

# Supported Employment Definitions

**Assets and Abilities** are the skills and traits the customer offers a potential employer. Examples include personality traits, interests, skills, and talents.

**Benefits Planning** is the process of reviewing a customer's social security and other benefits to determine the impact of employment and to develop strategies to ensure that the customer gains resources to address lost benefits and understands necessary reporting requirements to keep their benefits. Benefits Planning is required for all customers with Social Security and prior to referral for SE services.

**Benefits Planning Query** (BPQY) provides information on type of SSI/SSDI benefit, amount of cash benefit, overpayment status, medical review date, health insurance, work incentives used, non-certified yearly total of earnings, and more. Should be included with a referral for the Career Planning Assessment and Supported Employment.

**Benefits Summary and Analysis** (BSA) is a written document generated by a community work incentive coordinator (CWIC) that provides in-depth information about all publicly funded benefits that a customer receives.

**Benchmark(s)** are specific employment outcomes for which payments are made to the provider during the course of the Job Placement or Supported Employment process.

**Circle of Support** is a group of people that helps a customer accomplish objectives. The group functions as a "community" for that person who cannot achieve those objectives on his or her own. A circle of support is a strategy used in person-centered planning.

**Compensatory Techniques** are strategies used to help people perform tasks in an alternative manner or by using adaptive aids so that they can be more independent. Compensatory techniques also help people learn new tasks.

**Competitive Employment** is work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that—

- Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law for the place of employment;
- Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
- In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals

- with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
- Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees.

**Competitive Integrated Employment Checklist**- Is a TWC-VR tool used to determine if a customer's position meets the federal CIE definition. It is used when a customer is placed at employers in Texas and several work-from-home employers who have contracts related to the mandated direct labor-hour ratio. Below are some of the programs that offer contracts with direct-labor ratio requirements:

- Texas AbilityOne Network (PDF) (formerly known as JWOD);
- SourceAmerica Non-Profit Locator;
- National Industries for the Blind Texas Agencies;
- WorkQuest WorksWonders Program (PDF) (previously called Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped in Austin, TIBH);
- State set-aside programs (Purchasing from People with Disabilities Program, PPD); and
- Other employment programs for individuals with disabilities.

The checklist completed by a Regional Program Specialist, Regional Program Support Specialist, Regional Quality Assurance Specialist, Program Improvement Specialist, Regional Blind Services Specialist, Program Support Manager, VR Supervisor, VR Manager, Process Improvement Specialist, Purchasing Specialist, or Business Relations Coordinators then submitted the CIE checklist and supporting documentation, the State Office CIE Team will make a recommendation regarding the employment. Executive Management will review and make the final determination if the customer's position meets the criteria for CIE.

TWC-VR cannot pay for invoices or successfully close cases when the customer's employment has not been determined CIE.

For additional information view the [Competitive Integrated Employment webinar \(32 minutes\)](#).

**Cumulative Calendar Days of Employment** refers to the total count of days beginning with the first day a customer worked on a job and counting each subsequent day whether the customer worked or not. The count continues until the day that the customer is no longer working for the employer.

**Employment Conditions** are characteristics and preferences of any job or working conditions that are important to the customer and or relevant to his or her support needs. Examples of Employment Conditions include environmental considerations (indoors, outdoors, crowded, etc.), learning and training considerations, safety issues, transportation needs, work hours (number of hours, shift, days), specific anticipated support needs (medications, toileting, redirecting, etc.), and social and communication considerations.

**Employment Outcome** \*means, with respect to the individual, entering or retaining full time, or, if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market, supported employment, or any other type of employment in an integrated setting. This includes self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership that is consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.\*

\*CFR 361.5(B)(15)

**Extended Services and Supports** assist the customer in maintaining employment long term, after the intensive ongoing supports and training have led to the stabilization of the customer's employment. Extended Services are comparable benefits that must be listed in the customer's IPE.

Extended Services can be provided either at the employment site or off-site when necessary to maintain stable employment.

Examples of Extended Services include, but are not limited to:

- job skills training (job coaching when provided by Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers) to assist with development of soft and hard skills to ensure the customer is meeting the expectation of the employer;
- transportation;
- Social Security income reporting;
- medication management;
- assistance with dressing or toileting; and/or
- managing the customer's work schedule.

Extended Services are funded by sources other than TWC-VR for as long as needed to ensure the customer remains stable in his or her employment. Extended Services begin before the customer's achievement of Job Stability. The Supported Employment Specialist trains all Extended Service providers.

Exception for Extended Services being provided by resources other than TWC-VR is for a VR customer who is a "youth with a disability" that does not have comparable benefits or resources available for Extended Services. VR can purchase Extended Services for VR customers who are "youth with disabilities" through Job Skills Training for only VR customers for a period of up to four years or until the youth reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. When VR is providing Extended Services for a customer and is purchasing Job Skills Training the VR counselor must continually seek alternate resources for Extended Services and document the resources sought out in a case note. When comparable benefits or resources are found for Extended Services, VR must stop the purchase of Job Skills Training as an Extended Services.

**Fading** is a technique used in job training in which prompting to perform a task is gradually withdrawn until the need for the prompting decreases and is no longer needed.

**Guided Discovery** is when a Supported Employment Specialist assist a customer in the exploration and identification of their dreams, goals, interest, skills, values, personality traits, communication preferences, environmental preferences, responsibilities, learning styles, financial needs, transportation resources, circle of supports systems, networks, community employers and life/work experiences that will influence their development of a “blueprint” of their future employment. Activities used in guided discovery can include person centered mapping, interest finders, inventories, interviews, exploration of vocational interests/themes, and reviewing labor market trends.

**Hard Skills** are related to professional knowledge, tools, or techniques that allow a person to perform the essential functions of a specific job.

**Informational Interview** is a meeting in which job seekers get advice about their careers, the industry, and the corporate culture of a potential future workplace. The business also learns about the job seekers and judges their professional potential and fit with the corporate culture, thereby gaining exposure to candidates for future hires. Informational interviews allow individuals to gain employment leads and expand their professional network. These interviews provide a non-threatening form for discussion as each person learns about the other.

**Integrated Employment** is work that is performed at a location—

Typically found in the community; and

- Where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and
- Presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

(34 CFR §361.5(c) (9))

Employment established specifically for the purpose of employing individuals with disabilities generally do not constitute an integrated setting

**Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Working toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee, JAN helps people with disabilities to enhance their employability and shows employers how to

capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace. For more information, go to the JAN website, <https://askjan.org/>.

**Job Analysis** A job analysis breaks a position into its parts and identifies the inherent requirements. It demonstrates what the candidate can do, where support is needed, and provides solutions for any part of a job that a candidate is unable to perform, such as reallocating tasks to and from other employees

**Job Carving**, sometimes referred to as Job Creation, is a way to develop a job or certain job duties from one or more job descriptions or from unmet needs of an employer. This technique is often used in Supported Employment.

**Job Development** is the act of developing a job that meets the needs of the customer and of the business hiring the customer.

**Job Searching** is the process of using traditional and non-traditional methods to find jobs that meet an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice as outlined in a customer's placement plan. Such methods include use of job search engines, job banks, job boards, employer job postings, LinkedIn, social networking, and attendance at job fairs to facilitate the job search. The provider or counselor can contact the potential employer on behalf of the customer.

**Job Sharing** is a flexible work option in which two or more people share the responsibilities and tasks of a single position based on their respective strengths, skills, and interests while meeting workplace needs. This technique is often used in Supported Employment.

**Job Skills Trainers** are people who specialize in helping people with disabilities to learn and accurately carry out job duties. Job Skills Trainers provide one-on-one training tailored to meet the needs of the employee and to meet the employer's expectations. Job Skills Trainers must maintain the UNTWISE Job Skills Training Credential.

**Job Site Analysis** is a detailed look at a specific job. It identifies the tasks performed and the skills, abilities, and personal characteristics needed to perform the job.

