

The Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) Project helps state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies build their capacity so that more consumers can find meaningful employment. Two of our participating states, Kentucky and Minnesota, have made changes to their state VR program that have led to substantial gainful employment for their clients. This series includes some of the key resources that VR and financial professionals implementing the SGA project utilized.

The Job Placement (JP) Specialist adds value as an active and engaged team member working in coordination with the vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor and a financial specialist (or in Kentucky, a Kentucky Work Incentive Coordinator (KWIC)) early in the rehabilitation process.

The JP Specialist has critical expertise needed by Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) customers. Such expertise includes knowledge of the local job market, industry-specific intelligence, ability to identify transferrable work skills, and ability to assist customers to select an employment goal that is tied to the labor market needs of area businesses.

In SGA, JP Specialists:

- ▶ Became engaged with the SSDI customer prior to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- ▶ Worked as a team member with the VR counselor and KWIC.
- ▶ Assisted the SSDI customer in learning about the labor market.
- ▶ Used engagement strategies that ensured the SSDI customer was supported throughout the planning, training, job search, and placement process.

In the following, we examine the role of the JP Specialist during each step in the job placement process.

COORDINATED TEAM APPROACH (CTA) MEETING ONE

JP Specialist's role:

- ▶ Provide a brief description of services you have to offer as a JP Specialist to the SSDI customer (keep in mind and stress the importance of working as a team).

- ▶ Listen from a strength-based perspective and provide feedback as needed to the SSDI customer and team members.
- ▶ During the CTA meeting, consider and share the following information as appropriate: (1) potential transferrable work skills based on work history as well as current goals and interests; (2) the local job market and current options available in the community; (3) initial thoughts on preparation needed for the SSDI customer to return to work.
- ▶ Schedule a pre-IPE follow-up meeting with the customer.

PRE-IPE INDIVIDUAL MEETING

JP Specialist meets with SSDI customer as appropriate:

- ▶ Develop or update the customer's resume/ work history and references and any other job search needs (e.g., how to fill out online applications).
- ▶ Make a plan for ongoing check-ins with the SSDI customer to maintain momentum and engagement.
- ▶ Provide more detailed labor market information as appropriate (e.g., local wages for specific positions of interest, career opportunities in specific geographic areas).
- ▶ Continue in-depth discussion of transferrable skills.

FEEDBACK TO CTA TEAM

To assist in the development of the IPE, include the following as applicable:

- ▶ Transferable skills: Identify strengths and skills of the SSDI customer.

- ▶ Job readiness: Specify what preparation is needed.
- ▶ Job market: Provide information on the local labor market and availability of employment.
- ▶ Identify JP Specialist services.

ACTIVE JOB SEARCH AND/OR SHORT-TERM TRAINING

The JP Specialist becomes the primary point person for the CTA team during this phase of service delivery. The JP Specialist and the customer have shared responsibilities during the active job search process.

- ▶ We recommend **weekly** contact (face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, text messages, or email, as appropriate). Frequency of contact should be determined by the CTA and be based upon encouraging engagement of the job seeker.
- ▶ Progress on the job search is continually shared with the other members of the CTA team.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OR INDIVIDUALIZED PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS)

- ▶ The CTA may determine that the most appropriate employment service is supported employment.

- ▶ We recommend that the CTA determine frequency of contact with the Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) specialist to ensure that the customer is receiving services and is progressing. Suggested contact is **monthly** by the job placement specialist.

LONG-TERM TRAINING OR COLLEGE

- ▶ The CTA may determine that long-term training or education may be the most appropriate VR service for customers.
- ▶ We recommend that the CTA determine the frequency of contact; however, we suggest **quarterly contact** by the job placement specialist. We also suggest offering conversations about work experience through internships, summer and winter break employment, and other job placement services.

CMS DATA ENTRY

The JP Specialist enters a brief note in Staff Provided Services under the SGA Tab after each contact (meetings, phone calls, texts, emails, and/or letters) with the SSDI customer.



Explore VR

Informing Research, Policy, and Practice

This is a publication of ExploreVR, the data hub for a group of vocational rehabilitation research projects at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. ExploreVR is funded in part by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the US Department of Education, grant #H133B070001 and grant #H133B120002. The SGA Project is a model demonstration project funded by RSA under grant number H235L100004.



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