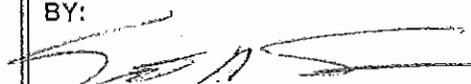


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|  | BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA Department of Public Welfare Department of Labor and Industry | | |
| | DATE OF ISSUE July 1, 2014 | EFFECTIVE DATE July 1, 2014 | NUMBER 00-14-05 |
| SUBJECT: OVR Referral Process for Employment Services | | | |
| BY:  Dolores Frantz, Acting Deputy Secretary for Developmental Programs | BY:  Stephen Suroviec, Executive Director for Office of Vocational Rehabilitation | | |

SCOPE:

Individuals and Families
 County/Administrative Entity (AE) Administrators and Directors
 State Center Directors
 Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) and Agencies (SCAs)
 Providers of Employment Services through the Consolidated, Person/Family Directed
 Support and Adult Autism Waivers

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidance regarding referrals to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for individuals enrolled in or enrolling in the Consolidated, Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) or Adult Autism Waivers. Referrals to OVR continue to be required prior to authorizing Waiver Supported Employment services. Referrals are no longer required prior to authorizing Waiver Prevocational¹ Services and Transitional Work¹ services.

BACKGROUND:

Prevocational and Transitional Work services as defined in the Waivers are not available in Pennsylvania through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. For this reason Waiver Prevocational Services and Transitional Work services no longer require a referral to and subsequent denial from OVR prior to authorization on the Individual Support Plan (ISP).

¹ Service definitions for Prevocational services, Transitional Work services and Supported Employment services may be located in Attachment A of this Bulletin. Prevocational services are not available in the Adult Autism Waiver.

In the past, County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability (MH/ID) programs established a referral process with each of their OVR District Offices. This bulletin now establishes a standard, statewide OVR referral process that should be utilized.

DISCUSSION:

An individual may be determined eligible for OVR services by qualified personnel (OVR Counselor) if the individual:

- Has a physical or mental impairment;
 - The physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment;
- Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

A. REFERRALS FOR INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED OR ENROLLING IN THE CONSOLIDATED AND P/FDS WAIVERS

PREVOCATIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL WORK SERVICES

When the ISP team determines that an individual will be ready to engage in vocational rehabilitation services to pursue competitive employment within one year of the ISP team discussion, the Supports Coordinator (SC) must make a referral to OVR. This referral must be made even when the individual is currently receiving Prevocational or Transitional Work services. Prevocational and Transitional Work services may be provided during the OVR referral and eligibility determination process.

When OVR determines that an individual is eligible for services, and develops an "Individualized Plan for Employment", the individual may receive Prevocational or Transitional Work services while also receiving OVR services as long as they do not occur concurrently (on the same day and at the same time). Prevocational and Transitional Work services will only be used to supplement the OVR services. Individuals must comply with OVR's Individualized Plan for Employment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

When the ISP team determines that the individual has a need for Supported Employment services, the SC must make a referral to OVR. Supported Employment cannot be provided through the Waivers in the following situations:

- Once a referral is made and while OVR is making an eligibility determination;
- When an individual is determined eligible for OVR services and/or is receiving OVR services; or
- When an individual refuses to be referred for OVR services, refuses to receive services through OVR when determined eligible for such services or fails to cooperate with the OVR program.

Supported Employment services may be provided when OVR services stop or if the individual is determined ineligible for OVR services.

B. REFERRALS FOR INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED OR ENROLLING IN THE ADULT AUTISM WAIVER

Individuals receiving OVR services are expected to comply with OVR's Individualized Plan for Employment.

TRANSITIONAL WORK SERVICES

When an individual receiving Transitional Work Services wishes to seek competitive employment, the Supports Coordinator will make a referral to OVR. Transitional Work Services may be provided during the OVR referral and eligibility determination process.

If OVR determines that an individual is eligible for services, the individual may receive Transitional Work Services while OVR develops an "Individualized Plan for Employment" or while receiving other OVR services, as long as they do not occur on the same day and time.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT, JOB ASSESSMENT AND JOB FINDING

When an individual wishes to seek competitive employment, the Supports Coordinator will make a referral to OVR. Supported Employment, Job Assessment and Job Finding cannot be provided through the waiver in the following situations:

- Once a referral is made and while OVR is making an eligibility determination;
- When an individual is determined eligible for OVR services and/or is receiving OVR services; or
- When an individual refuses to be referred for or receive services through OVR services or fails to cooperate with the OVR program.

Supported Employment, Job Assessment and Job Finding services may be provided through the waiver when OVR services stop or if the individual is determined ineligible for OVR services.

C. OVR REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ALL ODP WAIVERS

To make a referral to OVR and to help expedite the eligibility process, the SC must do the following:

1. Have the individual and/or his or her designated representative sign the SCO's or SCA's standard "Release of Information" form so that the SC may provide the following documentation, if available, to the OVR District Office:
 - a. Current ISP Employment Supplement and any other relevant information from the ISP that would be helpful to determine OVR eligibility;
 - b. Psychological Evaluation containing diagnoses;
 - c. Vocational Evaluations/Assessments (within 3 years); and
 - d. Any other relevant medical/psychological/educational records (within 3 years).
2. Complete the "OVR-ODP Interagency Referral Form", OVR-172, Attachment B. The SC will indicate on the form in the designated box to whom initial contact from OVR should be directed. The SC will also indicate if he/she would like to be notified when the intake interview is scheduled.
3. Submit the "OVR-ODP Interagency Referral Form", OVR-172 and any relevant referral information to the appropriate OVR District Office through the established "Resource Account" designated for the OVR District Office, Attachment C.

4. Document the date that the OVR-172 was submitted to OVR in the individual's ISP.

Upon receipt of the referral, including all necessary supporting documentation, OVR shall complete the following steps:

1. Contact all persons referred for services no later than 15 days from the date of referral.
2. Schedule an initial appointment or enroll in an OVR orientation session within 30 days of initial contact. An initial appointment is an in person meeting to discuss OVR services and other materials and/or to formally initiate the application process, if the individual is interested in moving forward.
3. Determine eligibility within established OVR timeframes and according to OVR policy.
4. Send a letter to the individual or his/her designee and send a copy to the SC notifying these parties as to whether the individual is eligible or ineligible for OVR services.
5. Complete the Individualized Plan for Employment established OVR timeframes and according to OVR policy.

When the SC receives a copy of the OVR letter that documents whether the individual is eligible or ineligible, the SC must forward a copy of the letter to the County/AE for the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers. The SC must send a copy of the OVR letter to the Bureau of Autism Services (BAS) Regional Office Representative for the Autism Waiver. The SC and County/AE or BAS Regional Office must keep a copy of the letter of "eligibility/ineligibility" in the individual's file as documentation to comply with Waiver requirements as well as document in a service note and update his/her ISP.

It is recommended that the SC maintain contact with the OVR counselor as appropriate to stay informed throughout the individual's receipt of OVR services. This will ensure that the ISP contains the most up-to-date information and necessary services.

If you have any questions, please contact your ODP regional office or BAS Regional Representative as appropriate.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A – ODP Waiver Employment Service Definitions
- Attachment B – OVR-172 "OVR-ODP Interagency Referral Form"
- Attachment C – OVR- ID Referral Resource Accounts

OBSOLETE BULLETINS:

MR Bulletin 00-98-04, *Waiver Funding for Prevocational, Supported Employment and Educational Services*

MR Bulletin 00-95-23, *Coordination of Vocational Training and Supporting Employment Under the 2176 Waiver*