



Guide
to
Employment

Overview

This Guide to Employment for HOME Choice consumers is designed to assist transition coordinators and case managers in locating employment resources for persons with disabilities. Transition coordinators and case managers are encouraged to become familiar with the basic employment information provided in this guide in order to discuss options with a consumer who is interested in employment. While employment is not a requirement for participation in the HOME Choice program, it may be an important consideration, and in some cases, a primary goal, for individuals with disabilities as they take steps toward personal choice and independence in a home- and community-based setting.

When to Discuss Employment

A consumer may inquire about employment opportunities at any time during the HOME Choice continuum (planning to full participation on the demonstration). The planning phase is an opportune time to discuss options available to HOME Choice consumers. If the consumer does not ask about employment, the HOME Choice transition coordinator should bring up the topic so that the consumer knows it is available. Employment may positively impact the consumer's quality of life. However, the transition coordinator should make it clear to the consumer that **employment is not a requirement of participation in HOME Choice** but, rather, an option available to them.

If a consumer becomes employed, he or she may want to apply for the Medicaid Buy-In program for workers with disabilities, which will help them keep more of their earnings.

Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD)

MBIWD is an Ohio Medicaid program that provides health coverage to working Ohioans with disabilities. Historically, people with disabilities were often discouraged from working because their earnings made them ineligible for Medicaid coverage. MBIWD was created to enable Ohioans with disabilities and still keep their health coverage.

Who is eligible?

To qualify for MBIWD, a person must:

- Be 16 to 64 years old
- Be disabled as per the Social Security Administration or as determined by Ohio Medicaid or eligible under the MBIWD medically improved category
- Be employed in paid work (includes part-time and full-time work);
- Pay a premium (if applicable)
- Meet certain basic requirements and financial criteria.

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Premiums

Monthly premiums are required for those eligible for MBIWD with an annual gross income greater than 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Each MBIWD enrollee will receive a monthly statement with his or her monthly premium amount. To obtain and maintain health coverage, the full amount of the premium must be received by the due date or it will be considered non-payment. Late payments will be applied to the most delinquent premium.

For more information, or to apply, please contact <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/mbiwd.stm> .

Disability Navigator

If transition coordinators are unsure where to begin to help a consumer interested in employment, contact the State Disability Program Navigator or a Regional Navigator (see map). Ohio's Disability Program Navigator Initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration. The Disability Program Navigator serves as a partner with Ohio's One-Stop (Employment) Centers.

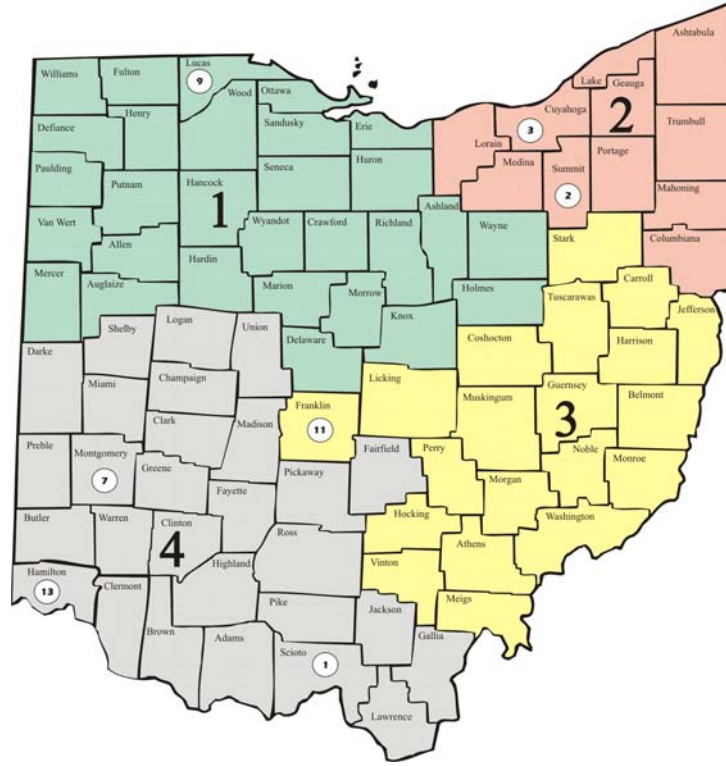
Disability Program Navigators will:

