

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

Section 5: Request for Services (RFS)

Question: *If the team decides (by going through the steps and questions outlined in the process presented in the [Process to Request EPR](#) document) that the client does not want to work in the community, does not want to do VR, and wants to just work in a sheltered workshop - will the RFS committee respect that the team has met, the individual has been offered informed choice and this is the route chosen to pursue? We often feel like we make team decisions, but then the RFS committee recommends something else.*

Answer: The RFS committee is tasked with reviewing the requests for several different reasons. They are ensuring that the documentation provided to justify the need for the service is adequate. They look at the requested service to see if it is being used within the scope of the service description. As the person's support team, you know them best. However, the RFS committee may need more information to understand your decision or see another option to consider. EPR would not be available if a demonstrated need is not identified. This may occur because documentation does not show the person is still interested in employment or what the prevocational skill is that they need to develop to seek Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

Question: *In step one (in the [Process to Request EPR](#) document)- the second bullet point. This muddies the waters. EPR is a precursor to working meaning the person is not currently employed. Other DSPD codes and VR require an existing job.*

Answer: Step 1 of the "EPR Guidance: Process to Request EPR" makes reference to whether a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or other DSPD services have been discussed and explored in making the decision to request EPR or not. After the discussion EPR may still be the right service. The question is important to determine the interest and experience of the person with employment. VR services should be used before using any DSPD supported employment services. VR has multiple services and resources that help prepare a person for working in CIE. Examples of these include: Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), life-skills training, assistive technology, accommodations, internships and work-based learning opportunities. Please connect with your local VR office if you have further questions. Other DSPD services should be discussed to ensure the interest is not better supported through a different service such as day, supported employment, supported living, etc.

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Question: *Can you clarify the factors that may be considered when denying an individual this service? If an individual is denied, will they be approved for day services? Finally, is a RFS request needed for everyone currently receiving DSG for whom EPR is not a budget neutral service?*

Answer: EPR would not be available if a demonstrated need is not identified. This may occur because documentation does not show the person is still interested in employment or what the prevocational skill is that they need to develop to seek Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). If a request is denied, the person may appeal that decision. The support team should then discuss an alternative service that will meet the person's needs and submit a request for that service if needed. While some previous approvals for EPR occurred outside the RFS process through the DSPD Employment and Community Integration team, moving forward an RFS will need to be completed for everyone currently receiving day support that wants to transition to EPR, whether it is a budget neutral change or not.

Question: *Would requesting EPR through the RFS be the same as other requests for services?*

Answer: The RFS process for EPR is the same as it would be for any other DSPD service. Work together as a support team to make sure that the person requests services that meet the health and safety needs of the person with adequate justification and documentation.

Question: *Does the provider write the request for the support coordinator? We are being asked to write the request for increases-is this the same?*

Answer: Information to describe the need for EPR or documentation to justify an EPR request should come from all members of the support team. The Support Coordinator will gather all the information and put together a request for EPR. This request is then submitted to the DSPD RFS committee for review. EPR should only be requested if the person is interested in working or needs more information, options or experiences to decide about work and has a prevocational skill they are working on that will help them pursue Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

Question: *Maybe just an overview of when to initiate a request and an example.*

Answer: EPR should be requested any time a person: is interested in working, has general employment skills they want to work on to reach Competitive Integrated

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Employment (CIE), are unsure about what work in the community could look like for them, or are wanting more informed choice activities before deciding if they want to work. A person wanting to develop skills in a sheltered workshop or subminimum wage job will need to transition to EPR by March 17, 2022. After that date, paid work and work training activities will only be allowed under an employment code and will be prohibited in day supports. Supported Employment Individual (SEI) can be used to support current CIE or returning to CIE. Supported Employment in a group Daily (SED) can be used for group employment or enclave work and job specific vocational skill training in a group. EPR can be used to support non-CIE as preparation for seeking CIE.

Question: *Is this process required to be documented and who would do that?*

Answer: Some documentation will be required when requesting EPR services initially and ongoing documentation should be gathered to ensure EPR is still helping the person develop skills and progress toward Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). Information should be collected to document the person was given informed choice regarding EPR and other service and support options available. Documentation should also identify prevocational skills to be addressed through EPR, the CIE goal, and any other information justifying individual needs. All members of the support team can and should contribute to the documentation. The request will be submitted by the Support Coordinator.

Question: *Can you please address the ease that individuals can move between EPR & other services. Will the RFS committee approve all changes (if an individual no longer wants to work & desires DS)?*

Answer: The RFS process for EPR is the same as it would be for any other DSPD service. Work together as a support team to make sure that the person requests services that meet their needs with adequate justification of those needs. Any change in service or rate paid for a service should be requested through the RFS process.

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.