will be referred to as “customers.” The authors acknowledge that service providers outside the brokerage system use other terms, including client, consumer and participant. Since the term “customer” better reflects an individual’s right to choose to participate and to engage as a full partner in the process, that term has been selected for use.

The term “DD Personnel” is used in situations where the policy relates to Brokerage Personal Agents assisting customers with distinct person centered support service plans and budgets and/or County DD Services Coordinators assisting customers with an ISP that may include a slot payment to a designated provider for employment or other services.

Common Values in VR/DD **Supported Employment Services**

As the workgroup began to formulate goals and share ideas, it became clear that all members shared a set of common values:

- Persons with significant disabilities can work for real wages in community settings.
- Public agencies can provide leadership in assisting customers in exploring and achieving gainful employment that matches their talents and abilities.
- Service access and decision-making should be effective and timely.
- OVRs and SPD (Brokerages and County DD Programs) can work as “team players” for and with each individual with developmental disabilities. Everyone brings expertise to the table to assist the individual.
- Supported Employment is a means for OVRs and DD (state SPD, county CDDP and local Brokerage) to work together to help a customer choose, learn obtain and keep a job/career.
- Customer choice, involvement and responsibility are shared values evident in all phases of OVRs and DD service delivery.
- Services are provided with respect for each agency’s rules and regulations and with openness to what will work for each individual customer.
- All available resources should be used to achieve employment goals.

Supported Employment Service Delivery Stages

After establishing these values, the group was able to identify and define specific stages in service delivery, which were common across customers and geographic locations:

Stage 1: Employment Screening

A Personal Agent uses Person Centered Plan, VR Eligibility Checklist and other information to identify potential joint service customers.

Stage 2: VR Application Meeting

The initial meeting between the customer, family, PA and counselor (the Team) to review supported employment process, timelines and resources. This meeting is expected to end with a VR file being opened.

Stage 3: Establishing Vocational Goals

The team will identify present interests/goals; if needed they will arrange an Employment PCP or additional assessment activities to identify career choices.

Stage 4: Supported Employment Planning and Funding Implementation

Team develops joint plan (VR IPE + Brokerage ISP) based on customer choice and potential barriers. The goals, resources, benchmarks, expected timelines and criteria for handoff from VR to DD are identified and defined.

Stage 5: Vendor Selection

Based on plan design, consumer choice and interagency consensus, the team will identify vendor(s) and document projected service hours, expected reporting requirements, designated benchmarks for outcomes, etc.

Stage 6: Delivering and Monitoring Short Term Supported Employment Services

Vendor will report to team every 3-4 weeks on job development, placement, training to stabilization and the process of securing necessary ongoing supports.

Stage 7: VR Case Closure: Rehabilitated or Other

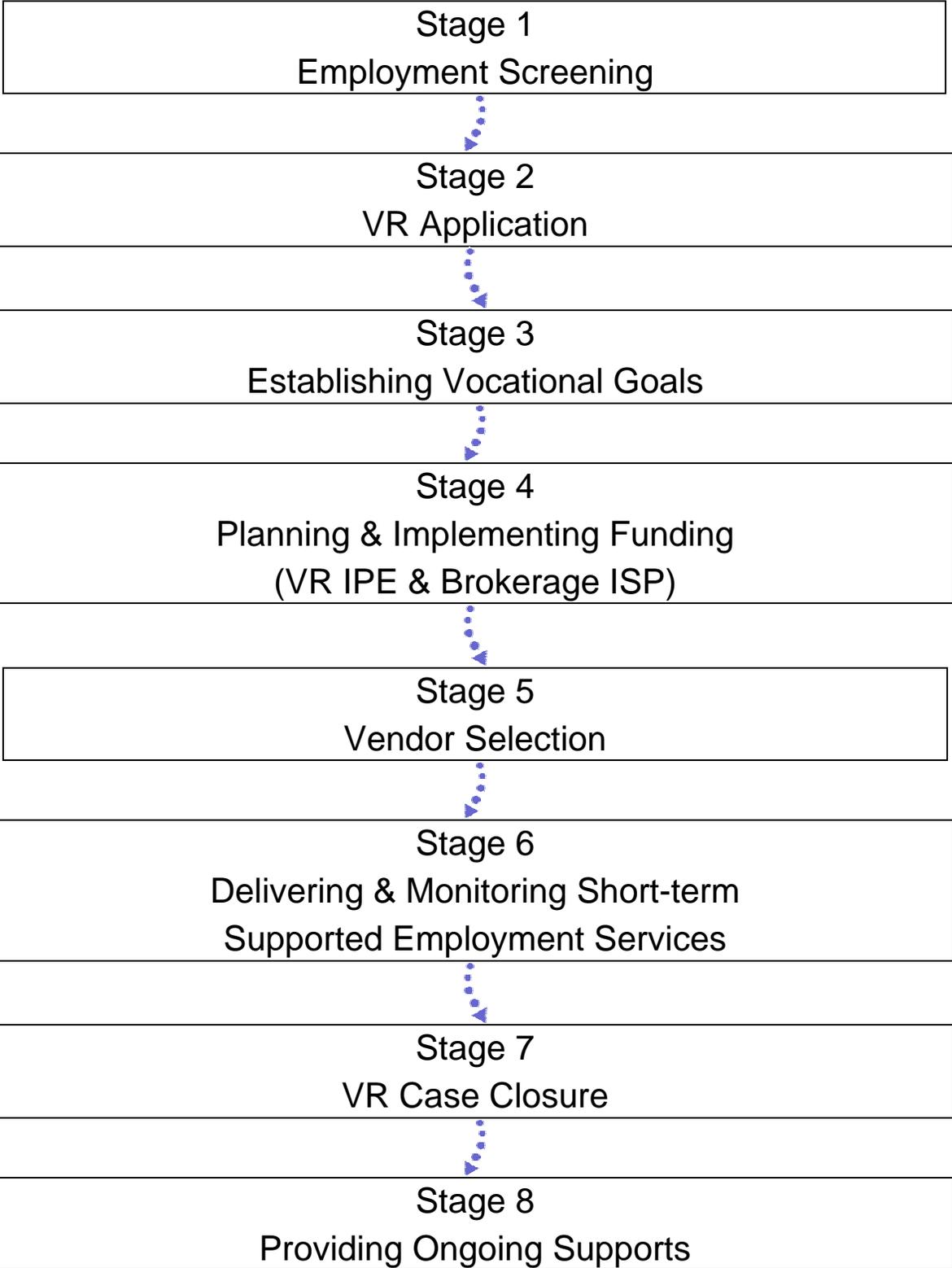
For “Rehabilitated” closures, the customer has achieved job stabilization and has maintained employment in an integrated setting at a competitive wage for at least 90 days (or has a timeline for attaining a competitive wage in place) and the Brokerage Long Term Support plan has been placed in VR file.

For “Other than Rehabilitated” closures, the VR file is closed and the Personal Agent, family and customer are aware of the reason for the closure as well as what must happen before VR can work with the customer again.

Stage 8: Ongoing Employment Support

Occurs through the Individualized Support Plan and is monitored by the Personal Agent.

Supported Employment Services Flowchart



Supported Employment Service Flowchart

As seen in the graphic on the previous page, there are several stages to the service process that lead to successful employment in a supported employment setting. A brief overview of each stage is included here, to serve as a quick reference for OVRs and Brokerage Staff.

Stage 1: Employment Screening

County DD or Brokerage Staff Screening

- Complete General Person Centered Plan (PCP) to see if individual identifies employment as a goal.
 - If the goal is employment in an integrated setting at a competitive wage, proceed with flowchart and in partnership with VR.
 - An integrated setting is one where workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities are employed and interact together.
 - Job Coaches and others providing employment supports are not included in the definition of “workers without disabilities” for this definition.
 - Enclaves cannot be defined as integrated settings.
 - If the goal is sheltered employment or supported employment at sub-minimum wage, proceed with planning without VR as a partner
- PA reviews Essential Worker Characteristics document to ensure the customer is ready to go to work.
 - Based on results, PA may provide information about VR services, benefits counseling and initial resource analysis.
 - PA offers to attend VR orientation/intake session if customer is interested and available
- Brokerage staff will work with customer and significant others to complete VR Eligibility Checklist to the best of their ability.

Stage 2: VR Application Meeting

Personal Agent contacts OVRs to schedule a meeting with the VR Counselor. This meeting should include customer, customer's advocate(s) or family, Personal Agent and OVRs staff. Discuss the following:

- Interest in employment
- Effect of employment on benefits
- Available plan resources
- Approximate timelines to employment
- Customer's interests, skills, barriers etc.
- Need for further information or answers to additional questions

If customer decides to move forward with VR, the VR Counselor will open a file.

