

## **Non- Waiver Funded Resource: Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR 101) (FAQs)**

### **Non- Waiver Funded Resource: Pennsylvania OVR**

**Question:** Some SC's have been advised to complete applications for participants. Should the OVR counselor be completing the application with the participant?

**Answer:** It depends. Some district offices complete the "Employment Planning Application" with the customer at the time of the intake interview. Other offices expect that the "Employment Planning Application" will be completed and sent into the OVR District Office before the individual is assigned to an OVR Counselor. In any case, the individual should complete as much of the application as he/she is able independently. The SC should provide guidance and support based upon the individual's abilities and level of need.

**Question:** Who is the payer of last resort, OVR or waiver?

**Answer:** According to federal regulations for both OVR and MA Waiver Programs, each of them is designated as a "payer of last resort". However, in the event that an individual is eligible for OVR services and is seeking competitive integrated employment, OVR should be the payer of "first resort" for services directly related to the individual's employment goals. Itinerant services such as attendant care, transportation and other support services that an individual might require both within and outside of the work setting should be discussed and will likely be funded by ODP if there is a non-vocational need for the support.

**Question:** What does OVR use to determine when to close a case?

**Answer:** OVR considers "job stability" when closing the case. If an individual is stable in his/her employment and does not require further supports, the case will be closed after 90 calendar days. Job stabilization occurs when the customer's work performance reaches a level acceptable to the employer, and the job coaching and related ongoing support services have diminished to the level necessary to maintain the customer in competitive integrated employment. Typically, the acceptable level of work performance occurs when the customer is able to work 80% of the scheduled hours independently. Therefore, direct support is only required to be on-site 20% or less of the customer's work time. It is expected that natural supports will be established and the direct support will be able to fade from on-site coaching completely. There may be situations in which the customer has not yet achieved stability on the job. In these instances, the customer Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and direct support staff must agree on the customer's maximum level of stability. Maximum level of stability occurs when a customer maintains a consistent level of support for ten (10) working days with no more than ten (10) percent variation.

**Question: Of your customers that are determined to be eligible for services, how many or what percentage of your customers are successful in obtaining and sustaining employment?**

**Answer:** In Federal Fiscal Year 2015, OVR provided services to more than 70,000 individuals with disabilities.

- Over that period, OVR increased the number of customers it successfully placed into employment by **2.7 percent** to nearly **8,800**.
- Of those **8,800** individuals, **98.8 percent** were placed in competitive employment, a **1.7 percent** increase over 2014 levels.
- Average wages for these customers increased **3 percent**, to **\$13 per hour**, exceeding the 2015 federal RSA standard by more than **12 percent**.
- These customers are estimated to net the public savings of nearly **\$54 million** from taxes collected and reduced costs to public support programs.
- As a result, the state is expected to see a return on investment from these workers in just over a year.

**Question: What is the expected time line, once the Community Based Work Assessments (CBWAs) are completed, for a job coach to secure a job for a client?**

**Answer:** This varies. CBWAs are typically used to help OVR to establish eligibility and to develop an “individualized plan for employment”. OVR must determine eligibility within 60 days of application and develop a “plan” within 90 days of eligibility unless unforeseen circumstances require extensions in those time frames. Many factors will impact how quickly job development will occur after the completion of a CBWA. Such factors include:

- Availability of OVR Staff and Provider Staff to meet with customer to review the CBWA and develop a “plan.”
- Follow through on the part of the customer.
- Availability of Job Development and Job Coaching personnel.
- Availability of funding.
- Availability of Long-Term/Extended Supports.
- Availability of Community Resources. Availability of Employers.

**Question: My question is that I have not had success with getting a live person on the phone to assist a consumer about their case and getting a new wheelchair. The consumer finally went to the physical OVR building and by then her case had been closed. Is there a better way to contact case managers at OVR or a customer service number that works? I have tried the number listed and it just rings or connects to a case manager who never returns calls.**

**Answer:** In the event that an individual cannot get through by telephone to the local District Office, the individual should contact OVR Central Office. The individual can provide their information to staff in OVR's Central Office and the concern will be forwarded to the District Administrator of that particular district office.

Email is also another way to contact the OVR counselor. Therefore, individuals should always ask the OVR counselor for his/her email address.

The customer may also contact the Client Assistance Program should he/she wish to take a more aggressive approach. To contact CAP, call this toll-free number 888-745-2357 (Voice/TTY).

**Question: Will the Webinar and PowerPoint be posted publicly?**

**Answer:** Yes, the Webinar, PowerPoint and Frequently Asked Questions will be posted on the OLTL website, OLTL Training Page until an Employment Page is established. The link is as follows: <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/provider/training/index.htm>