

SDEP Module 9-Getting the Help You Need-Working with an Employment Support Agency

1. SDEP Module 9 11-13-12

1.1 Title



Self-Directed Employment Planning

Module 9: Getting the Help You Need -
Working with an
Employment Support Agency



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Notes:

Welcome to Module 9 of the Self-Directed Employment Planning Training. This module is called “Getting the Help You Need - Working with an Employment Support Agency.”

1.2 About this Module



Notes:

In this Module, you will learn about working with employment service providers. With the resources available to you, you can hire an Employment Support Agency (sometimes called a Supported Employment Agency) to help you with the different parts of your employment process. Such agencies, with expertise in assessment, job development, job training, and ongoing support services, are available in most parts of Wisconsin.

You can find the questions and worksheets that go with this module in section nine of the Employment Planning Workbook that you downloaded after the introduction to this training. You can download the workbook at any time. You can do that at any time you choose by clicking on the Resources tab in the upper right hand corner of this training.

1.3 Vocational Support Agencies

Vocational Support Agencies

- Vocational simply means WORK
- Help with different parts of process
- Assessment
- Planning
- Goal Setting
- Finding a Job
- Learning the Job
- Ongoing Support



Notes:

In Module 7, you learned about different parts of the process of getting a job. Agencies can help with assessment, planning, goal setting, job seeking, job coaching, and ongoing support. You can hire an agency to help you with all of these parts of the process or just the parts you need. As we mentioned in Module 7, YOU and your team can decide what services and supports are right for you.

1.4 Finding an Agency

Finding an Agency

- Teachers
- Area Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Case Manager/County
- Care Manager/MCO
- Support Broker
- IRIS Consultant
- DVR Counselor
- Family & Friends
- Job Center
- Phone Book



Notes:

You might be wondering how you will find an employment support agency. There are several ways that you can find out about the supported employment providers available near you. In Module 8, you learned that your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) can help you get connected to services in your community. In addition to helping you find out if you are eligible for Long Term Care, they have information to give you about the agencies that provide different types of employment supports. They might have a list of names and phone numbers for you to call, or they might have brochures from agencies that you can review. Someone from the ADRC should be able to meet with you to tell you what they know about the employment agencies in your area.

Another way you can find out about the agencies available near you is through your DVR counselor, if you are working with one, or through the person you are working with at School, or through Family Care, IRIS or County Long Term Care program. These people should have either a list of agencies you can contact or they can help you to find agencies in your area. If you are in school your school staff should know the agencies in your area and can help you connect with them.

Another way to find out about employment service agencies in your area is to talk with your friends who have jobs. Find out from them who they worked with to get a job and what their experiences were like.

The Job Center in your town or county is another place you can go to look for information, as is the United Way, if there is one near where you live. If you have access to a computer and the internet, you can go on-line to look up information about agencies in your area that provide employment supports. Even if you do not have your own computer, you probably have a library near you that has public computers available.

Many supported employment provider agencies have websites - or at least have information written about them on the internet that can help you figure out your options. Even without using a computer, you can look up some information on your own using just the phone book. Although not all agencies providing employment supports in your area are guaranteed to have their information listed in the yellow pages of the phone book, some of them probably do have listings.

1.5 Choosing an Agency

Choosing an Agency

- May have several or only 1 or 2 options
 - Contact Agencies
 - Ask What is Offered
- Meet to Talk about YOUR Needs



Notes:

You may live in an area where there are several agencies that provide employment supports or you may live in an area where there only one or two are available. Whether you have multiple options or not, it is still good for you to have an idea of what you are looking for before you enter into a working relationship with an agency. When you contact them, ask to have an interview about their agency and the services they offer. This will help you to find out if the agency can offer the types of supports you want, need in the way that meets your expectations. This is one very good reason for answering the questions for each section of this training and writing your answers in the workbook. If you complete the questions, you can transfer your answers into the Employment Inventory section at the end of the workbook and use that during your search for an employment support agency. If you have a few agencies to choose from, having a good idea of what you want will help you make your decision. If you only have one employment support option available, then your employment support inventory will help that agency understand some things about you from the beginning of your working relationship.