If customer decides NOT to move forward with VR, the PA/other provider proceeds with alternative planning; VR may be considered in the future.

Stage 3: Establishing Vocational Goals

Working as a team, the customer, counselor and PA will explore possible career choices and answer three (3) questions:

- Are any career choices already identified via school and work experience?
- Do we want additional opportunities for exploration?
- Do we need further information to establish the customer's abilities and disability-related barriers to employment, confirm the customer's choice or to identify components of the IPE?

If needed, the team will use the Employment Person Centered Plan (EPCP) as the primary method for establishing career goals and identifying short- and long-term employment support needs. Movement to Community-based Work Evaluation will occur only after an Employment PCP if the team has identified it as necessary.

Employment Person Centered Plan (EPCP)

EPCP is based specifically upon the information to be obtained and questions to be answered. This activity will be done with all members of the team involved. Findings are the basis of plan development to be done in Stage 4.

Career Exploration

OVRs counselor will arrange a Community-based Work Evaluation, if one is determined necessary by the team. Effort should be made to match the assessment to the interests identified in Employment PCP. The length, intent and information needed at conclusion of the assessment must be clearly identified prior to initiation of the assessment.

Stage 4: Planning & Implementing Funding (VR IPE & Brokerage ISP)

The team will meet and formalize plans to help the customer get and keep a job.

The team will review benefits and any financial plan commitment, if applicable. The team will also review how communication will flow and the responsibilities and expectations of all team members. It is also necessary for the team to set up services, review schedules and timelines.

In both the IPE and ISP documents, the team should be sure to address:

- When will the team know the goal is reached?
- Are ALL disabilities and barriers identified and accommodated?
- How will goals and resources impact plan, vendors etc?
- How will we secure other resources?
- How will progress be evaluated?
- What supportive services may DD fund at the same time?
- How will we know to move from VR to long-term support?

Stage 5: Vendor Selection

Vendor selection may occur at any time in Stage 3, 4, or 5. Selection will be from a pool of state-approved vendors identified locally by VR and DD. The team may choose to use the same vendor throughout both the IPE and ISP or to select a series of vendors at each stage, as appropriate.

The use of one or more vendors will be dependent on three factors:

- Plan design
- Customer informed choice
- VR and DD consensus, since both agencies will generally be funding and evaluating services.

If any member of the team feels a change in selected vendor is necessary, the decision to release or retain vendors will be made in collaboration with the entire team. Customer and family choice will be honored wherever possible, given legal requirements placed on OVRs and DD regarding vendor selection.

Define and clarify the performance measures expected from vendor:

- Outcomes
- Written reports
- Number of service hours to be provided per week or month
- Check-in points
- Involvement of the customer in the process

Plan Design

Identify if the supported employment design means that one vendor or job coach will be involved in short term (job development, training) and long-term support. If the team plans to use a coworker for long-term support (in either a paid or a natural support format), they must clearly identify how the vendor will train and prepare the coworker for this role. The job development design may involve “job carving,” matching specific job tasks to worker abilities. Supported Self-Employment may be the most appropriate plan design for some customers.

Customer Informed Choice

Whenever possible, the customer should have the chance to interview and choose from a pool of possible vendors.

Interagency Consensus

The Team will ensure that the chosen vendor understands supported employment implementation, including changing expectations and rates in transitioning from short term to long-term supports.

Stage 6: Delivering and Monitoring Short Term Supported Employment Services

IPE Service Delivery

OVRs will pay for agreed upon IPE services. The team will reconvene on an established schedule. This schedule should include a face-to-face meeting, e-mail, or phone communication at least every 3-4 weeks to discuss progress based on identified criteria. OVRs staff is responsible for coordinating progress meetings and ensuring all parties are informed of progress/issues. If the whole team cannot meet, those who are absent will be provided notes, as appropriate, in a timely manner.

Securing Employment

The customer will be hired into a paid, community-based job expected to meet job goal criteria.

Job Coaching and/or Training to Stabilization

OVRs will pay for job coaching or training to the point of job stabilization as initially defined in Stage 4 and refined throughout the plan implementation process.

Long Term Support Plan (Support Services ISP)

The team will identify resources and activities necessary to keep employment following VR case closure. This document will be placed in both the OVRs and DD files.

Stage 7: VR Case Closure

Rehabilitated

The VR case will be closed as Rehabilitated when the following criteria have been met:

- The customer has been employed for a minimum of 90 days and is earning or working toward earning a competitive wage.
- Job stabilization as defined in plan has occurred
- If the customer is working toward a competitive wage, the OVRs Counselor has documented when that is expected to be achieved.
- The DD system has completed all action to ensure ongoing supported employment payments necessary.

Other than Rehabilitated

The VR case will be closed as Other than Rehabilitated at any point in the process if:

- The customer chooses to terminate OVRs services
- The customer is unable to continue participation in VR services
- The customer moves out of the OVRs service area
- The customer's disability becomes too severe to allow further participation
- The customer does not follow through on medical advice or treatment
- The customer does not cooperate and actively participate in the VR process

Stage 8: Providing Ongoing Supports

Brokerage Staff Responsibilities following OVRs case closure:

- Arrange for or provide services identified in Long term Employment Support Plan (ISP)
- Monitor or assist customer or designated person in monitoring PASS plan or other Work Incentive, when applicable
- Assist customer or designated person in monitoring essential wage reporting to Social Security
- Review and revise ISP "supported employment" services and/or budget as necessary and available
- Utilize OVRs Post Employment Services for one-time disability-related employment needs

General Guidelines for VR/DD Partnership

The following are general guidelines that apply to all joint planning and service delivery. Additional guidelines specific to each stage in the VR-DD Process are included in Guide #2, the Supported Employment Toolkit.

1. OVRs and SPD have a common commitment to the gainful employment of persons with developmental disabilities who desire paid jobs in a community setting. By October 15, 2004 Brokerages and Local VR Offices will use the format provided to develop and submit a Local Area DD Supported Employment Implementation Plan identifying methods of collaboration.
2. Local Brokerage Directors and OVRs Branch Managers will identify the number of local plans needed in a region. If more than one plan is being developed in a region, the date for submission may be negotiated.
3. As a part of the Local Area Plan, the Brokerage(s) and local VR Office(s) will create a list of preferred vendors based on proven performance for both agencies in the delivery of quality supported employment and/or services to persons with developmental disabilities.
4. OVRs and DD personnel are team players and will work together in the development, implementation and monitoring of both a time limited VR Individual Plan For Employment (IPE) and the long term Individual Support Plan (ISP) necessary to assist customers to get and keep a job.
5. OVRs and DD personnel will share copies of each individual's IPE and ISP in order to ensure full understanding of the supported employment plan.
6. The individual will have the opportunity to make informed choices throughout the process of development and implementation of the supported employment plan.

Informed Choice in VR and Brokerage Services

Over the last 15 years changes in the Rehabilitation Act, Medicaid, IDEA, and the Workforce Investment Act regulations have been made to support increased customer control and “informed choice” or “self determination” in the disability field. Although the language may be a little different, Brokerages and VR are both working to implement informed choice or self-determination with their clients/customers.

“Self-determination” is the philosophy and process by which customers with developmental disabilities are empowered to gain control in the selection of support services that meet their needs.

Principles of self-determination are:

- **Freedom:** the ability of a person, together with their family and others important to them, to plan a life with necessary supports rather than purchasing a predetermined program
- **Authority:** the ability of a person (with the help of a support network, if necessary) to control a certain sum of resources to purchase support needs
- **Autonomy:** the arranging of resources and personnel--both formal and informal--that will assist the individual to live in a community and enjoy rich affiliation with that community
- **Responsibility:** the acceptance of a valued role in the community through competitive employment, organizational affiliation, personal development, and caring for others, as well as accountability for spending of public dollars in ways that are life enhancing for persons with developmental disabilities

Things to Note

- All people indicate choice--sometimes with words, sometimes with actions (which others may help to interpret).
- Informed Choice or Self-determination means new learning, attitudes and relationships for everyone!
- There is a recognized tension between VR’s traditional focus on the individual and the DD system’s recognition of a role for the family as reporters, advice givers, guides and an essential part of the “team.”

