

Attachment 4.8(b)(4)

Evidence Of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services And Extended Services

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) administers the Supported Employment (SE) Program as specified in Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act. MDRS works extensively with other state agencies, private non-profit entities, employers, family members, and consumer groups to ensure quality supported employment services are provided to all eligible individuals throughout all phases of the SE service delivery system.

MDRS maintains formal agreements with the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (the administering authority for the state's Workforce Investment Act one-stop system), and other public and private entities which identify areas of collaboration to ensure a comprehensive program of services to SE eligible individuals. SE staff members collaborate intensively with local mental health centers, school districts, businesses and industries, local project staff of programs funded by the Developmental Disabilities Council, one-stop centers, parents, advocacy groups, and other relevant third parties.

A large portion of the SE staff's job duties involves liaison activities among SE clients, family members, employers, and other service providers. SE staff members regularly attend joint staffings and Person Centered Planning meetings with third party service providers to ensure that SE services are provided to clients in a consistent, appropriate, continual, and ongoing nature from the time of the initial referral to supported employment into the extended support phase. These staffings often include family members and employers as well as service providers. Person Centered Planning and the development of natural supports for individual clients are an integral part of the SE staff members' activities.

Upon completion of the time-limited supported employment services, the ongoing job skills training assistance and other necessary long-term support is transitioned to a third party, group, or individual through a Cooperative Agreement or Extended Services Agreement. The primary provider of extended services is the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through its network of local community service programs. However, an increasing number of individuals and other community organizations are accepting this role. Employers are often willing to take on this responsibility and are encouraged to do so since it is the most natural arrangement for the client.

When an individual or agency agrees to provide extended services, an Extended Services Agreement is negotiated between MDRS and that individual or agency. The Extended Services Agreement is a stand-alone agreement in which the individual or agency agrees to provide extended supports once the MDRS time-limited supported employment services are complete.

MDRS does not pay for the extended services included in the agreement. The agreement describes the type and extent of needed supports, the frequency of contacts with the client, and resources for possible future referral. The agreement is signed by both parties and is maintained on file with MDRS indefinitely. MDRS entered into 60 new Extended Service Agreements in FFY 2013. These 60 new agreements are in addition to the agreements previously established and still ongoing. Although 18 months of time-limited services is maintained as a standard, the rate of transitioning a client to extended services is dependent upon the needs of the individual, his/her family, the employer, the third party agency, and other involved individuals. Since SE staff members and the extended service provider will have been collaborating in the provision of SE services throughout an individual's vocational rehabilitation program, such transitions are normally smooth and do not cause job disruptions.

This attachment was developed after a review of the results of the Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs. Any pertinent findings from the Statewide Assessment were incorporated into this attachment. Additionally, members of the State Rehabilitation Council were involved in the development of this attachment.