

## ***I. Program Description***

### **A. Program Overview**

Employment Services assists individuals with disabilities to choose, obtain and retain employment in integrated settings. The program provides support and training on and off the job site. Employment staff work cooperatively with consumers, employers, families, schools, state agencies and other service providers in helping the consumer meet his/her career goals.

Although the services are similar, there are four programs within employment services:

**Supported Employment (Tier 1)**—This program is for persons who need a good deal of help in finding and keeping a job. There are three phases to this service: seeking, coaching, and follow along. Participants work with an Employment Consultant (EC) to identify their interests and abilities. The EC helps the person develop a resume, complete applications, and interview for jobs. Once a job is found, the EC provides long-term support and training to the person and the employer until maximum independence is reached. Ongoing support is then provided to assist the person in maintaining their job. This support (follow-along) is individualized and can vary from one or two contacts per month to continuous assistance at the job site.

**Placement Assistance (Tier 2)** —Placement Assistance helps individuals who do not need ongoing supports get and keep a job. This program provides seeking and coaching services, but does not provide follow along services. Persons in this program are very active in their job search. An Employment Consultant (EC) helps the person create a resume and set up interviews. The EC may also communicate with the employer and may sometimes supplement the training provided by the employer. When the person can do the job well without help, the EC closes the consumer out of the program as successfully employed. One of the goals in this program is to try to teach the consumer along the way, so if they need to find a new job in the future, they will have the skills to do this on their own.

#### **Ticket to Work-**

Ticket to Work is a voluntary program that offers beneficiaries age 18 through 64, and who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on disability, expanded opportunities to obtain the services and supports that they need to work and to achieve their employment goals.

The ultimate goal of this program is to reduce reliance on Social Security disability benefits and to promote increased self-sufficiency for beneficiaries with disabilities through work. In this program, the supports provided by the Employment Consultant are similar to those in Placement Assistance. They include mainly seeking services, but could include coaching and/or follow along supports as requested.

**Project SEARCH Indiana:**

Project SEARCH Indiana provides young aged 18-24 with quality, paid and unpaid internship experiences in the “real world.” Through Project SEARCH Indiana, participants can experience innovative employment and career development opportunities.

Working with teams of employment service providers and local businesses, Project SEARCH participants develop a variety of skills including specific job skills, ability to respond to employer expectations, workplace social skills, and interviewing skills.

The Current Partners in Project Search are Stone Belt- (providing instruction and job support) Vocational Rehabilitation (providing planning, development and funding), Indiana University (providing project management) Cook Inc. (providing internship opportunities) and Ivy Tech Community College (providing internship opportunities and classroom space and equipment)

A typical day includes:

Classroom instruction in employability and independent living skills and Job Rotations/Internships

Each intern will complete three different rotations lasting 2 months for each rotation.

**Transition Services --** Stone Belt considers it essential to provide appropriate support and services for persons exiting from public schools to smooth their transition into the world of work. Stone Belt is actively involved in transition councils in school systems of the counties Stone Belt serves. Stone Belt may provide the following support to persons who are still in or are exiting from school.

- Information about available services is provided to schools and families via written materials, participation at information fairs, and participation in case conferences.
- Input, as requested, into the student’s individual education and transition plans.
- Coordination and assistance of job development and job coaching

- Overlap of job coaching between Stone Belt and school staff as the student nears time to exit from school.

## B. Goals:

The primary goal of all programs in community employment services is to find and keep a job in the community. Secondary goals include: increased opportunities for developing relationships and social capital, increased opportunities for skill development, and increased opportunities for learning informed decision making.

## **II. Program Participation**

### A. Populations Served and Eligibility

Community Employment serves adults with disabilities who are interested in finding a job in the community. People with a wide range of disabilities are served including: traumatic brain injury, developmental disabilities, sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illness, and other disabilities.

In order to participate in the Supported Employment or Placement Assistance Program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Meets all general Stone Belt admission criteria
2. Exhibits a desire and willingness to work in the community and/or is recommended for employment by their support team.
3. Is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services or alternative funding source.
4. As applicable, is eligible for, and able to secure follow-along funding through SSBG, Medicaid, Medicaid Waiver and/or Social Security Work Incentives.

For Ticket to Work referrals must meet the above criteria, AND:

1. receive SSI and/or SSDI benefits
2. have a ticket to work from the Social Security Administration and be willing and able to assign it to Stone Belt
3. be willing to work toward getting off benefits

For Project Search referrals candidates should:

1. Be between the ages of 18 and 24
2. Be willing to work at least 20 hours a week
3. Have applied and be found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Indiana

4. Be able to meet the specific hiring requirements of their employer (drug screen, immunizations, etc)
5. Have already met all high school certificate/diploma requirements.

Candidates are selected based on the above criteria. There are a limited number of opportunities available.

## B. Referral Sources

Referrals come from Vocational Rehabilitation or from individuals who have received a ticket to work from Social Security.

## C. Admission

Process for Admission:

For persons who are not currently receiving services from Stone Belt, the admissions acceptance procedure for persons in Supported Employment and Placement Assistance is as follows:

1. The Employment Coordinator receives a referral, and an authorization to develop a plan from the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
2. The Employment Coordinator determines if they believe we can meet the needs of this consumer through one of our community employment programs.
3. The Employment Coordinator arranges an admissions conference. At that time an Employment Consultant is identified to work with the new consumer. A consumer can request to work with a particular EC if he/she has a preference.
4. The Employment Coordinator conducts an admissions screening process that identifies the person's vocational strengths and preferences. The EC then develops the person's Individualized Plan for Employment, which is VR's official document that specifies the type of job and the number of hours the person wants.
5. The VR Counselor approves the plan and writes an authorization for services that enables the EC to begin the assessment and job development process.

For persons who are already receiving services the procedure is as follows:

1. The person and his/her interdisciplinary team determine that this program is desired and appropriate.
2. The EC gives the person information on contacting the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. If they choose Stone Belt

Employment Services, the VR Counselor sends a referral back to the Employment Coordinator.

3. The Employment Coordinator arranges for the admissions conference and steps 3-6 from above are followed.

#### D. Individual Support Plan

All persons enrolled in Stone Belt Programs have an Individual Support Plan (ISP). Goals and objectives are developed with each individual and his/her interdisciplinary team to secure and maintain community employment. Each person has an Employment Consultant (EC) who is responsible for writing and coordinating the plan that is developed. The EC is responsible for developing and carrying out the program plan and reporting the progress made by the person at progress conferences. Progress conferences are held at the VR counselor's request during the seeking and coaching phase. Monthly progress is sent to VR during these two phases. Quarterly reviews are held every 90 days when the person is in follow-along. The plan, which includes goals and objectives from the entire program in which the person participates, is revised at least annually through a case conference.

#### E. Components

**Seeking:** The EC will conduct assessments of abilities and interests including a vocational profile. To gain assessment information, the EC can meet regularly with the person, consult with residential/family members, and observe the person in various settings. The EC can help set up a short term paid community based assessment if more information is needed to determine strengths, abilities and or interests. All this information leads to the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The EC helps the person develop a resume, complete applications, and interview for jobs. EC's supports the consumer at whatever level is necessary to find a job.

During the seeking phase of services, the EC conducts job developing activities, which includes contact with potential employers to locate jobs that match the consumer's interests and skills. While job developing the EC presents general information to the employer about the employment services provided. Usually the EC is looking for a particular type of job for the person he/she is representing. Wherever possible, the person is actively involved in the job search. In many cases, the EC works with the employer to restructure his/her work tasks to best use the person's skills.

It is critical to start discussions while the consumer is in the job seeking status about what funding will be in place to support the person when

he/she transitions to follow along. This usually needs to be determined by the whole team.

**Coaching:** Once a job is found, the EC provides ongoing support and training to the employee and the employer until maximum independence is reached. The EC will work closely with the employer to identify the training plan for the employee. The EC should always strive to use the natural supports within the workplace, rather than paid supports supplied by Stone Belt staff. Natural supports might include employer provided orientation and training, assistance from co-workers, environmental cues such as clocks, buzzers etc that already exist in the workplace. When necessary, Stone Belt Employment Services supplement the employer's regular orientation and training if it will take the employee longer to learn the job than the employers usually provides to new employees. The EC learns the job responsibilities alongside the employee during training provided by the employer. It is important during this phase that the EC is careful to not build him/herself into the process in such a way that he/she cannot leave. As the employee becomes more proficient in the job the EC is less and less involved. A fading plan and/or task analysis is developed to detail this process. When the employee in Supported Employment (Tier 1) has reached the maximum level of job performance, they are determined to be stable, even though they may continue to need some level of supports provided by the EC. This can happen as early as 30 days on the job, but can take longer as well. At this point, a stabilization form is completed by Vocational Rehabilitation. This is sent to the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities and the Case Manager (if applicable) so that follow along funds will be in place. Sixty days later the consumer will move to follow along status if his/her stability in the job is sustained.

For persons in Placement Assistance (Tier 2), the person is stable when he/she is successful in the job and the supports are no longer necessary. This can happen as early as 90 days on the job. The person is then closed out of services.

**Follow Along:** (For persons in Supported Employment and Project SEARCH only) In Follow-Along, regular, documented contact is made with the employee and/or the employer on an ongoing basis after VR closure. At least two job site contacts are made monthly. Retraining is available for employees who need this support, but the hope is to increase the employer's ability to retrain the person. For persons in shared support sites, the Direct Support Specialist- Employment (DSS) provides ongoing and mostly continuous follow-along support.

## F. Service Delivery

### 1. Length of Service

Employment Services are provided for as long as they are appropriate, desired, and necessary. The person and his/her interdisciplinary team determine this.

### 2. Hours of Operation

Services are provided whenever the consumer needs support on or off the job.

### 3. Frequency of Service

Determined on an individualized basis

Consumers unsuccessful in their job search or in maintaining employment have the following contingencies:

1. Re-entry into job seeking status
2. Re-entry or referral into another Stone Belt program as appropriate (i.e. work services, life skills enrichment)
3. Referral to an outside agency

### 4. Fees and Payers of Sources

Funding for Seeking and Coaching in Supported Employment, Placement Assistance and Project SEARCH Indiana:

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** A state organization that funds all referred consumers in **seeking** and **coaching** status. Almost all of this funding is results-based funding, which means Stone Belt is paid for outcomes, not paid on an hourly basis. There are two tiers of referrals, and four Milestones for each tier. Which tier a client is referred for, is based on their potential perceived support needs, but generally tier 1 equates to supported employment, and a need for follow-along support, and tier 2 equates to placement assistance, and no need for follow-along support

Funding for Follow Along

There are 3 potential sources of follow-along funding. Each consumer who is eligible will have only one of these sources. Stone Belt can only receive follow-along funding for those who are developmentally disabled.

**Medicaid Waivers:** For consumers on a Support Services, Autism, Developmentally Disabled or Traumatic Brain Injury waiver.

**Community Supports Budgets** (formerly known as Title XX): These are state dollars that are currently the only funding source accepting new clients.

**Group Home Consumers/Medicaid Day Add-On:** This is for consumers who live in a group home. Stone Belt has a contract with each of those group homes to provide day services, including follow-along.

#### Funding for Ticket To Work

**Social Security Administration** funds this program. Payments vary depending on what types of benefits were received and how much money the client earns at their job. Payments do not start until someone is working, and they can go on as long as 5 years if someone is working off benefits.

#### 5. Discharge

People are discharged from Employment Services according to the agency discharge procedures. Discharge criteria specific to Employment Services are as follows:

1. Self-request to withdraw from program due to lack of interest or finding own employment
2. Case conference decisions that community employment is no longer beneficial for the consumer. The consumer must be a participant in this decision.
3. Successful employment with no need for follow-along supports
4. All ISP goals are met and there are no other identified training needs
5. General or program admission criteria are no longer met.

