

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

### **Section 6: Service Delivery**

**Question:** *If a person is working a CIE job, they cannot have the EPR code. Is that accurate?*

**Answer:** Yes, that is correct. The EPR service is intended to support a person to develop prevocational skills to prepare them for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). If an individual is currently working in a CIE position, EPR is not the recommended service option. Employment services through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and DSPD should instead be focused on helping the person maintain their job, expand skills for their responsibilities or duties, or help the person find a new or second CIE job. Unique situations that fall outside of this guidance can be handled on an individual basis.

**Question:** *EPR has to be supervised by a person that is ACRE certified, correct? How do you see this looking for a person in a Day Program? They just review the employment skills being provided. How often?*

**Answer:** Providers must ensure that at least the EPR supervisory staff completes either the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training or the Utah State University's Workplace Supports training within one year of starting to provide this service. After the first year of providing this service, any new EPR Supervisory Staff must complete either of the above training within 90 days of employment. Day support providers are not required to have any staff ACRE certified. Those providers that will have day supports and EPR, particularly if they are both provided in the same location, will need to determine their own implementation strategy for how the two programs will function. All prevocational skill building should occur in EPR and not day services. Supervisory staff would need to ensure all staff are adequately trained to support individuals to develop their designated prevocational skills through EPR. If a provider has more than one location providing EPR with the same supervisory staff, another staff on site must have one of the two trainings listed above when the supervisory staff is not on site.

**Question:** *So, can you define when we would need to use EPR instead of SEI Supports in the budget?*

**Answer:** EPR provides time-limited, individualized supports to gather information, develop skills, and gain experiences that will prepare an individual for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). By contrast, supported employment services are meant

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for vocational or job-task specific strengths and skills. This includes job coaching, but also can be used for vocational assessments, job development and vocational skill development when Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are not available. Use the service code descriptions and [EPR resource documents](#) as a guide when differentiating between EPR, VR, or other DSPD employment service options.

**Question:** *The EPR code has to be out in the community, not in a day program?*

**Answer:** EPR must be provided in the community at least 20% of the time. The 20% of the time is calculated on a monthly basis. One goal of the EPR service is to explore jobs that are available to anyone in the community. If a person does not want to go into the community, support teams should develop strategies to support the person with any challenges or concerns they have about participating in community activities. Alternative activities should be offered during times the person chooses not to go into the community. Day services and EPR can be provided in the same location.

**Question:** *What about job sampling as part of DSG?*

**Answer:** Specific to day service, you can support a person to gain informed choice for employment in many ways such as discussing jobs you see in the community, talking to a person about how their skills or interests might fit in a certain job field, or through volunteer activities. You should not help the person job develop, obtain skills specific to employment or fill out job applications as part of day services. These are all supports that should be provided through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or through DSPD employment services like supported employment or EPR. You do need to have a process of how you support people to make an informed decision about working or not and then how you would connect them to the supports they would need to pursue work if they are interested. Sometimes this would mean connecting a person to an EPR provider of their choice, after a discussion with the person and their support team, to develop some prevocational skills in preparation for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

**Question:** *Are you saying the ACRE certified person must be on site and not one person who oversees multiple sites?*

**Answer:** Yes, there must be a supervisor or staff on site that has completed either the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training or the Utah State University's Workplace Supports training while EPR is being provided. If a provider has

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

more than one location providing EPR with the same supervisory staff, another staff on site must have one of the two trainings listed above when the supervisory staff is not on site.

**Question:** *My understanding is if the individual has had SEI then EPR cannot be used. Is that correct?*

**Answer:** EPR would not be recommended when someone is using a supported employment service. EPR is meant to support prevocational skills and goals while supported employment, through DSPD and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), are available to support job specific skills and tasks. Generally then, if additional vocational skill building was needed a supported employment service, like VR supports, Supported Employment in a group Daily (SED) or Supported Employment Individual (SEI) is recommended. However, additional EPR could be requested 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 should be handled on an individual basis.

