

Process to Request the Employment Preparation Service (EPR) for Individuals and Families

Definitions-

Competitive integrated employment, or CIE, means that individuals with disabilities are able to work in the community with people of all abilities; and that they are paid at a rate comparable to those people without disabilities who work in the same place.

Prevocational skills mean general skills that are needed for most jobs in the community. This includes skills like:

- Talking to supervisors, customers and co-workers
- How to dress and act professionally
- Following directions and staying on task
- Problem solving
- Remembering and following the steps of a task
- Workplace safety

The Vocational Rehabilitation or VR program assists eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for, get or keep employment. They help the person to achieve as much independence on the job as possible. VR services are designed to meet the unique needs of individuals who are eligible.

Supported Employment services are offered by the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) to help a person get, keep, and advance in Competitive Integrated Employment or self-employment.

When to Request EPR-

EPR should be requested any time a person:

- is interested in working,
- has prevocational skills they want to work on to reach 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.

Process to Request EPR-

This process to request EPR is similar to requesting any other DSPD service. It is also the same whether you are requesting EPR for the first time or for an extension of the 24 month timeline on the service. The steps of the process to request EPR are as follows:

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(EPR) for Individuals and Families

1. Make an informed choice if Employment Preparation Services (EPR) is the right service for your needs and interests. Questions you and your support team should consider include:
 - What experiences do you have with competitive integrated employment (CIE)?
 - Would you like to have more experiences with CIE before you decide if you are interested in CIE?
 - Are you interested in working?
 - Have you and your support team talked about other support options like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or other DSPD employment services?
 - Would supported employment be a good fit for your current interest and skills for employment?
 - Are there pre-vocational skills you could develop in EPR to help you be successful in CIE?

*If you already have a job in the community or are ready to find one in the community, EPR is not recommended for you. Instead you may want to consider supported employment through VR or DSPD. If you don't want a job in the community, EPR is not recommended for you. Instead talk with the support team about other services that could be used to meet your needs, interests, and desires.

2. Talk with your support team about your choice.
 - You and your support team will give information to your Support Coordinator about the decision you made. This will include why you want EPR specifically, what skill you will work on developing, and the amount of time you would need this service.
3. The Support Coordinator will submit a request to DSPD.
 - All the information gathered will be put together into a request for the EPR service. This request is submitted to the DSPD Request for Services (RFS) committee for review.
4. The RFS committee will review the request.
 - The RFS committee will review the request to understand if EPR can appropriately meet your needs based on the information in the request. If needed, the RFS committee will ask the Support Coordinator for more information before they can make a decision.

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5. The RFS committee will either approve or deny the request.
 - If the RFS committee approves a request, you can then use the EPR service for the amount of time stated in the request.
 - If the RFS committee denies a request, a formal letter, called a Notice of Agency Action, will be sent to you. The letter will include information about how to appeal if you disagree with the committee's decision.

Denial of an EPR Request-

EPR may be denied if the criteria is not met. This may happen because documentation does not show that you are still interested in employment or what the prevocational skill is that you need to develop to seek CIE.

If a request for EPR is denied, you may appeal that decision. You will continue to receive your current services while the appeal process takes place. If you choose not to appeal or the appeal process results in again denying your request for EPR, your Support Coordinator will help you look at other services options that can meet your needs. You will have support to transition to another service option and will not be without services.

Non-CIE Work Situations-

A person wanting to develop prevocational skills in a sheltered workshop or subminimum wage job will need to transition to EPR by March 17th 2022. After that date, paid work and work training activities will only be allowed under an employment service and will be prohibited in day services. 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 that is paid at least minimum wage. SED can also be used for job specific vocational skill training in a group. EPR can be used to support non-CIE as preparation for seeking CIE.