- Guide One Stop (Employment) staff in helping people with disabilities access and navigate the complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain employment.
- Develop links and collaborate with employers to facilitate job placement for persons with disabilities.
- Develop partnerships to achieve integrated services, systemic change, and expand the capacity to serve customers with disabilities.
- Establish ties to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities.
- Serve as resource on the Social Security Administration's work incentives and employment support programs and the provision of services through Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs, Protection and Advocacy systems, and employment-related demonstration projects.
- Facilitate the transition of in or out of school youth with disabilities to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Please note that the Disability Navigator can be viewed as a resource, facilitator, relationship builder or a problem-solver, Navigators will not replace case managers, front-line staff in Workforce Centers, community work incentives coordinators, or veterans' specialists.

The following graphic provides contact information for the regional Disability Program Navigators.

Ohio Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative Contacts



State DPN Program Manager

Gwen Ivory Gwen.Ivory@jfs.ohio.gov (614) 644-0344

Regional Navigators

| Region 1 | Region 2 |
|---|---|
| Yvonne McDaniel Yvonne.McDaniel@jfs.ohio.gov (419) 891-8686 | Georgianna Lowe Georgianna.Lowe@jfs.ohio.gov (330) 252-6637 |
| Region 3 | Region 4 |
| Debbie Yost Debra.Yost@jfs.ohio.gov (330) 430-1508 | Abbea Forcum Abbea.Forcum@jfs.ohio.gov (740) 774-8538 |

General Process for Employment Systems

This section provides an overview of the general process in each of the employment systems operated by the Rehabilitation Services Commission, the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Department of Aging.

Rehabilitation Services Commission – Vocational Rehabilitation

Consumers eligible for VC services must have a disability that impedes their ability to obtain or maintain competitive employment. They must also be able to benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services that will assist them in achieving employment. Eligible consumers also must need multiple VR services. Consumers who are receiving SSI or SSDI are presumed eligible for VR services, with supporting documentation, while meeting the above-mentioned criteria.

A referral for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services may be made by the consumer, the transitions coordinator or case manager, or the local One-Stop (Employment) Center. Referral forms are available through the Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) website at www.rsc.ohio.gov. Upon referral to the RSC, consumers are served by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation or the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired if their primary disability is a visual impairment.

Once referred, consumers may attend a general orientation group to apply for services or and receive an assignment to a VR counselor, or the consumer may be scheduled directly with a VR counselor for an intake interview.

During the intake interview with the VR counselor gathers information by discussing with consumers their disability history, its impact on working, their work history, educational background, family history, and vocational goal interests. Consumers (and the legal guardian, if applicable), may be asked to sign releases in order to obtain further disability information.

If there is concern as to whether the consumer may benefit from VR services toward a competitive employment outcome, the consumer may be referred by the VR counselor for a trial work experience, in order to aid in eligibility determination.

Upon VR eligibility determination, the consumer is classified as Severely Disabled (SD) or Most Severely Disabled (MSD). Federal law requires MSD consumers to be served first.

The consumer may be referred for further evaluations to develop a comprehensive assessment and to aid in determining the vocational goal. Evaluations may include vocational, situational assessments, physical capacities, low-vision, psychological and career exploration.

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Informed Choice. The VR counselor offers consumers choices for all VR services. Consumers also decide on their vocational goal and development of their plan through informed choice.

When a consumer decides on a vocational goal, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) may be developed. The IPE states the vocational goal and the estimated time needed to reach this goal because VR services are time-limited. It also includes the services needed to reach the vocational goal, along with the chosen service providers, estimated costs, payer of services and estimated timeframes for services. Services may include training, rehabilitation technology equipment and services, job placement and job coaching. The consumer's contribution to the IPE and responsibilities are stated on the IPE, which is signed by the consumer and VR Counselor.

The VR counselor then implements the services on the IPE through referral and authorization to the Community Rehabilitation Partner (CRP) and other community resources. The consumer is monitored for the first 90 days of employment. Sometimes periodic meetings are held with the consumer, VC counselor and RCP to discuss VR progress or issues.

For consumers eligible for supported employment services through the Ohio Department of Mental Health or Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities, the consumer may receive follow-along services through one of those agencies after their case is closed with RSC.