**Question:** *There has been conflicting information that SED is no longer to be used, and that EPR is to be used in its place.*

**Answer:** Supported Employment in a group Daily (SED) and EPR both continue to be available service options. SED is the only service available for people who want to work in an enclave, and vocational skill training in a group. Enclaves are generally small, separate crews that are contracted to complete tasks for community businesses at their business location as a group. The State is aware that some people who are intent on working in an enclave require a higher support level than the SED service can provide. In the past we have addressed this need through day services. As of March 17th 2022 we will no longer utilize day services to support higher staffing needs. If a person is funded under day services for an enclave, and is intent on staying in the enclave, they must transition to either SED or EPR for a higher staffing need by that date. If EPR is chosen, the service code requirements remain unchanged. Depending on the nature of the setting, enclave work time may count towards the 20% community integration requirement of EPR. We are also aware that some enclaves are paid subminimum wage. As of March 17th 2022 any employment paying subminimum wage will need to be provided under EPR. All EPR requirements will apply.

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**Question:** *So if I have a person with the EPR code, they couldn't participate in other social activities? Or leisure activities?*

**Answer:** EPR requires that at least 20% of the time in the service is in the community, this is a minimum requirement. The amount of time the person spends in the community throughout their day and how they use their services in the community should be determined during person-centered planning and supported as much as possible. We expect that at least part of that 20% during EPR be used to apply prevocational skills. Please document the skills being addressed and any progress made. Support teams should use resources at their disposal, communication from the person, and their best judgement to determine if the activities are more habilitative, day services focused, or prevocational. Some overlap is expected just as it would be for a non-disabled peer. Social activities, leisure activities and other interactions could happen with coworkers or with friends. As much as possible match the purpose of the activity to the service being used.

**Question:** *As a provider, and doing community activities as a day program. Where is that different from EPR? We are discussing different activities during that time, where is that difference?*

**Answer:** The purpose for the activity can help you determine the difference between EPR and a day service. Depending on what the person wants to do, their support team can help them to determine if an employment, day, or another DSPD service will best meet someone's needs, interests, and desires. When you are talking about work, gathering more information about a future community job, looking through options, or gaining some work experience or skills you would most likely be using employment services for support. If instead the focus of community time is on skills or participating in activities that are not employment related, like independence, self help, socialization and other skills needed for success in the community, usually a day or supported living type service would be used. Specific to day service, you can support a person to gain informed choice for employment in day service by discussing jobs you see in the community, talking to a person about how their skills or interests might fit in a certain job field, or through volunteer activities. Providers can and should continue to offer and support person-centered community activities as part of their services. Please use the service code descriptions and professional judgement in determining the best activities to support the services you provide.

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**Question:** *There are a lot of things which are 1:1 services discussed here. How will that work with the EPR rate being the same as the person's DSG rate?*

**Answer:** EPR is a daily service with the same rate as a day service. Similar to the approach for day services, please request the level of support needed to help the person access their community, employment opportunities, remain healthy and safe, and accomplish their goals. This could include some 1:1 time, but group training time through EPR is also recommended. As the person's interests become more specific in employment, access Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or DSPD supported employment services to further explore what a potential CIE job could look like.

**Question:** *What code is billed for that one hour of supported 1:1 work with a coach?*

**Answer:** EPR only requires that at least a supervisor is trained as a job coach or employment specialist through Utah State University's Workplace Supports training or the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training for prevocational skill training. EPR is a daily service that might include any combination of group and 1:1 support time based on a person's need. If any job specific training is needed please connect with your local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office. If for any reason VR is unable to assist you, one-on-one vocational skill training and job coaching is available through DSPD's supported employment services.

**Question:** *It does not talk about if you do not want to work, what your services can look like and if you want to work a couple of hours and then do an activity based day program.*

**Answer:** Employment services through DSPD or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) should only be accessed if the person is interested in a future Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) position or they are unsure about CIE. EPR or Supported Employment in a group Daily (SED) are the only services available to support a person with job coaching in a setting that is not CIE. SED services should be used for enclave work and EPR for any other non-CIE work situation. If instead the person chooses to work on skills or participate in activities that are not employment related, they might use a day or supported living type service as an alternative to employment. The person might also want a combination of both work, day services, or other DSPD services. Work with the person and their support team to find the service combinations that work best for the person and meet their needs.

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**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](mailto:dspdinfo@utah.gov), or ask your question directly to Bryn Peterson at [brynpeterson@utah.gov](mailto:brynpeterson@utah.gov) or (385) 228-3122.