

People with intellectual disability are accessing postsecondary education now more than ever before. Individuals with intellectual disability who pursue postsecondary education achieve employment at a significantly higher rate than the national rate for people with intellectual disability. Given their shared goal of preparing people for competitive integrated employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies and postsecondary education (PSE) institutions are natural partners for student success.

This guide is designed to help VR counselors develop targeted Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) to support clients pursuing PSE.

### COMPONENTS OF AN IPE

Here are the general components of an IPE, along with examples that align with attending PSE institutions. Keep in mind that each state's IPE requirements differ! Use this guide as a starting point.

- » **Personalized Employment Goal:** the career the client is working toward
- » **Services:** what is provided, by whom, and when
- » **Responsibilities:** for the client and VR counselor
- » **Progress Measures:** short-term goals to mark progress
- » **Comparable Benefits:** other resources for support in reaching the client's goal

Let's explore examples of what each component might look like for a client wanting to use PSE as their career pathway:

#### Personalized Employment Goal

PSE institutions assist clients in developing skills and preparing for their career pathways, regardless of their employment goals. PSE institutions help clients gain credentials and advance their employment opportunities. An employment goal states the occupation category the client is working toward. VR employment goals usually align with O\*NET codes.

#### Examples of an Employment Goal:

- » Fitness Instructor or Exercise Trainer (ONET 39-9031.00)
- » Office Administrator (ONET 43-1011.00)
- » Teaching Assistant (ONET 25-9043.00)

*\* Quick Tip: General goals are good. Clients will learn more about themselves and their career path through college. Give yourself some room to adjust the goal down the road.*



## Services

Clients pursuing PSE receive many of the same VR services as other clients, but some unique services exist for clients pursuing PSE.

### Examples of Common VR Services for PSE Clients:

- » **Counseling and Guidance:** career planning and goal setting
- » **Job Placement Services:** assistance in securing employment
- » **Paid Internships/Work Experiences** (paid at the federal minimum wage hourly rate): opportunities to learn in a hands-on work environment
- » **Job Coaching:** on-the-job support and training
- » **Assistive Technology Support:** tools and resources to aid accessibility
- » **Benefits planning:** support in financial planning regarding Social Security benefits

### Examples of Potential VR Services Unique to PSE Clients:

- » Tuition and fees
- » Meal plans
- » Room and board
- » Transportation support (parking passes, bus tickets, gas)
- » Textbooks and class materials

## Responsibilities

Both counselors and clients are responsible for implementing the plan, which outlines what they will do to progress toward the employment goal.

### Examples of Student Responsibilities:

- » Maintain contact with my VR counselor
- » Practice using public transportation with my PSE coach
- » Attend classes and work shifts

### Examples of VR Counselor Responsibilities:

- » Authorize funds for tuition and room and board
- » Authorize funds for internship support
- » Send a referral for technology assessment

*\* Quick Tip: VR services are determined by the VR counselor and the client. Services and financial procedures vary by state. Check with your state procedures to determine what services the VR agency can cover for each client.*

## Progress Measures

Progress measures help the team keep track of a student's progress toward their employment goal. Use these progress measures to determine if you need to adjust services or measures to support progress or better reflect progress. When setting progress measures, consider both the student's career goals, and broader career readiness skills gained in college.

### Sample Progress Measures for PSE:

- » Student will join at least one academic and industry-related club or organization on campus to practice professional skills and learn industry terminology.
- » Student will practice independence as they learn to navigate their way on campus to and from their classes and job sites.

- » Student will build self-accountability skills as job coaching support fades in increments of 20 minutes over the semester.
  - » Student will practice self-advocacy by accessing accommodations through the campus disability office, in class, and through campus employment.
  - » Student will develop the math and communication skills necessary to work in their identified career area through the successful completion of identified coursework and attainment of identified credential.
  - » Student will meet the requirements of their training program for each semester as documented on progress report submitted within X weeks of completing the term.
- \* Quick Tip: Phrase measures positively, make sure they are measurable, and include how progress will be measured.*

## Comparable Benefits

Comparable benefits are support or financial assistance from agencies or organizations other than VR that support the student in reaching their employment goals. These benefits ensure clients get the support they need while using all the resources available to them.

### Examples of Comparable Benefits:

- » Medicaid waiver supports
- » College or university or campus counseling services
- » College or university or campus disability support services

## Conclusion

IPEs outline a student's goals, services, responsibilities, progress measures, and comparable benefits. VR counselors supporting clients in PSE institutions can customize their IPEs for improved student outcomes. While states, PSE institutions, and clients vary, this tool provides a great starting point for counselors writing effective IPEs for clients pursuing PSE. Counselors can use this guide in their everyday work to efficiently write IPEs for clients pursuing PSE.

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