Consumers may refer themselves back to RSC if they develop disability-related issues in their job or if they lose their job.

Rehabilitation Services Commission – Personal Care Assistance Program

The Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program provides funds to pay for personal assistance services to enable eligible persons with severe disabilities to work and/or live independently. The requirements and structure of the PCA program are outlined in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 33-4-4-02.

Please contact the RSC for more information at 1 (800) 282-4536 voice/TTY or <http://www.rsc.state.oh.us/default.aspx> .

Rehabilitation Services Commission – Ticket to Work

The Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (ticket program) will help people with disabilities become employed. It was created through passage of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

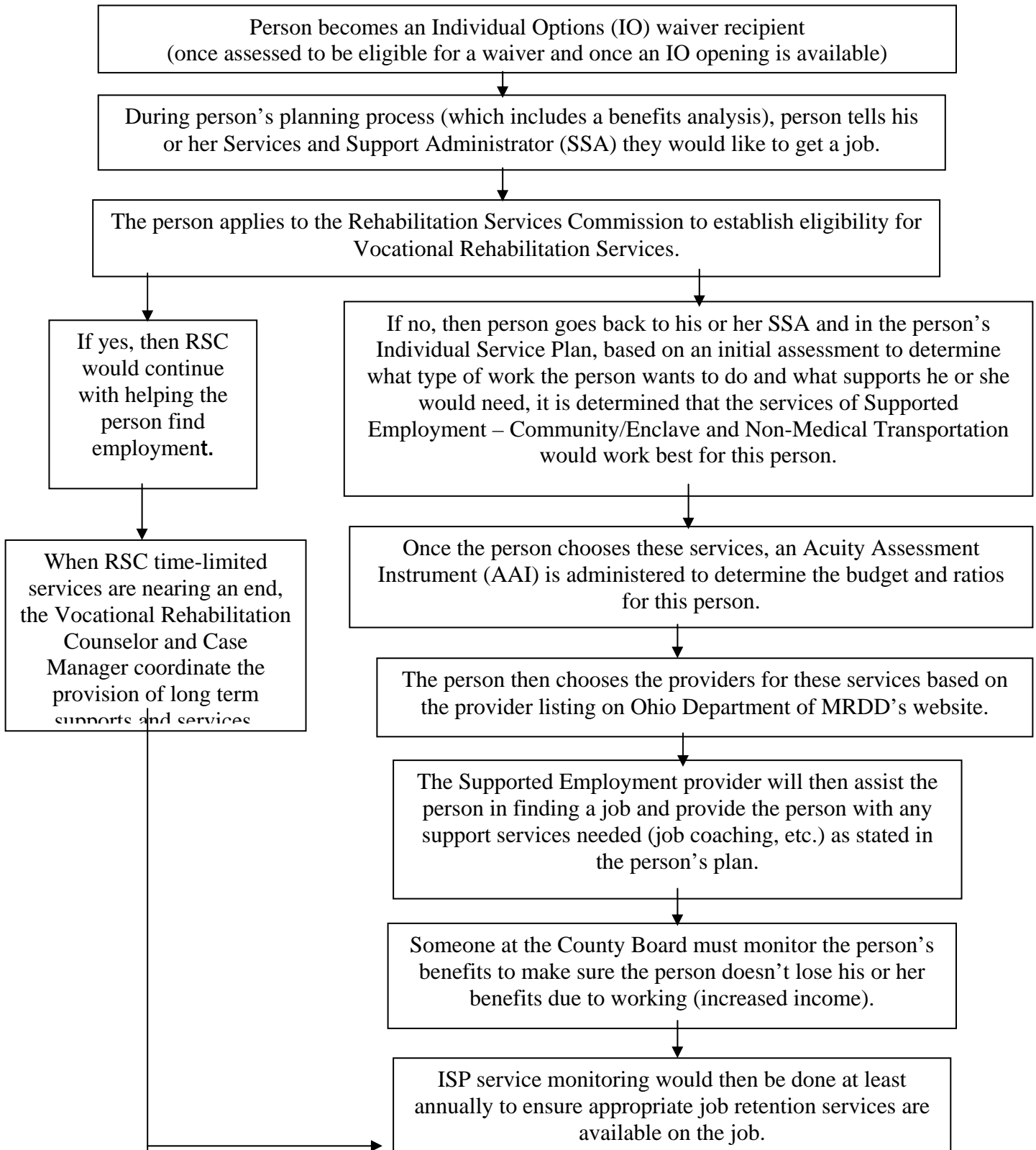
The goal of Ticket to Work is to increase employment and reduce dependence on cash benefits among people with disabilities who are ages 18 – 64 and receive Social Security Disability (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This will be accomplished by

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increasing the number of providers (employment networks or ENs) of employment, vocational rehabilitation and support services, and by giving the consumer his or her choice of provider.

