

**Frequently Asked Questions for Individuals and Families:**  
**Employment Preparation Services (EPR)**

**Question:** What is this new service I keep hearing about called *Employment Preparation Services* or *EPR*?

**Answer:** Employment Preparation Services or (EPR) is meant to prepare a person for the general requirements of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). If you are currently working in a facility-based setting, or participating in sub-minimum wage contract work, you will see this service start to be used to support you. EPR will help you learn or improve in skills that help you to find and keep a community job in the future.

**Question:** What does the term Competitive Integrated Employment or CIE mean?

**Answer:** Competitive Integrated Employment, sometimes stated as CIE, refers to jobs that are open to everyone in your local community. It also means that you work with some co-workers that may experience a disability and also non-disabled coworkers. It means that your pay is at least minimum wage and comparable to coworkers that do the same work. Last, it means that you have the same opportunities for work benefits and advancement as any other employee in your workplace.

**Question:** Can I still choose to attend Day Services?

**Answer:** Yes. Day Services will continue to be an available service option. Day Services will focus on skills needed for daily life, while EPR services will cover all skill-building activities directed towards preparing someone for the general workforce. Individuals can use a combination of Day Service and time-limited EPR services to develop interests and meet health and safety needs.

**Question:** Will I lose my current job?

**Answer:** No. If you have been working in a sheltered workshop or on a sub-minimum wage contract, you will not lose your job. You will also continue to have the right level of support to meet your individual needs. It does mean that the job you are working right now will not be permanent. Instead, you will be given up to 24-months to learn the skills you need to be successful in a competitive and integrated job. Your Person-Centered Support Team (PCST) can help you to discuss what this means for your individual situation.

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**Question:** Will anything change at my current job?

**Answer:** Yes. Federal guidelines require DSPD to separate day and employment focused activities. This does not mean that day services will end, instead those employment services activities (like time spent in a sheltered workshop) will now occur under the EPR code. Introducing EPR will also change how your work week might look. You will spend some of your time each week learning about different community jobs and even trying some new job tasks yourself in different workplaces. When you feel ready, work with your support team to help you find and keep a competitive and integrated job.

**Question:** Will I still get to see friends from work?

**Answer:** Yes. If you want to maintain friendships with coworkers, communicate that request to your family and support team. You may observe, as time goes along, that you or your coworkers start to find new, community jobs, or decide to do different activities. Starting new jobs opens the door to make more friends if you choose. Work with your support team to help you find time to continue friendships with coworkers from past and current jobs.

**Question:** How will my Support Coordinator help me?

**Answer:** The Support Coordinator's role is to advocate for you. Support Coordinators make sure you have control over your life and can make informed choices regarding employment and all other areas of your day. They can assist you to plan and participate in work activities that interest you, make goals, and develop work skills that will help you in all competitive integrated jobs. They will also connect you to other employment resources, like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

**Question:** How will staff help me?

**Answer:** Staff, including job coaches, are available to assist you to be successful in whatever job you choose. The purpose of EPR is to help you learn skills that are needed in all jobs and staff will support you to learn these abilities. Once you have decided on a specific job, you can request a job coach to help you learn more skills to be successful.

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**Question:** Do I have to work in the community?

**Answer:** No. In many cases, you and your family may want to take some time to consider if work in a competitive and integrated setting is right for you. No one is ever required, or forced to work. If you choose not to work, this means that you have also chosen not to participate in a facility-based work opportunity, or sub-minimum contract work. This is because EPR activities prepare an individual, interested in work, for the requirements of Competitive Integrated Employment. Your support team might also discuss with you other activities or interests, as well as other ways you would prefer to spend your time.

**Question:** What if I don't know if I want to work in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)?

**Answer:** EPR is available to anyone who might be unsure or unaware of their employment options. As part of EPR, you will be supported to make an informed, educated decision about whether or not to work. The EPR service will provide you with: hands-on experience; information about potential competitive integrated jobs; and ongoing discussions about your work options to help make that choice.

**Question:** What if I don't want to go into the community?

**Answer:** If you do not want to go into the community, you are not required to do so. You get to choose when and how often you go into the community. Members of your support team are available to help you with any challenges, or concerns you might have about participating in community activities. Alternative activities would be offered during times you choose not to go into the community. As part of this new EPR service, you will spend a portion of every week in your local community, exploring work interests. The goal of the EPR service is to explore jobs that would be available to you in the community. You will be asked often about: interests; desires; meaningful activities you would like to do; and also going into the community to learn about work interests and other options. These questions may be repeated to make sure you are given every opportunity to experience and participate in your community.

**Question:** What if I have more questions?

A detailed description of all the basic changes can be found on the "EPR Guidance: Fact Sheet." If you have further questions feel free to speak with your Support Coordinator, submit an email to [dspdinfo@utah.gov](mailto:dspdinfo@utah.gov), or send your question directly to Bryn Peterson at [brynpeterson@utah.gov](mailto:brynpeterson@utah.gov) or (385) 228-3122.