



COMMISSIONER
Adelaide Horn

March 18, 2008

To: Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Program Providers, Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Program Providers, Community Living and Support Services (CLASS) Program Providers, Deaf Blind and Multiple Disabilities (DB/MD) Program Providers, Executive Directors of Mental Retardation Authorities (MRA), Superintendents of State Mental Retardation Facilities, Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded and Related Conditions (ICF/MR) Program Providers

Subject: Information Letter No. 08-26
Revised Coordination and Notification Process for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services

During the past year, the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) have worked together to improve coordination of employment services for individuals in certain DADS programs.

As a result, a process has been implemented to better inform individuals and providers of an individual's eligibility status for employment services. In addition, providers of both agencies will have access to documentation that can be used to determine which agency is responsible for funding employment services to minimize the interruption or delay of services. DADS providers are defined as contractors of HCS services, TxHmL services, CLASS services, DBMD services, and MRAs providing general revenue funded services. DADS providers also include community ICF/MR providers and state schools. The process is outlined below.

DADS providers should:

- contact DARS first for an appointment on behalf of an individual requesting vocational rehabilitation or supported employment services;
- accept a DARS application statement as verification that an individual has requested DARS services, but an eligibility determination is pending;
- provide vocational and supported employment services using DADS funds while a DARS eligibility determination is pending and the individual plan for employment (IPE) is being developed by DARS;
- discontinue using DADS funds for vocational and supported employment services once an individual is determined eligible for DARS services and the IPE has been developed; DADS funding may resume once DARS services have ended and ongoing follow-up support services begin.

- provide copies of any of the following to the DARS counselor upon request, and with proper authorization for disclosure:
 - the individual's most recent service plan;
 - any current vocational assessments or person-directed plans that focus on employment opportunities; and
 - any other available records pertaining to the individual's disabilities (including but not limited to medical, psychological, and psychiatric reports).

DARS will:

- notify an individual in writing:
 - if he or she is determined to be eligible, ineligible or if DARS services are unavailable; and
 - that DARS services have been completed.
- after the IPE is completed, begin coordinating the provision of services as identified on the IPE, which includes supported employment services.
- upon request, provide copies of any of the following documents to the DADS provider with proper authorization for disclosure:
 - either an individual's Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Application for Services, or the Division for Blind Services (DBS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Application for Services;
 - an individual's completed IPE;
 - written documentation specifying an individual's eligibility status; and
 - the notification letter indicating DARS services have been completed.

An individual's receipt of DADS funded vocational and supported employment services while a DARS eligibility determination is being made and the IPE is being developed, should not cause that individual to become ineligible for DARS services.

In addition, DADS Information Letter No. 07-114 was published to encourage DADS providers to contact their local DRS Area Manager and DBS Field Director to establish or reestablish a partnership to facilitate coordination of services on behalf of an individual.

Information Letter No. 08-26

March 18, 2008

Page 3

If you need assistance reaching the local DRS or DBS office, please call (800) 628-5115. If there are issues or questions that arise regarding this new process, please contact Adrienne Nevola at (512) 438-3641.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Tommy Ford
Director, Institutional Services
Acting Director, Community Services

[signature on file]

David Rollins
Director, