

Resource Series provides MCOs with best practices, guidance and/or reference materials. This series does not include directions on contract requirements or directives from the Department.

## Authorizing Supported Employment Job Coaching for Family Care, Partnership and PACE Members

**Purpose:** This resource memo is intended to offer best practice guidance for authorizing Supported Employment job coaching for Family Care members. This memo also defines and explains:

- 1) The appropriate use of trained job coaches for **stabilization monitoring** to prevent job loss if on-the-job supports have been faded completely;
- 2) The appropriate use of **workplace personal assistance** for those MCOs contracting for this service as a long-term on-the-job support to follow job coaching. These guidelines are intended for MCOs that are purchasing Supported Employment services based on units of service, are consistent with the vision and the requirements of Family Care and Family Care Partnership; and are consistent with the program goal of providing the most cost effective services to support members' outcomes.

### Principles of Family Care and the Resource Allocation Decision-Making (RAD) Method:

- Provide the right support, in the right amount, at the right time.
- Effectively support members' outcomes in the most cost-effective way.
- Maximize member independence, self-sufficiency and use of community and natural supports in order to reduce dependence on paid supports.
- Investment in prevention is a critical aspect of Family Care's model.

### Principles of Supported Employment:

- Fading the job coach is a best practice in Supported Employment; fading helps ensure that member is achieving optimum self-sufficiency and that Supported Employment is cost-effective over time.
- A good job match **and** effective job coaching will generally result in fading of coaching over time; a good job match requires matching the member's interests, skills **and** other important conditions for success as identified in the Supported Employment Assessment or Discovery process.
- Regardless of whether DVR or the MCO pays for the Assessment or Discovery process, the IDT staff is part of the review of the Assessment or Discovery report and through this, can contribute to identifying the criteria for a good job match **before job development begins**.
- Fading is possible due to **a combination of strategies** used by a trained and experienced job coach. These strategies include: job and task analysis; on-the-job training including systematic instruction; use of assistive technology or other adaptive aids; and engagement of natural supports.
- Fading is possible when a member achieves greater independence and/or inter-dependence with co-workers in performing his/her job, thereby reducing the need for the job coach.

- In some but not all situations, on-the-job supports can be faded completely. In these situations, stabilization monitoring (defined/explained later in this memo) is critical to prevent job loss.
- Addressing each member's transportation needs is an essential part of ensuring members' success in supported employment. This involves collaboration between IDT staff and the supported employment service provider in a two-step process. The service provider identifies, and shares with the IDT, transportation options available to the member, maximizing use of natural supports whenever possible. IDT staff then uses their MCO's service authorization method (e.g., RAD) to determine if MCO funded support for transportation is needed and to determine the most cost-effective option available.

#### Principles for Authorizing Job Coaching:

- The amount of job coaching authorized must be individually determined based on member need; the amount authorized must be **regularly reviewed** and adjusted accordingly.
- Use of the RAD does not allow any MCO to establish, through policy or practice, an across-the-board cap or time limit on job coaching supports available to Family Care members. Any service authorization policy or practice that is not consistent with the RAD, as defined by DHS, must be approved by DHS.
- In determining the amount of job coaching to authorize for a member at a particular point in time, IDT staff are encouraged to use the following questions as a guide for gathering relevant information. Service authorization decisions are made by the full IDT, which includes the member and guardian if one is appointed.

#### 1. How many hours per week is the member working?

It's essential to know how many hours the member is working each week. This helps put the request for job coaching hours into perspective. A request for 10 hours of coaching per week for a member working 30 hours a week is very different than a request for 10 hours of coaching per week for a member working 12 hours a week. The cost-effectiveness of job coaching cannot be accurately determined if the hours worked by the member are not known.

#### 2. How long has the member been in the job, including any time when the member's on-the-job supports were funded by DVR or the school system?

As a general rule of thumb, the longer a member has been in a job, the greater the expectation that coaching supports have been significantly faded (reduced) from the coaching level authorized when the job first began.

#### 3. How long has the member been at the current level of job coaching support?

Fading typically occurs incrementally but should continue to occur if job coaching is still being authorized. Members should not remain at the same level of coaching for an extended period of time (e.g., 12 months). It is the job coach's responsibility to have a plan to address fading their role while empowering the member to build on their own strengths. The fading plan should be specific, for example:

**Timeline-Goal-Method:** Within 12 weeks, the job coach will support the member 30 minutes less per shift by using systematic instruction and prompts delivered through a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) to enable the member to do 30 more minutes of work without the job coach.

**Timeline-Goal-Method:** Within 1 month, the job coach will leave the job site 20 minutes earlier on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday by introducing a picture instruction sheet and engaging a co-worker to provide needed prompts.