**Job Stability** when the customer:

- is satisfied with the employment;
- continues to work in a job that meets the definition of competitive integrated employment;
- is meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632;
- has reliable transportation to and from the jobsite with a backup plan;
- is meeting the employer's expectations regarding job performance;
- is meeting the physical and environmental demands of the job;

- has all necessary accommodations in place and working;
- has extended services (funded by other local or state agencies or Social Security, private pay, and/or natural supports) in place to ensure continued employment with this support; and
- has achieved all goals, unless a goal has been determined to be “no longer applicable” or is scheduled to be transferred to extended services, on VR1634.

**Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS)** are Extended Services and Supports available through the Health and Humans Services (HHS). The counselor should get a copy of the individual service plan from the LTSS case manager or service coordinator. The service "Supported Employment," detailing the number of units authorized and the name of the provider, should be on the plan when LTSS are used to provide any of the Extended Services a customer may need to maintain employment prior to the TWC-VR counselor closing the case.

**Natural Supports** describes supports provided to an employee from supervisors and co-workers, such as mentoring, friendship, socializing at breaks or after work, providing feedback on job performance, or learning a new skill together. Friends, family, or volunteers help the customer keep his or her job by providing natural supports outside of the worksite. Examples of supports provided away from the worksite include transportation, reporting of earned income to social security, feedback on attire and hygiene, or medication management. When natural support resources are not available, paid supports not funded by TWC-VR can be used to ensure a customer maintains long-term employment.

**Negotiable Employment Conditions** are preferences for working conditions and the things that a customer would like the placement provider to consider when looking for suitable employment.

**Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)** is a national source of occupational information. The O\*NET database has information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. The database, which is available to the public at no cost, is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. O\*NET is an interactive application for exploring and searching occupations. It is developed under the sponsorship of the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) through a grant to the North Carolina Department of Commerce. For more information, go to <http://www.onetonline.org/>.

**On-going support services** must be provided twice monthly at a minimum, to monitor the customer at the work site, as well as one contact with the employer to check-in to ensure the customer is meeting the employer's expectation. Under special circumstances, at the request of the customer, arrangements can be made for the Ongoing support to be provided away in-person from job site.

Ongoing Supports, including Job Skills Training, are provided at or away from the job site, are provided through the least intrusive method possible, should gradually reduce, when the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent; and will transfer to a long-term Extended Service provider, when necessary, to meet the customer's needs long-term.

Ongoing supports are provided in a relatively informal way or with specific structured interventions covering topics such as:

- identifying accommodations and supports the employee can use to be successful, such as job aids and natural supports;
- providing on-site training that reinforces the employer's expectations and procedures;
- supporting the customer in acclimating to the workplace culture and etiquette;
- addressing interpersonal skills;
- facilitating communication between co-workers and supervisors;
- identifying cost effective assistive technology or other aids that will help the employee perform job functions; training natural and extended support providers who will provide long-term supports to the customer to foster long-term employment;
- travel training;
- helping the customer understand employment benefits (e.g., vacation, sick leave, insurance);
- advocating in support of the customer's employment to his or her circle of supports, and/or treatment service providers.

(Based on CFR-363.6 (c) 3)

**Person Centered Planning Process** the person (customer) owns and controls the planning process and its products. Person-centered planning brings together all the people who are important to the person including family, friends, neighbors, support workers, and other professionals to create a comprehensive portrait of the person and what he or she wants to do with his or her life. This team identifies the skills and abilities that can help the person achieve his or her goals for competitive employment, independent living, continuing education, and full inclusion in the community. The team also identifies areas in which the person may need assistance and support and decides how the team can meet those needs.

**“Place, Then Train” model** *has two steps*, first step is to place customers with the most significant disabilities into a competitive integrated job based on their preferences, interests, assets, and abilities, as identified during a community-based assessment and an SE planning meeting. The second step is to provide training and support to the customer directly related to the job and then coordinate and train the designated extended service providers, or natural supports, to ensure a smooth transition with no interruption in service delivery.

