

Frequently Asked Questions for Providers and Support Coordinators: Employment Preparation Services (EPR)

Section 2: Extensions

Question: *Are extensions on EPR limited or unlimited?*

Answer: There is not a specific limit to the number of extensions allowed, however, this is a time limited service and requests will not be approved by DSPD indefinitely. Extending EPR beyond 24 months would require the person remains interested in seeking Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and has identified specific prevocational skills requiring training.

Question: *Once again, there were no clear answers as to what the criteria would be, it was only stated that it would depend on the person.*

Answer: The criteria for an EPR extension is fairly simple. We are asking you to answer two questions: is the person still interested in employment and what is the prevocational skill that they need to develop to seek Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)? If needed, an extension could occur immediately after an initial 24 months or years later, depending on the situation. Documentation submitted through the Request for Services (RFS) process should demonstrate a need for EPR that addresses both questions clearly.

Question: *The [Criteria for an Extension of EPR](#) document indicates that an EPR extension would not typically be considered if a person is employed in a CIE position at the 24 month mark-can there be exceptions to that? If the employment is stable and has been stable for several months, it makes sense. But if the person just obtained employment that month or even the month before it may be too soon to tell if the skill building and/or job placement is going to assure success for the individual. If EPR can be extended for someone placed in the three months prior to month 24 but has lost the job in that same period of time (by month 24) couldn't consideration be given to those who may lose a job in month 25 or 26?*

Answer: When someone who is using EPR supports starts a new job, please use professional judgement on the timing of fading EPR. Having the experience of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) is vital to making an informed choice about working. We recognize there will be some situations where either the support team and/or the person is unsure of on-the-job success at the beginning of a new job. You can use EPR and other employment services prior to starting CIE to ensure the job is the best fit and the person is prepared as much as possible. If needed, you can continue EPR

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support for a few months until the job is stable. The continuance should not typically extend more than a few months.

Question: *If a person has completed 24 months previously and has worked for a couple of years but then something happens which results in skill reduction, could they be considered again for EPR? We understand that the intent is not to have individuals just repeating EPR, but we also understand that people change over a lifetime and those changes may result in them needing some additional support such as that provided through EPR.*

Answer: In this situation we generally recommend that you work through vocational training options such as short-term Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) supports, Supported Employment Individual (SEI) for individual skill development, or Supported Employment in a group Daily (SED) for skill training in a group to address the skills needed to return to the workforce rather than returning to prevocational skill development. EPR could be requested in this situation if prevocational skills were identified that are preventing the person from returning to a competitive and integrated job. Unique situations that fall outside of this guidance can be handled on an individual basis.

Question: *Please provide an explanation of what happens when the 3 years (24 months of initial EPR and 12 month extension) is up and no community placement has occurred.*

Answer: EPR is initially available for up to 24 months with service extensions only available if a specified need is identified. One of the main purposes of EPR is to allow opportunities for each person to find their own path to the most integrated employment for them, or to find other meaningful activities to fill their day. Person-centered planning is all about ensuring that people are able to lead their own lives and determine their own goals. We recognize that EPR represents a change and there is often fear that comes with changes in services like this. Many have expressed worry about what will happen to their current services, especially those who feel their services have been meeting their needs well for some time. No one will lose services. If more time is needed an extension can be requested to support the person to gain the prevocational skills they need to pursue CIE. There are also a variety of services options that already exist that a person can transition to that support continued efforts to seek employment or other meaningful activities to fill their day.

Question: *Will extensions be approved if no meaningful alternatives are available?*

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Answer: EPR may not be available after a 24-month period if a demonstrated need is not identified. The support team can discuss what this means for a person's specific situation. Person-centered planning is critical to ensuring that people are able to lead their own lives and determine their own goals. A person-centered planning approach will allow the person and support team to identify meaningful activities connected to a person's hobbies or interests in all areas of their life. For employment, DSPD has recently released the [DSPD Employment Pathway Tool](#). This tool will help you to have a person-centred approach to informed choice for employment.

Question: What if I have more questions?

More information can be found on the [DSPD website](#) under the 'Providers, SCs, & Staff' tab, then under 'Providers' click on 'Employment Preparation Service (EPR)'. If you have further questions feel free to email dspdinfo@utah.gov, or ask your question directly to Bryn Peterson at brynpeterson@utah.gov or (385) 228-3122.