Informed Choice/Self Determination: **Do You Know It When You See It?**

The following is a partial list of some of the ways that a VR Counselor and Personal Agent could help to make choice and self-determination a part of everything that they do with a customer. **See if you can add to this list!**

During Employment Screening and Application

- Determine level of personal involvement of customer, family members and significant others
- Identify the types of information and decisions the customer desires to take the lead with when considering employment

In the Identification of an Employment Goal

- Complete an Employment Person Centered Plan
- Perform a Community-based Assessment to find what types of employment will build on individual strengths
- Value families and non-paid supporters as participants in the process
- Consider job carving or job creation as placement approaches, if appropriate
- Explore supported self-employment, if appropriate

During Plan Development

- Ensure the plan design reflects the needs of the individual
 - The pacing of service
 - The schedule (week, day, etc.) of service delivery
 - Level of provider effort
 - Level of customer effort
- Make sure the definition of Job Stabilization (which initiates VR case closure) includes:
 - Employee/client satisfaction
 - Other measures determined by customer
- Confirm that the amount of resources each person receives is individualized to their unique and specific needs

In Provider Selection and Monitoring

- Encourage Individual to interview potential providers and make final selection

Next Steps

The information in this manual gives you an overview of the process you and your teammates will follow to assist customers with developmental disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. A manual written specifically for customers and their families and advocates is also available. By using the partner manuals and their tools, you will be able to assist your customers in a more efficient, effective and successful manner.

Included with these manuals is a disk with a PowerPoint presentation that provides a general overview of the teamwork process. Written in partnership by OVRs and SPD Staley Implementation Team staff, it provides an engaging and easy to understand picture of how the process should work. It is intended for use in training OVRs, County DD and Support Service Brokerage staff members; you are encouraged to view it with your local partners.

Local area plans will be made and reviewed as needed. These plans will outline how Support Service Brokerages and OVRs branch offices will collaborate on staff training, service delivery and evaluation. By implementing these plans, local partners will create even closer connections and smoother processes than presently exist.

If you have questions about the information in this manual or the Toolkit, contact OVRs Administration or the SPD Staley Implementation Team. Staff there will be happy to assist you to get the answers you need.

Appendices

What Are the Staley Settlement and Brokerage Support Services?

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

What is Supported Employment?

Local Area Contact Lists

What Are the Staley Settlement and Brokerage Support Services?

What is the Settlement?

Staley vs. Kitzhaber was a lawsuit brought by 6 families of adults with developmental disabilities who had been waiting for services and supports for many years. The lawsuit Settlement Agreement resulted in a plan for additional support services for approximately 5300 eligible adults over a multi-year period. The Staley Implementation Team is the unit of staff within DHS' Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) group that is responsible for the development of support services in line with the Agreement. Support Services for Adults is one portion of the system of services for people with developmental disabilities where services are provided in a manner that is the most self-determined. Support Services do not include 24-hour care.

Who is Eligible and How Do They Get Access?

All eligible adults (aged 18+) who live at home in communities around Oregon must receive support services by June 30, 2005. There is a State-established Order of Enrollment to ensure fairness and equity. The County Community Mental Health Program (CMHP) manages the enrollment process and a designated number of people per county enter each month. As of August 2004, there are 2979 customers receiving Support Services.

What Does A Person Get Through Staley/Support Services?

The most important outcome is a plan, focused on assisting the individual to stay in the community, which is developed based on self-determination. By utilizing the self-determination model, customers have greater freedom, control, choice, and opportunity based on their needs. Customers also have assistance from an individual called a Personal Agent (PA) to help them plan for their needs and secure resources to meet those needs. Personal Agents work for an organization called a Brokerage. Customers also receive funds they can guide and use to help achieve the plan. Funds and supports available add to the resources already available in the community. Customers can use available funds for an array of supports designed to keep them stable at home and engaged in their community.

What Does a Brokerage Do?

A "Support Service Brokerage" or "Brokerage" is an entity that performs certain functions in the planning and implementation of Support Services for adults with developmental disabilities. Based on the principles of self-determination and the practice of Person Centered Planning (PCP), Brokerages are designed to:

- Assist customers with developmental disabilities to determine their needs, plan Support Services in response to these needs, and develop individualized budgets based on available resources.
- Assist customers with developmental disabilities to find and use the resources necessary to implement planned Support Services.
- Assist customers with developmental disabilities in ensuring the effective implementation of their plans over time, and help make adjustments to the plan or plan goals as necessary.
- Provide information, education and technical assistance for customers with developmental disabilities in order to help facilitate effective plan implementation.
- Act as a general fiscal intermediary in the receipt and accounting of certain funds on behalf of an individual in addition to making payment with the authorization of the individual, and accounting for certain support plan costs.
- Assist customers with developmental disabilities in fulfilling their roles and obligations as employers of personal caregivers when plans call for such arrangements.
- Facilitate development and expansion of community resources.
- Assist customers with developmental disabilities in monitoring of the quality of their supports.

