

**Department of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired**

PROGRAM GUIDE
DRS/DSBVI-2019-01
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**FROM: Ronda Williams, SBVI
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TO: All DRS & SBVI Offices

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST PROVIDER STANDARDS

The Rehabilitation Act and Amendments require State VR Agencies to maintain standards for Employment Specialists Providers of vocational rehabilitation services. This policy will impact the service delivery system in the following ways:

- Establish services for clients in rural areas across the state,
- Give VR clients more choices in service providers, and
- Allow for the development of a less costly service delivery model.

This Program Guide establishes the guidelines for accepting Employment Specialists to be authorized and reimbursed for Job Placement, Job Coaching, Situational Assessments, Independent Living Services and Follow-Along Services from the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI).

The following three types of providers are available to provide vocational rehabilitation services:

Provider Type I. - Existing Accredited Providers

These agencies consist of any Department approved, Community Support Providers, Mental Health Centers, Centers for Independent Living, Career Learning Centers, Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, SD DROP and any CARF accredited agencies. We will continue to accept their current accreditation. They will not be required to submit a request for proposal or application to provide services except where required for contract purposes.

Provider Type II - Client Certified Provider

Providers in this category are certified to provide services for a specific client. These individuals must meet minimal standards of completing a criminal record check and entering into an agreement with the client. The client is responsible for initial evaluation to certify the

provider, helping the provider understand their needs in their job search or workplace, monitoring on-going services, and informing the counselor of unacceptable services. DRS/SBVI retains the right to deny approval of a provider having a negative criminal record or a previous record of poor performance on services provided to clients of the Department of Human Services.

Examples of Provider II could be a co-worker, member of the community, family member, or employer. Services available from these providers will be limited job coaching and follow-along services. When District Offices are working with clients and providers utilizing this provider category, the following process should be utilized:

1. The counselor should review the Provider Handbook for Client Certified Provider and Client Handbook for Client Certified Provider with the team to ensure that expectations are understood and agreed to by both the client and requested provider.
2. The client, provider, and counselor must complete and sign the Client Certified Provider Form and the provider must complete and sign a W-9 and authorization for release of their criminal background check.
3. If the background check is clean and it's been verified that this individual has not provided dissatisfactory services to DHS clients in the past, the District Supervisor can make the final determination if the person can serve as a Client Certified Provider or not.

In emergency situations where the client needs the services immediately and cannot wait for the results of the criminal records check, the following steps should be taken:

- Complete Step 1 listed above.
- Provisional approval may be granted by the District Supervisor for up to two weeks until the criminal background check is completed and the records are reviewed.
- Once all records are received and reviewed, the approval or denial decision will be made.

Provider Type III - Private For-Profit Providers

Providers in this category will be businesses who have been approved through an application process and if approved contract will be issued with DRS and or SBVI. DRS & SBVI District Offices can then authorize services for which the provider has been approved to provide. The District Offices should enter these individuals onto VRFACES using the correct fee rate for Provider III.

If you have any questions on this Program Guide, please contact the DRS Assistant Director or SBVI Director.

Enclosures