**Potential Employers** are specific employers or industries, in the customer's preferred or desired geographical boundaries where the identified job tasks might be performed.

**Preferences and Interests** are specific types of work or activities in which the customer would like to engage, for example, working in an office, working with children, teaching others, or working with computers. Preferences and interests can also be stated in negative terms (for example, "no fast-food restaurant employment").

**Premium** payments compensate providers for their additional efforts, such as taking required training that ultimately benefits customers but can increase the costs of providing services. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) encourages all staff of contracted providers to obtain specialty endorsements. The specialist endorsement identifies the individuals working for contractors who possess the necessary knowledge for competent practice related to disability populations and complex employment barriers.

**Soft Skills** are behavioral competencies, also known as interpersonal skills or "people skills." Soft skills are the skills, traits, work habits, and attitudes that all workers across all occupations need in order to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment.

**Suitable Employment** is employment that meets the customer's needs outlined in his or her Individual Plan of Employment (IPE) and/or the Placement Plan for Job Placement or Supported Employment services including non-negotiable employment conditions and negotiable conditions. The customer has the physical and mental skills, training, experience, and/or requirements necessary to hold the position at the business. The employer meets all reasonable health and safety standards for the industry and the employer compensates the employee with a competitive wage.

**Section 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers** provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings. These programs serve a variety of targeted populations groups, such as people with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and/or physical disabilities.

Currently there is an interest list for all Texas HCBS waivers. When a VR customer is eligible for a HBCS wavier the VR counselor should assist the customer in putting their name on the interest list.

Texas common HBCS waivers:

- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)
- Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS)
- Texas Home Living (TxHmL)
- Youth Empowerment Services (YES)
- Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
- STAR+PLUS
- STAR Kids



For more information refer to Chapter 18 SE Resource Tool: Extended Services Texas Health and Human Service Resources

**Supported Employment** is for customers with any type of disability, but a customer must:

- have a most significant disability (three or more functional limitations);
- require individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
- require ongoing supports to learn the job and establish accommodations; and
- require extended services (long-term supports) to maintain the employment after VR closes the case.

Customer in Supported Employment:

- will benefit from the Place, Then Train model of job placement;
- need extensive comprehensive training and support to compete in the labor market;
- need Ongoing Supports to maintain an employment outcome;
- require considerable help competing in the open job market;
- usually have not had competitive integrated employment or has experienced interrupted or intermittent employment; and/or
- should be able to find and keep a competitive integrated job when necessary Extended Services are in place.

Supported Employment is offered to customers with the [most significant disabilities](#) to enable them to enter competitive employment by

- providing individualized assistance finding an appropriate job match, and
- establishing extended services/long term supports within the work environment.

Customers in Supported Employment need assistance to

- compete in the open market,
- meet potential employers, and
- develop and coordinate extended services and long-term supports to maintain employment after TWC-VR closes the case.

Often, these customers have been

- excluded from community services,
- institutionalized, or
- in such segregated work programs as sheltered workshops or enclaves for long periods.

**Supported Employment Plan** is a tool developed through person-centered approaches that describe customer's characteristics, job skills tasks, employment

conditions and Extended Services that the TWC-VR provider will use when identifying a job placement in competitive integrated employment for the customer.

**Supported Employment Specialist** is the provider's employee who completes the, Career Planning Assessment, identifies jobs the customer can perform in the community, and coordinates the customer's attainment of the job and job skills training to ensure that the customer learns the job and uses long-term supports to maintain long-term employment success. The Supported Employment Specialist must maintain the UNTWISE Supported Employment Credential.

**Transferable Skills** are the skills and knowledge acquired through personal experience such as schooling, jobs, classes, hobbies, or life experiences.

**Worksite accommodations** are environmental changes, assistive technology devices, techniques, or work process changes that improve the ability of a person with a disability to perform in his or her work environment and/or complete his or her work.

**Work Observations** refers to when the Supported Employment Specialist observes the customer in work environments performing work-related tasks in order to determine the customer's strengths and challenges as well as interests related to work.