How Do the Brokerages Work With OVRs & Other DHS Programs?

When an individual wants a job, the PA and OVRs staff will work together based on a local interagency agreement. Brokerages also work actively with SPD's Disability Service Offices (DSO) staff on issues related to benefits, health care, etc.

Brokerages may also work actively with SDA partners in completing their responsibilities related to:

- Surveying and identifying community resources
- Building essential community capacity to meet customer needs
- General community education to support inclusion and integration of people with disabilities
- Customer education in monitoring service quality

What Is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Oregon's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) assists Oregonians with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and independence. OVRs is a state- and federally-funded program that works in partnership with the community and with business to develop employment opportunities for people who have disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs are custom-designed for each individual. Services include (but are not limited to):

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Evaluation
- Physical Restoration
- Vocational and other training services
- Information and referral
- Job Development and Job Search Assistance

Customers work directly with a VR Counselor, who has specialized training in providing counseling services to people with disabilities. VR is an eligibility-based program; in order to be eligible, individuals must have at least one documented disability that causes barriers to their getting or keeping a job. Customers receiving Social Security (SSI/SSDI) benefits are automatically presumed to be eligible for VR services if they are seeking employment in an integrated setting and require VR services. VR staff work with those customers to gather needed documentation for eligibility while moving ahead immediately with vocational planning. In some cases, a customer initially presumed eligible may be determined ineligible for VR services if there is clear and convincing evidence that the severity of the consumer's disability or disabilities make him or her incapable of a successful VR employment outcome, despite VR services.

Following eligibility determination, the VR Counselor works with the individual and, if appropriate, members of his or her support network to identify a specific job goal and to outline the services and supports needed to achieve that goal. This information is compiled into the Individualized Employment Plan (IPE), which is the roadmap the team will follow. The IPE is not a contract, but a living tool to assist the individual to achieve his or her work goals: throughout the plan

implementation period, services may be added or deleted as needed, on an individual basis. Once the individual has found a job, stabilized in that job and has worked a minimum of 90 days, the VR case file may be closed and the individual may be considered “Rehabilitated.”

What is Supported Employment?

Supported Employment is an employment option that facilitates competitive work in integrated work settings for individuals with the most severe disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred. Because of the nature and severity of their disability, these individuals need ongoing support services in order to perform their jobs. Supported employment provides assistance such as job coaches, transportation, assistive technology, specialized job training and individually tailored supervision.

Generally, this means the customer obtains a paid position in an integrated employment setting with other employees with and without disabilities. The individual will receive a competitive wage or will be working toward a competitive wage and prior to beginning employment, ongoing support needs and sources of support will be identified and planned for.

Local Area Contact List

Region	OVRs Branch Offices	Brokerages
Metro NW (OVRs DISTRICT 1)	<p><u>CENTRAL PORTLAND</u> Janine Delaunay 3945 SE Powell Blvd Portland OR 97202 Janine.Delaunay@state.or.us 503-731-3210 503-731-3211 (TTY) 503-775-5696 (Fax)</p> <p><u>EAST PORTLAND</u> Teddy Forester 305 NE 102nd Ave Suite 200 Portland OR 97220 Teddy.r.forester@state.or.us 503-257-4412 503-257-4333 (Fax)</p> <p><u>NORTH PORTLAND</u> Nancy Conover 4744 N Interstate Ave Portland OR 97217 Nancy.conover@state.or.us 503-280-6940 503-280-6960 (Fax)</p> <p><u>CLACKAMAS</u> Nancy DiPasquale 4382 International Way Suite B Milwaukie OR 97222 Nancy.c.dipasquale@state.or.us 503-653-3024 503-653-3210 (TTY) 503-653-3065 (Fax)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Inclusion, Inc.</u> May Nelson, Acting Executive Director 3454 SE Powell Portland, OR 97202 May@inclusioninc.org Phone 503-232-2289 x25 Fax 503-235-6914</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Developmental Systems, Inc.</u> Larry Deal, Brokerage Director 305 NE 102nd Suite 100 Portland, OR 97220 Larry.deal@thementornetwork.com Phone 503-258-2440 x118 Fax 503-258-2450</p>
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2 & 3)**

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