

Partners with Business FAQs for Employers

Employers who are interested in learning more about the Partners with Business model may have questions about how this program works. This FAQs document was developed to capture questions about this program and share answers.

Question: How is Partners with Business different from traditional job coach support?

Answer: With traditional job coach support, a job coach from an outside agency provides on-site training and support to an employee with a disability. While effective for some, this model can feel intrusive to employers or employees. In contrast, **Partners with Business** allows existing coworkers or supervisors to provide training and support directly to that employee. Employers are reimbursed for the extra time and resources spent supporting the employee, resulting in a more consistent and integrated approach.

Question: Who are the “partners” in Partners with Business?

Answer: The model is a collaboration between an employer and an employment support agency. The employment specialist who works for the support agency helps to develop support strategies and offers ongoing consultation.

Question: What kind of support will I provide?

Answer: You would supervise and train an employee just as you would any team member. Some employees with disabilities may need additional assistance, such as help with task organization, pacing, or quality checks. This support can often be provided by coworkers or supervisors already on staff instead of outside job coaches.

Question: What responsibilities would I take on as an employer?

Answer: You would agree to:

- Define the employee’s job duties.
- Assign coworkers or supervisors to provide standard onboarding and support.
- Identify and approve additional support roles if enhanced assistance is needed.
- Allow time for an employment specialist to train coworkers on effective support.
- Monitor performance and contact the employment specialist if concerns arise.

Question: Would I be eligible for reimbursement?

Answer: You may be eligible for reimbursement if the level of support provided to the employee exceeds what is typical for your workplace. You would work with an employment specialist to assess the tasks, level of independence, and type of support needed. Reimbursement is then calculated based on the actual time and cost of that additional support.

Question: How is the reimbursement amount calculated?

Answer: Reimbursement is based on the level of extra support the employee needs—beyond natural supports already built into the job. You would work with the agency to assess job duties

and support needs together. The total cost is calculated by multiplying the amount of support time needed (in 15-minute increments) by your actual cost (wages and related expenses).

Question: What types of supports would I be reimbursed for under a Partners with Business agreement?

Answer: You would be reimbursed only for supports that would typically be provided by an outside job coach. This excludes natural supports already in place such as typical supervision or assistance any employee would receive from coworkers or supervisors. Reimbursable supports may include:

- Task-specific training or skill building.
- Direct support to complete job duties.
- Quality checks and performance monitoring.
- Prompts, redirection, or reminders.
- Social and emotional encouragement.
- Problem-solving assistance.
- Monitoring for health and safety.

Question: What support does the employment specialist provide?

Answer: The employment specialist trains your staff about disability awareness, provides regular check-ins, and remains available to answer questions or address concerns. If the employee's support needs to change, the employment specialist can help reassess and adjust supports, including more job coaching if needed.

Question: What training will my coworkers or supervisors receive?

Answer: The employment specialist will train them on:

- The Partners with Business model and covered supports.
- Support strategies that promote independence.
- Specific support needs and communication preferences of the employee.
- How to access follow-up support from the agency.
- Documentation requirements (for example, hours worked, hours supported, and progress updates).

Question: How are coworker or supervisor supporters selected?

Answer: Supporters are chosen through a collaborative process between you, your staff, and the supported employment agency. Selections are based on their willingness to provide support, an agreement to a background check, their work schedule compatibility, and their proximity to the employee. It is best to designate more than one supporter to ensure consistent coverage during absences or scheduling changes.

Question: Why is a background check required?

Answer: State and federal regulations require background checks for anyone providing direct support to individuals with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation or long-term care

programs. Supported employment agencies apply the same background standards to these supporters as they do to their own job coaches.

Question: Who pays for the background check?

Answer: The supported employment agency covers the cost of any background checks, just as they would for their own staff.

Question: Who sees the results of the background check?

Answer: The supported employment agency's human resources staff reviews the results and notifies the employment specialist whether the coworker is eligible to provide Partners with Business support. As an employer, you would not be given details of the background check—only whether the person passed or did not pass. Employees should be informed in advance and allowed to decline participation without penalty.

Question: What if I am hesitant to request background checks on my staff?

Answer: Background checks are a necessary part of this model. Many employers already conduct their own checks and may share the results with the agency. If you cannot or will not provide them, the agency will need to complete its own check. Again, only pass/fail status will be shared with you.

Question: Who is liable for coworkers or supervisors providing support?

Answer: As an employer, you would assume liability for actions taken by coworkers or supervisors providing support. The supported employment agency is not responsible for accidents or negligence caused by your staff.

Question: What are my reporting responsibilities?

Answer: You would complete a written agreement with the agency, outlining responsibilities and reimbursement rates. This agreement is reviewed every six months and renewed annually. The agreement can also be revised or discontinued, based on the employee's needs. You must submit a monthly invoice and a brief update about the employee's performance and support needs to receive reimbursement.

Question: Will the employment agency issue me a 1099 form from the Internal Revenue Services (IRS)?

Answer: Yes, if you are paid more than \$600 in a calendar year, the agency must issue a 1099 form unless the business is a corporation or an LLC taxed as a corporation. Refer to the [IRS website](#) for more information.

Question: How can I learn more?

Answer: Visit [Partners with Business](#).