Please contact the RSC for more information at 1 (800) 282-4536 voice/TTY or <http://www.rsc.state.oh.us/default.aspx> .

How an Individual in the MRDD System Would Obtain Employment



How an Elderly Person Would Obtain Employment

The **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** is a paid job training and work experience program for low-income adults age 55 and older. Training is available in positions such as receptionists, typists, secretarial assistants, nutrition aides, security guards, maintenance workers, teachers' aides and more. Custom training programs and positions are developed to meet the needs of participants and employers.

Participants train in nonprofit organizations, hospitals, schools, police stations, senior centers, food banks, museums, nutrition programs and various governmental agencies. Participants train 20 hours per week and are paid at least state or federal minimum wage. Schedules are determined by the needs of the training site, but are typically four hours a day, five days a week.

Benefits vary, but may include job training, physical exams, job-related counseling, workers' compensation and job referral and placement.

To qualify for SCSEP, participants must be 55 or older, residents of Ohio and income-eligible. The combined incomes of all family members must not exceed the following:

| Family Size | Annual Income* |
|--|----------------|
| 1 | \$13,000 |
| 2 | \$17,500 |
| 3 | \$22,000 |
| 4 | \$26,500 |
| Add \$4,500 for each additional person. | |
| * Not all income applies - call for details. | |

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is available in all 88 Ohio counties. The Department of Aging contracts with leaders in employment and training in each county. To learn more and to apply, contact the SCSEP provider serving your county at <http://goldenbuckeye.com/families/scsepprov.html> or call the Ohio Department of Aging at (614) 466-5500 or 1 (800) 266-4346 and ask to speak to someone about the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

If you do not meet the eligibility guidelines above for SCSEP, job training and job search assistance may still be available through your community One-Stop office. Click <http://www.ohioworkforce.org/localboard/onestopmap.stm> to find the One-Stop Office serving your county.

Resources

This section includes contact information and general information (websites) for Ohio’s employment resources and systems.

To find out more about the **Employment and Training One Stop** nearest you please visit:

<http://www.ohioworkforce.org/jobseekers/onestopmap.stm>

For a description of services available at your local Employment and Training One Stop, please go to http://www.ohioworkforce.org/jobseekers/state_programs.stm

Find the **Rehabilitative Services Commission office** nearest you at:

http://www.rsc.ohio.gov/Offices/voc_rehab_listings.asp
(see RSC attachments)

Consumers with disabilities over the age of 55 may be eligible for the **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**. Find the SCSEP provider nearest you at:

<http://goldenbuckeye.com/families/scsepprov.html>
(See SCEP attachments)

Consumers living with mental health issues are perhaps the most negatively impacted in the labor force. It is important to familiarize yourself with the information and resources made available by the **Ohio Department of Mental Health**. This information is located at <http://www.mh.state.oh.us/index.html>.

Consumers living with mental retardation or developmental disabilities may be eligible for services provided through the **Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities** (ODMRDD).

To learn more about ODMRDD please visit:

<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/> --Click on the “Adult Services” tab for employment information. For services located close to you, please use visit:

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<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/contacts/countyboards1.htm> --List of County Boards of MRDD.

https://odmrdd.state.oh.us/apps/Internet/pcs_publicdisplay/PCS_PublicWelcome.aspx

This is the provider search website.

Consumers living with disabilities who are also **veterans** can call the VA Hotline at 1-800-827-1000. They will be connected directly to the regional office nearest them and will be able to speak with a Benefits Counselor regarding employment information.

They may also benefit from the services offered by <http://veteransaffairs.ohio.gov>

Additional resources can be found at:

www.connectmeohio.org. Comprehensive list of service providers in Ohio.