4. **Has there been any recent changes impacting the member's need for job coaching?**

Consider any recent change that would explain why fading has justifiably not occurred, including:

- Changes related to supervisor or co-worker, for example: a very supportive supervisor or co-worker has been replaced by one who is not yet as supportive or clearly unsupportive.
- Changes in natural supports, for example: the loss of a natural support that provided transportation or support during lunch break.
- Changes in the member's job duties or expectations.
- Changes in the member's health and or physical/cognitive condition as it relates to the member's performance on the job.
- Major changes in the member's life/home circumstances that create stress for the member (e.g., death in the family, moving; new roommate; etc.).
- A member's health or life/home circumstances have changed in a way that negatively impacts employment performance.

Consider any recent changes that would suggest additional fading should be occurring:

- Positive changes in supervisor, key co-worker or other sources of natural support
- Job duties and expectations are decreased or the member's health or life/home circumstances improve.

5. **What were the results of member's most recent performance reviews by his/her employer/supervisor?**

Good performance reviews are an indication of job stability and quality performance by the member. It is a good time to expect meaningful fading to occur as the result of a clear plan for fading being developed and implemented by a trained and experienced job coach.

6. **How does the member (and guardian if one is appointed) feel?**

Involvement of the member (and guardian if one is appointed) in the development and updating of the member-centered plan and individual service plan is an essential requirement in Family Care.

If a reduction or increase in job coaching supports is being considered, it is essential to get input from the member (and guardian if one is appointed).

Ask the member the following questions:

- What is his/her relationship with the supervisor and co-workers?
- How much do they rely on the supervisor and co-workers to complete job tasks, as opposed to the job coach?
- What is their perspective on the role the job coach plays?

The member's perspective on the role the job coach plays can help determine whether a reduction in coaching is appropriate and can be done without jeopardizing the member's job security.

To avoid jeopardizing the member's employment, **always seek the member's input outside of the member's work time** so that the member can remain focused on doing his/her job while at work.

7. What is the opinion of the job coach?

IDT staff is encouraged to consider all of the information listed above which can be obtained from the job coach. IDT staff should get input from the member (and guardian if one is appointed), which IDT staff should get through direct communication with the member (and guardian).

The last two pages of this memo offer a sample Job Coaching Progress Report which IDTs could use to collect the relevant information from the job coach. The sample report includes a section that asks the job coach to affirm the amount of job coaching being requested for the next period of service authorization. The report asks for a description of the fading plan to be used if job coaching is reauthorized. This ensures that the job coach's attention is focused on maximizing the member's ability to maintain his/her job while also fading the amount of job coaching needed.

8. What is the opinion of the employer/supervisor?

Since supported employment focuses on supporting and responding to the member **and** the employer, decisions about reducing job coaching hours must be made with input from the employer (typically the member's supervisor). The job coach typically solicits the input of the employer. If the job coach is indicating a reduction in coaching **can** occur, the IDT staff should confirm with the job coach that she/he has consulted the employer and obtained his/her agreement. However, if the IDT staff has taken account of the various information described in 1 through 6 above and has concluded that a reduction in job coaching appears feasible but the job coach suggests a reduction in job coaching **should not** occur, the IDT staff will need to contact the member's work supervisor, (with permission of the member/guardian) to obtain his/her input directly.

Keep in mind this is not a typical interaction for an employer, who typically interacts with the job coach. The IDT staff making the contact will need to explain who she/he is and why the contact is being made. **This should be done in as non-intrusive a way as possible.** It is not necessary to notify the job coach **before** making this contact; but as a courtesy, the coach should be told the IDT staff made this contact **as soon as it has been made.**

The IDT staff should **only contact the employer directly when there is a documented difference of opinion between the IDT staff and the job coaching provider** regarding the fading of the job coach. The IDT staff needs to obtain the employer's perspective by contacting the employer directly.

9. What are the individual member's unique support needs?

Certain member-specific issues may make it impossible to reduce paid workplace supports. For example, acute health or behavioral needs, a history of engaging in criminal behavior if unsupervised, the presence of a protective services or other court order, or a history of vulnerability/exploitation may mean a support staff person should always be present, even if/when the member has become independent on the job. This is one situation where it is recommended that IDT staff consider a Workplace Personal Assistant (WPA), if your MCO

contracts for this service. Other situations where a WPA may be considered are discussed below.

If your MCO does not contract for WPA services and a job coach is clearly no longer needed, a support person hired through SDS or Supportive Home Care could be explored as an option. To ensure quality and preserve the member's employment situation, it is important for any support person replacing a job coach to complete the WPA training before providing support in a workplace.<sup>1</sup>

### What if fading gains are not being made?

The first step to ensuring fading gains are being made is to **ensure the job coach has developed and is implementing a fading plan** specifically tailored to the member's situation. The plan should include a specific fading goal, an explanation of the method that will be used to achieve the goal and a target date for when the goal will be achieved. There are many strategies that can be used to accomplish fading. The job coach should have a plan for fading in place **at the beginning** of each authorization period.

