

## **Employment Preparation Services (EPR) Recommendations**

### ***Purpose of EPR -***

Employment Preparation Services (EPR) provides time-limited, individualized supports to gather information, develop skills, and gain experiences that will prepare an individual for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

### ***When is EPR recommended?***

EPR is recommended over Day, Supported Employment, Supported Living, or another service when:

- a majority of daily activities, trainings and direct support time is related to employment (examples include: job coaching, job development, job skills training);
- additional Pre-vocational skill development is needed before the individual can actively seek a CIE position; or
- more options, information, or experiences are needed to make an educated decision on employment.
  - If a Day Service code was previously utilized to support a facility-based work setting, and the majority of weekly service time includes job coaching, vocational skill training, and exploration of employment interests, replacing Day Services with EPR is recommended.

### ***When is EPR not recommended?***

- If an individual has made an informed choice, not to pursue competitive integrated employment;
- If an individual is currently working in competitive integrated employment;
  - USOR/VR supports should be fully utilized to support CIE before requesting DSPD employment supports.
  - DSPD Supported Employment services should be used to maintain a position, develop new CIE skills, or search for new work.
- If service activities and training focus on habilitative skills, life skills, or independent living skills.

### ***Support Coordinator considerations-***

- As Support Coordinators advocate for individual needs, EPR should be considered if time-limited preparation is needed before seeking CIE.
- Support coordinators should facilitate conversations and planning with individuals, families, and providers to discuss EPR, and document next steps.
  - Educating individuals and their families on the differences between EPR, and other day and employment services will be valuable as teams meet to address individual support needs.

### ***Service provider considerations-***

- EPR separates employment from day service activities as required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Providers should decide if they will focus on day, and/or

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employment activities and ensure they are contracted to provide the distinct service(s) they choose.

- Providers should be prepared to connect a purpose to each planned activity, or skill training. Doing so will help distinguish EPR from other service options.

### ***Individual considerations:***

- EPR is only recommended for individuals expressing interest, or might be unsure about working in Competitive Integrated Employment. Individuals should be supported to decide whether they want to pursue a competitive integrated job in the future. If an individual is unsure, they should know that EPR can give them time to decide, and some hands-on experience in jobs of interest.

### ***Family/natural support considerations:***

- Transitioning between EPR, and another DSPD or community alternative can be quick or gradual, and based upon individual need. Families are encouraged to begin conversations early with the Person-Centered Support Team (PCST) to prepare for changes to services, activities, or routines when EPR services are nearing an end.
- Many alternative service options such as: day services, supported living and non-DSPD community resources remain available after the EPR service ends. As the EPR end date approaches, individuals will be prompted to prepare for future employment by meeting with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), or identify replacement activities, goals and trainings.