1.6 Questions to Ask

Questions to Ask

Things you might want to know:

- How long in business
- Types of supports offered
- Fees and what funders they work with

Notes:

One of the best ways to plan for an interview with prospective employment support agencies is to develop a set of interview questions that you want to ask. If your goal is to get a job working for someone else the questions you ask an employment service provider will be different than the questions you ask an agency that might be helping you to be self-employed.

Here are some questions for you to consider asking when interviewing agencies:

How long has this agency been providing employment supports?

What are the types of supports you offer here?

What type of assessment process do you use to help people determine the jobs that would be best for them? Please describe it.

How do you go about helping people look for a job?

How many people are on a caseload for your job developers?

How long does it typically take your job developers to help people find jobs?

How do you go about training people to learn their jobs?

Do your job coaches use task analysis and systematic instruction to help people learn their jobs and then to help people fade job coaching time?

Does your agency use assistive technology to help people become more independent at their jobs? If so, please give me some examples.

How do the people you support get to and from work?


Does your agency work with DVR?

Does your agency work with _____ (name your Long-Term Care program if you have one)?

1.7 More Questions to Ask

More Questions to Ask

- How many people do they support?
- How many have community jobs?
- Types of jobs people got?
- Average number of hours per week working?
- Average pay for people being supported?



Notes:

Additional questions you might want to ask are:

How many people does your agency currently work with providing employment supports?

Of those people, how many currently have jobs in the community?

What is the average number of hours those people work per week?

What is the average pay rate for the people you support who have jobs in the community?

Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about your agency?

1.8 Self-Employment Supports

Self-Employment Supports



- Different Questions for Self-Employment
- Employment Planning and Process Different
- Find Out About Experience
- Requires Different Expertise

Notes:

If you decide that you want to start your own business and are looking for an agency to help you with that process, then your questions will be different. Important questions to ask prospective service providers are:

How many people does your agency currently support who run their own businesses?

What types of businesses do those people have?

How long have those businesses been in operation?

Are the people you are supporting to run their own businesses making income?

Has your agency assisted people to conduct market analyses of the type of business they have in mind? If so, please describe the process you use.

Has your agency helped people to write business plans and seek funding for equipment? If so, please describe the process you use.

How long does it typically take you to help someone start a business?

Has your agency helped people to market their businesses/products?


Have you worked with DVR to help people start their businesses?

Does your agency work with _____ (name your Long-Term Care program if you have one)?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the supports that your agency can provide to help me start my own business?

1.9 Questions in the Resource Guide

Questions in the Resource Guide



Use the
questions in
the resource
guide how
you want

Notes:

We have created a page in the Resource Guide with these lists of questions and spaces for you to take notes. You can make copies of this page and bring it along to interviews with employment service providers if you want to.

You do not have to use the sample questions we have provided. You might have other questions in mind that are more important to you. If that is the case, then you should think about what those questions are and write them down when you are preparing to interview employment support provider agencies.

1.10 Different for Everyone

Different for Everyone

- Employment Supports NOT one size fits all
 - Keep YOUR Needs and Goals in mind
 - Get help from people you trust
 - You can change your mind



Notes:

Remember, if you hire an employment support agency to help you in the ways that YOU choose and with the parts of the process that you need support with having a clear idea of your goal and support needs before you start working with an agency will help you work out an agreement with an agency should you decide to hire one to provide your employment supports.

1.11 Service Agreements

Service Agreements

- Like a contract between you and the agency
- Outline what YOU want the Employment Support Agency to do for YOU
- Not necessary but a GOOD Idea
- Sample in Resource Guide



Notes:

Once you decide on an agency to help you with your search for employment or plan to start a business, it is wise work with that agency to create a service agreement. This agreement should summarize your expectations for the agency, as well as the responsibilities that you will have during the process of working with them. It is important to remember that the relationship you will have with the employment support agency is a business relationship. The agency will be getting paid to provide you with the supports that you want and need to seek and obtain employment, or start your business.

As you learned in Module 8, you can choose to work with an agency though all parts of the process to get to your employment goal or you can ask service providers to unbundle or individualize their services by only agreeing to work with them on the parts of the process you have hired them to help you accomplish.