When re-authorization of a job coach is requested, the IDT staff's role is evaluating to what extent coaching continues to be necessary. As part of making this evaluation, the IDT is encouraged to use information gathered from asking the questions outlined above. However, if two six-month job coaching authorization periods have passed without any fading gains during that time, and there are no extenuating circumstances that explain why fading hasn't occurred, IDT staff should consider whether additional fading should be expected or not. If additional fading is thought to be possible, IDT staff should hold the job coach/job coach agency responsible for developing a viable fading plan within thirty days after reauthorization of job coaching. If the job coach is at a loss for how to facilitate further fading, the job coach may need to obtain assistance from more experienced personnel in his/her agency. If the current job coaching agency isn't able to develop a viable fading plan, the IDT may decide to use a different job coaching provider with the needed skills in developing and implementing a fading plan. If additional fading gains are **not** thought to be possible, IDT staff will implement the RAD process to determine the most cost-effective way to continue to support the member's employment outcome. This could involve using Workplace Personal Assistance service, using someone hired through SDS or Supportive Home Care, or continuing to authorize job coaching without further expectation of fading.

### Difference between Job Coach and WPA:

- Job coaching is intended to teach the member to do the work tasks independently or with help from natural supports, thereby allowing the job coach to fade.
- A WPA physically and/or verbally assists the member to perform work tasks the member is unable to do without assistance<sup>2</sup>.

To ensure WPA results in the most cost-effective supports for the member, this service should be used **after** fading of job coaching has been maximized.

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<sup>1</sup> This training is available online from February 2012 at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare/ProgramOps/prevoc>

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean the WPA is doing work tasks for the participant, while the participant passively observes. WPA can also be used to provide personal care at the workplace in situations where neither job coaching or job assistance is needed.

For example:

Member has just received 12 months of job coaching but no additional fading gains have resulted and there are no extenuating circumstances affecting the member. Rather than continuing to authorize job coaching the IDT may determine the most cost-effective way to support the member's outcome is to authorize the WPA instead of job coaching.

Keep in mind: if WPA is substituted for job coaching **too early**, maximum fading may not be achieved and the MCO will spend more money over the longer term. Job coaching should always be used first so that the need for on-the-job support can be reduced to the greatest extent possible. Unlike WPA staff, job coaches are trained in strategies to facilitate fading and this is an expected part of their role. IDT staff should be cautious about replacing job coaching with WPA before fading has been maximized. While this may appear to be cost effective in the short-term, it will in fact cost more in the long-term.

**What if job coaching has been reduced to just a few hours a month? Should the goal be to eliminate it entirely?**

Where best practice Supported Employment is implemented, including a good job match and effective job coaching, significant fading should be occurring. When job coaching has been faded to just a few hours a month, this is **stabilization monitoring**. At this point, the purpose of the job coaching is to ensure on-going stability and to prevent job loss.

This minimal authorization of job coaching units can minimize the risk of the member losing a long-standing job, thus making the job coaching very cost-effective. When supports have been reduced to this level and are directed at anticipating and preventing problems that would otherwise cause a job loss or a request for an increased authorization of services, a trained job coach is appropriate. A WPA does not have the training or experience to do this kind of work with employers and supported employees.

An authorization to continue a minimal amount of job coaching for the purpose of preventing potential job loss is consistent with Family Care's strong focus on prevention.

**IDTs should exercise great care in making the decision to eliminate job coaching altogether.**

If job coaching is completely discontinued, it is critical that IDT staff ensure the employer and the member have a clear point of contact they can use if issues arise. However, since there is a risk that **the member or employer may not use the point of contact**, and consequently the member may lose their job before others realize there was a problem, the IDT staff needs to ensure that **proactive** stabilization monitoring is being done. This involves a designated party (e.g., care manager) regularly checking in with the employer and member to confirm everything is going well. Keep in mind; it may be more cost-effective to pay the job coach to do the preventative check-ins, rather than having this responsibility transfer to IDT staff. Regardless of who does the stabilization monitoring, a procedure should also be in place to ensure job coaching can be quickly re-authorized if it is needed, so issues raised by the employer or supported employee can be addressed immediately after they are identified.

**Appendix: Sample Semi-Annual Job Coaching Progress Report**

# Sample Semi-Annual Job Coaching Progress Report

Page One

Name of Member:

Supported Employment Agency:

Lead/Primary Job Coach Name:

Lead/Primary Job Coach Cell Phone & Email Address:

Employer Name and Address:

Supervisor Name:

Hours Worked Per Week:

Hourly Wage:

Length of Time on Job:

Results of Member's Most Recent Employee Performance Evaluation or Most Recent Feedback from Supervisor at Work:

Weekly Hours of Job Coaching Currently Authorized:

Fading Achieved during Last Six Months (please describe):

If no fading achieved, please explain:

