**Supported Employment**

**Contract Reference:** *Sections A-1.1, and C-1.2.3*

**Authority:** Section 394.453(1)(c), Florida Statutes

**Frequency:** On-going

**Due Date:** On-going

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to provide written guidelines to Managing Entities for the implementation and administration of supported employment services. For the purposes of this document, supported employment refers to an evidence-based model of supported employment as established in s.64E-14.021, F.A.C, and does not include mental health clubhouse services.

1. **Overview**

Two key social determinants of health and mental health are employment status and poverty. Employment is also a key component of recovery for individuals with behavioral health conditions. Florida has limited specialized services and resources available to support their employment goals. As the demand for high-quality supported employment services grows, building a framework for expanding the availability of these services across the state is critical. Collaboration across state and local agencies involved in supporting individuals with behavioral health conditions is essential in this effort.

1. **Definitions**
   1. **Competitive Integrated Employment** refers to work in the open job market (i.e., positions that are open to qualified candidates, regardless of disability status) on a part-time or full-time basis and the wages and benefits are the same as others in similar jobs. Competitive integrated employment also includes self-employment and informal labor for cash (i.e., day labor).
   2. **Evidence-based** as referred to in Guidance 1 Evidence-Based Guidelines**.**
   3. **Fidelity** is the extent to which an evidence-based practice is implemented as intended. An assessment of fidelity provides conclusions about the effectiveness of an intervention's outcomes.
   4. **Supported Employment** definition is established in [Ch.65E-14.021(4)(ll)1., F.A.C](https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?title=COMMUNITY%20SUBSTANCE%20ABUSE%20AND%20MENTAL%20HEALTH%20SERVICES%20-%20FINANCIAL%20RULES&ID=65E-14.021).
2. **Goals**

The goals include:

* 1. Advancing resiliency and recovery for individuals with behavioral health conditions through competitive integrated employment.
  2. Expanding high-quality supported employment services using evidence-based practice models.
  3. Increasing collaboration across state and local agencies involved in supporting individuals with behavioral health conditions.
  4. Promote provider and community awareness of supported employment, Vocational Rehabilitation, and CareerSource services.

1. **Eligibility**

To be eligible for services individuals:

* + 1. Must be eligible for substance abuse and mental health services under s. 394.674, Florida Statutes; and
    2. Express expresses interest in, and desire for career exploration, education supports, or employment.

1. **Program Administration**
   1. **Managing Entities**

The Managing Entity shall:

* + 1. Designate at least one staff as an employment lead to facilitate the guidance established in this document.
    2. Ensure that supported employment services are sufficient to meet the needs of their communities, that supported employment services are integrated within Network Service Providers (Provider), and that they will continue to be available for individuals who can benefit from this service.
    3. Approve organizations requesting to provide supported employment using an evidence-based practice model of supported employment for people with behavioral health conditions. The evidence-based practice must have demonstrated effectiveness in helping individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Benefits planning, individualized services, job development, rapid job search, integration with clinical teams, time-unlimited support, and collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation must be included as components of the evidence-based practice.
    4. Develop performance measures to evaluate service outcomes and address evidence-based practice implementation fidelity. Managing Entities must make competitive integrated employment a primary outcome.
    5. Ensure Providers delivering supported employment services comply with federal, and state regulations, and the requirements established in this Guidance document.
    6. Provide leadership at the local level to advance evidence-based models of supported employment services.
       1. Identify and solve systems barriers to supported employment including services, funding, or practices that conflict with the service approach (e.g., financial barriers, Vocational Rehabilitation policies, etc.,).
       2. Work with local and state offices of Vocational Rehabilitation to improve collaboration between providers and Vocational Rehabilitation.
       3. Meet with local Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to discuss common goals and practices, their role in supported employment, available resources, and strategies for collaboration with providers.
    7. Provide ongoing education, training, and technical assistance to Providers, partners, and stakeholders.
       1. Disseminate employment information and resources to agency leadership, Providers, partners, and other stakeholders.
       2. Facilitate trainings on topics such as evidence-based employment models, developing relationships with employers, conducting effective job searches, offering strengths-based services, helping individuals with school and training programs, and providing individualized job supports.
       3. Facilitate quarterly supported employment meetings to provide networking opportunities and to discuss outcomes, supported employment fidelity across sites, and training and technical assistance needs.
    8. Actively monitor Provider outcomes and assess fidelity to support continuous quality improvement.
       1. Develop and maintain procedures for evidence-based practice monitoring. Collect and analyze data on program outcomes at regular intervals and develop goals and strategies for improved outcomes.
       2. Conduct reviews of evidence-based practice implementation using a validated fidelity scale at least annually for newly procured Providers and biennially for Providers older than 24 months. Provide technical assistance in areas needing improvement. Results of the fidelity assessment must be made available to the Department upon request.
       3. Providers that consistently underperform on fidelity assessments and do not make noticeable improvements after receiving technical assistance may lose their supported employment funding (e.g., Provider’s fidelity score reflects poor fidelity within a consecutive 36 month period).
    9. Participate in state and local leadership meetings and committees to develop goals and action steps for the implementation and sustainability of supported employment services.
    10. Participate in supported employment learning community when applicable.
    11. Attend at least one supported employment conference per year.
  1. **Network Service Providers**

Providers must:

* + 1. Implement an evidence-based practice model of supported employment with demonstrated effectiveness in helping individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders find and maintain competitive integrated employment. The supported employment model must emphasize individualized services, rapid job search, integration with clinical teams, time-unlimited support, and collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation.
    2. Develop a plan for implementing the evidence-based practice model. The plan must include basic training for staff at all levels across the organization and intensive training for employment staff.
    3. Develop and implement policies and procedures that align with the evidence-based practice model of supported employment.
    4. Collect data Monitor program outcomes at least every three months.
    5. Achieve a fidelity score consistent with fair to high fidelity within the first 18 months of program launch and consistently thereafter.
    6. Participate in all supported employment conference calls, meetings, learning communities or other relevant events.
    7. Participate in supported employment meetings, committees, and learning collaboratives.

1. **Ineligible Employment or Services**

The following includes, but is not limited to, a list of ineligible employment or services:

* 1. Activities related to work readiness, or uncompensated internships.
  2. Companies speculative in nature, such as investments in real estate, etc.
  3. Companies organized as hobbies (i.e., activities engaged in not-for-profit (I.R.S. ATG ss.183)).
  4. Companies that may violate community morality or are unlawful.

1. **Evidence-Based Practice Considerations: Models of Supported Employment**

Best practice considerations and resources are provided to support continuous improvement of supported employment services. The below lists the evidence-based practice models of supported employment recognized by the Department. The Department will update this list as effective approaches to employment for individuals with behavioral health conditions emerge.

* 1. **Individual Placement and Support (IPS)** is an evidence-based practice model of supported employment that helps individuals with mental health conditions work in competitive jobs of their choosing. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. For more information, please visit the IPS Employment Center website: <https://ipsworks.org/>.

1. **Data Requirements** 
   1. Providers must submit data in accordance with the most recent version of the Florida Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse and Mental Health Financial and Services Accountability Management Systems Pamphlet 155-2, and in compliance with Section C-1.4 of the Managing Entity contract.
   2. Managing Entities must submit to the Department the following supplemental data:
      1. Total number of individuals served broken out by age and diagnosis.
      2. Number of individuals attending a credit-bearing educational program.
      3. Number of individuals competitively employed.
      4. Number of individuals referred to Vocational Rehabilitation.
   3. The Department reserves the right to require additional standards and reporting requirements.
   4. Quarterly supplemental data must be submitted in accordance with the following schedule:

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| **Quarter** | 1st Quarter | 2ndQuarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter |
| **Reporting Period** | July - September | October - December | January - March | April - June |
| **Submission Date** | October 18th | January 18th | April 18th | July 18th |