Given that this is a business relationship, an agreement can help everyone (including you) to stay on track and complete steps in a timely manner. Whether you are looking for a job where you will work for someone else or you plan to start your own business, it can take some time to reach your goal. It can take even longer, however, if you and your support team members are not working well together. Each person must do their part to keep the process moving along.

An agreement can be as simple as one page of the information that you have discussed with the agency prior to hiring them to work with you. Some important parts of the agreement should include:

When they will begin working with you,

A list of the tasks they will help you to complete,

Timelines for each task,

A list of the person or people responsible for completing each task (you too),

A tentative schedule of meetings to check in and discuss progress,

A description of what will happen if timelines are not met within reason, and

An end date to the contract - a date when a new agreement will be created or when the relationship will stop.

A sample Service Agreement is in the Resource Guide. As with the interview questions, you may want your agreement to be different. That is OK. You do not have to have one, but it is a wise idea.

1.12 Sometimes Things Don't Work Out

Sometimes Things Don't Work Out

- That is ok
- Remember you can change your mind
- Best to discuss over time
- Service Agreement will help
- Regular meetings will help

Notes:

Sometimes things go smoothly during the employment planning process, and sometimes there are things that happen along the way to slow the process down. You can probably think of times in your life when things did not go exactly as you expected them to go. This may happen with your employment planning. Sometimes things happen that are not expected. Sometimes these are things that you and your employment support agency have no control over. For example, a prospective employer might have an informational interview set up with you and then need to postpone the meeting with you. Or, you might have a work experience lined up and then come down with the flu. Employment support provider staff may have unexpected things come up too.

However, it is perfectly reasonable for you to expect that the timelines for tasks related

to your employment support planning do not get too far off track due to too many unexpected issues with your employment support provider agency and staff. Generally, your employment support provider should follow through on the things that they say they are going to do for you. If they do not, then you may need to go through a process to find out why things are not getting done and why you are not making progress in your employment search. It is important to make sure that you are completing the tasks assigned to you also.

If a period of time goes by (typically 6 months or more) when you are not pleased with the progress you are making and you feel that it is because your employment support provider is not following through on the tasks they have been assigned, then you may need to search for a new employment support agency or an individual to assist you with the process.

1.13 Check out Module 10

Check out Module 10

To learn about the option
of hiring Individual
Employment Supports
(not an agency)




Notes:

It is recommended that you go through Module 10 to find out about the option to hire Individual Employment Supports before you begin work on hiring an agency. This training was designed to help you understand what employment supports is all about - and think about all of your options!

1.14 Questions and Workbook

Questions and Workbook

- How much help will you need?
- How will you get information about my options?
- Will you be able to make contacts on your own or will you need help?
- If you need help, who will you ask to help you?
- Will you be able to interview providers or individual employment supports on your own or will you need help?



Notes:

Sections 9 and 10: Getting the Help You Need. The questions in the Workbook that go with Modules 9 and 10 include:

What parts of the employment planning process can you do on your own (or with the support of your family), and what parts will you need help from an agency, or individual employment supports to complete?

There is a chart on the Workbook for you to use. (You should put an X in the right box for you)

For each parts of the Employment Process, you will decide:

I can do this on my own or with the support of my family

I would like help from an Agency

I would like to hire Individual Employment Support

The parts of the Employment Planning Process Listed in the chart are:

Assessment: Deciding what you want to do and what your skills are

Job Development: Finding a job that matches your skills and interests

Business Planning (if you want to start your own business): Figuring out how my business will be successful and writing a business plan

Initial Job Training: Learning the tasks for your job or business

And, Ongoing Support: Help for you to stay successful at work

2) If you are interested in working with an agency, how will you get information about my options? (you should circle all that you want to use)

DVR

ADRC

MCO

IRIS

School

Friends and family

On-line, visiting agency websites

Other:

3) Will you be able to gather information about your options and make contacts on your own or will you need help? (you should circle what you feel fits you best)

4) If you need help, who will you ask to help you?: (list one or more people here)

5) Will you be able to interview providers or individual employment supports on your own or will you need help?

Remember, there are sample interview questions in the Resource Guide. You can use those or create your own questions when hiring an agency or individual employment supports.