

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

Section 9: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Question: *Does the person need to have graduated high school, and/or turned 18 to get EPR?*

Answer: Any DSPD service can be accessed after all other resources have been fully utilized. Since EPR is a prevocational service, all employment supports available to the person through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), or any other available services should be sought prior to requesting EPR. Please document efforts taken to access these resources when requesting EPR for anyone that is transition age (14-24).

Question: *If someone has DSG and is working with VR currently, do they need to have EPR in their budget? Do we need to explore that or can they just work with VR to obtain employment?*

Answer: EPR is not required and may not be the best fit for everyone. Some people may not use EPR simply because they are not interested in work. Others may not need prevocational skill development and find it best to go directly to VR to find a job. Day services may continue to support non-work activities and skills when the person also uses EPR or VR services. Use the services and supports that best fit the needs, interests, desires, and goals of the person.

Question: *Is the hope that EPR will create a better transition into VR? Or will steps between pre-employment and VR be unrelated?*

Answer: EPR can be used as one of many options to help someone transition to VR. All direct care DSPD services can also be used to help a person to access VR. EPR should be used to prepare someone to gain prevocational skills needed to enter the competitive workforce. Supported employment services, such as VR, should then be used to help gain and maintain Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and support career advancement. For these reasons, EPR will primarily be used prior to starting VR services. Connecting with VR is an approved activity for any direct care DSPD service, including EPR. Timing in connecting with VR should be person-centered and based on an interest in seeking future CIE. We recommend you review the [Employment Services Workflow](#) for details regarding how DSPD and VR processes function together.

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

Question: Will EPR staff be helping the individuals through the VR process and getting them to and from the VR appointments?

Answer: Any direct care DSPD service, including EPR, can be used to help a person connect with VR. VR can be a resource to answer current employment related questions and provide services to help eligible individuals reach their vocational goals. Meeting with a VR Counselor is an approved EPR activity. If the person chooses to pursue employment, they will be given an informed choice for the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) they want to help them while working with VR. The DSPD provider and the CRP with VR may be the same company. We recommend you review the [Employment Services Workflow](#) for details regarding how DSPD and VR processes function together.

Question: Looking at the first question (On the [Process to Request EPR](#) document), “Are you interested in working?” My understanding was that VR is where we go for that. How does EPR fit into that process?

Answer: The most important question to answer in determining if any employment services are needed is if the person is interested in working in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). If they are not interested in working in CIE, a sheltered workshop, sub-minimum wage job, enclave or VR may not be appropriate. Everyone needs to be offered an informed choice for employment, and that can occur under any DSPD service. We recently published the [DSPD Employment Pathway Tool](#) as a resource to help facilitate a guided conversation and next steps for employment. EPR should be used if the person is unsure if they want to work and want to learn more about CIE before deciding, or if they want to develop some prevocational skills before starting a job search. VR is another resource that can be accessed through any direct care service, including EPR. Meeting with a VR counselor to explore options, provide current information, and give some hands-on experiences to make an educated choice about work is an approved EPR activity. EPR can also be used as preparation for VR services or while someone is working with VR to continue to develop prevocational skills, up until they are stable in CIE.

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

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

further questions feel free to email dspinfo@utah.gov, or ask your question directly to
Bryn Peterson at brynpeterson@utah.gov or (385) 228-3122.