

Increasing Employment Opportunities and Outcomes for OLTL Participants

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- The Employment First, Executive Order 2016-03, was signed by the Governor Wolf on March 10, 2016.
- Order establishes Employment First Policy and increases competitive integrated employment for Pennsylvanians with a disability.
- OLTL issued an Employment and Employment Related Services Bulletin: [Bulletin #59-16-07](#).

- SCs who are working with individuals to develop an individual's service plan (ISP) must:
 - Devote ample time during the participants initial and subsequent service planning meetings/conversation to discuss employment.
 - Discuss the process to obtain employment services and supports.
 - Reflect information relative to employment or employment related services in the ISP.
 - Make a referral to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation on behalf of the participant in order to address employment goals.
 - Address transportation needs relative to achieving or maintaining employment and noted in the ISP.

- OLTL is requiring Service Coordination Entities to:
 - Inform participants that OLTL is offering additional resources and support if they have employment as a goal.
 - Ensure employment is an essential topic of discussion when meeting with participants on an ongoing basis.
- OLTL developed Guidance on Conversations about employment with OLTL Participants.

The Guidance on Conversations provides service coordinators with ways to initiate employment-related discussions with Participants.

The following slides illustrate how to start the dialogue.

Participant is not working...

1. Is there anything about getting a job that worries/concerns you?
2. Have you had the chance to explore work or volunteer opportunities to help identify your skills, talents and interests? Would you like to?
3. What would need to happen in order for you to consider finding a job in the future?
4. Did you know you can often keep some of your benefits even if you work? Let me tell you how...

Participant is not working and there is resistance from family member or other person about working...

1. Talk through each concern the person has related to the participant obtaining employment.
2. Assist the participant and family to understand their options relative to employment so they can make informed choices.
3. Remember the expectation of employment may take time. There are many reasons why the participant and/or their family may have resistance to conversations about employment. SC's need to be sensitive to where they are in order to raise expectations. The topic of employment may need to be an ongoing discussion so consideration may be given to employment.

Individual is working...

1. Are you satisfied with your current job and salary? Are you interested in pursuing other jobs/ careers?
2. What necessary supports and/or training would you need in order for you to pursue additional opportunities?

Individual acquired a disability...

1. What type of employment were you engaged in previously?
2. What future goals or aspirations do you have regarding your return to the workforce?
3. Are you familiar with reasonable accommodations in the work place?

- SCs are expected to talk about employment and employment-related goals with all working-age participants in OLTL home and community-based programs.
- As a follow-up to these conversations during the person-centered service planning process and subsequent participant monitoring, all SCs will document employment goals and conversations in the ISP document, HCSIS and SAMS, as appropriate.

1. Take a lead role in locating, coordinating and monitoring employment support services and resources for participant
2. Discuss barriers which prevent participants from finding employment and develop a proactive action plan to address any barriers or obstacles participant may encounter.
3. Discuss the availability of services and supports designated to assist participants find and keep a job.
4. Develop an employment career plan for participants interested in competitive employment.
5. Discuss the need for health care benefits in regard to employment.

Proposed waiver service definitions (tentatively effective October 1, 2016)

- **Job Finding** - Identifies and/or develops potential jobs and assists the participant in securing a job.
- **Job Coaching** - Individualized services providing support to a participant, who needs ongoing support.
- **Employment Skills Development** -Services that provide learning and work experience including volunteer work, where the participant can develop strength and skills that contribute to employability in paid employment.
- **Career Assessment** -Is an individualized employment assessment used to assist in the identification of potential career options based upon the interests of the participant.
- **Benefits Counseling** - Is a service designed to inform and answer questions from a participant about competitive integrated employment.

SCE's must complete the following sections in HCSIS:

Functional Information Section

- A. Educational and Vocational Information
 - Educational Status
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Information
 - Training Goals
 - Comments

- B. Employment and Volunteer Information
 - Work Status
 - Employer and/or Organization
 - Employment and/or Volunteer Goals
 - Comments

Functional Information Section

C. Interest Section - Document

- What is important to the Participant relative to employment?
- What priority does the Participant place on employment?
- What are the Participant's personal interests?

D. Outcome Section - Document

- Outcome Phrase, Current Needs relative to employment.
- Outcome Phrase and Outcome Action relative to employment.



- **The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR):** The OVR is a state agency within the Department of Labor and Industry, (with district offices in your local area) that assists Pennsylvanians with a disability to secure and maintain employment.
- OVR Contact Information – To contact the OVR district office in your area visit:
https://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/vocational_rehabilitation/10356/ovr_office_directory/606620

- **Work incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA):** WIPA projects are organizations within Pennsylvania that are authorized by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide free benefits counseling to Social Security disability beneficiaries to help participants make informed choices about employment.
- The comprehensive list of WIPA organizations for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can be found at:
http://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/result?option=2&zipcode=&state=PA&name=&nm_state=&resStr=wipa,&radius=0&p_pagenu m=1&p_pagesize=25&p_sort=1&mt_sort=0

Or go to <https://www.chooseworkttw.net/>, click “Find Help to Reach a Better Future” and enter your zip code or state.

- **Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD):** MAWD enables a participant to enroll or stay enrolled in Medical Assistance (MA) even when they are earning income.
 - **Applying for MAWD:**
 - Once participants are employed, or about to be employed, they should contact their caseworker at their local County Assistance Office (CAO).
 - Additional information can be found online at:
<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/healthcaremedicalassistance/medicalassistancebenefitsforworkerswithdisabilities/>
- Opportunities and supports in maintaining employment can be found without relying on paid employment services
 - Family and Friends
 - School
 - Business Contacts
 - Centers for Independent Living



Questions