Discharge occurs only as a result of a case conference decision or a retraction of the original referral by the consumer's referral source.

### ***III. Intra/Interagency Relationships***

Employment Services are coordinated with Work Services and Life Skills Enrichment. Many consumers are in multiple programs during the day. One staff is assigned to manage the person's total program and advocate for the person to receive appropriate services. Many consumers are in Stone Belt's residential programs or in residential services with other providers. It is critical that good communication occurs with the other services about what is happening with the job. The EC is responsible for communication of all things job related. This communication may happen electronically, via phone contacts or in a written format. They are responsible for the total program only when employment is the only services

Ongoing communication with the VR Counselor or other referring agent is critical. That person is responsible for assuring the consumer is meeting the goals of his Individual Plan for Employment or similar document. The Counselor should be kept aware of all major activities that occur in the



employment process. This includes, but is not limited to, an offer of a job to a consumer, a change in the status on the job, a change in job duties, or any significant event in the consumer's life that effects his/her employment status. Counselors should be reached by telephone or email as promptly as possible when events necessitate communication.

#### **IV. Personnel**

##### **A. Director of Employment**

The Director oversees the employment program in all three counties (Monroe, Lawrence and Bartholomew), and directly supervises all Employment Coordinators. The Director is also directly responsible for management of the Ticket to Work program, and Project SEARCH, which includes direct supervision of the Project SEARCH instructor. Other duties of the Director include the following:

Assuring that policies and procedures relevant to Employment Services are followed; Compiling and analyzing monthly billing and statistical information, and all scorecard data; Budgeting and fiscal management for this program; Ensuring implementation of appropriate training for staff; Review of all monthly billing, and direct responsibility for all Project Search and Ticket to Work billing

##### **B. Employment Coordinator**

The Employment Coordinator supervises a team of Employment Consultants who coordinate and deliver consumer-centered services to an assigned group of individuals with disabilities. They must provide quality leadership.

The Employment Coordinator schedules direct service assignments and supervises the provision of support and instruction in community employment. This position provides these direct services about 30% of the time. The position is also responsible for the following: Direct VR billing, and communicating this billing to financial services; Review of all other team billing; Securing follow along funding; Training of EC's; Admissions decisions and paperwork; Ensures timely and appropriate completion and submission of required documentation and paperwork and Serves as a back-up to staff as needed.

##### **C. Employment Consultant**

The Employment Consultant is a member of a team which coordinates and delivers consumer-centered supports and services to an assigned group of individuals with disabilities.

He/She provides support and advocacy to assigned individuals in a

manner that recognizes each person's uniqueness, worth and right to self-determination. The EC communicates and interacts with all significant people in the lives of consumers to ensure appropriate program involvement. These persons include families, residential providers, employers, friends, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and other agency staff. This position also provides job seeking, coaching and follow-along services to assigned consumers.

#### D. Direct Support Specialist- Employment

Generally, this position serves as a site supervisor in a shared support employment site. The Direct Support Specialist (DSS) is responsible for the implementation of instructional services to consumers consistent with written program plans for Employment Services.

#### E. Project Search Instructor

The Project SEARCH Instructor is responsible for all primary instructions and job supports in the program. Other specific duties include: curriculum development; internship development; training internship at job site; coordinating with business liaisons, VR, and Indianan University; data collection for Project SEARCH and documentation of services.

### **V. *Program Evaluation***

Quarterly meetings with Vocational Rehabilitation

On an annual basis, program outcomes are developed as part of Stone Belt's Outcome Measurement System. Current outcomes include Progress, Access, Satisfaction and Efficiency. Data is collected from internal sources, as well as from clients, families and other stakeholders. The data is analyzed in order to determine progress toward the outcomes. Information gained from the data collection/analysis is used to make recommendations for improvements.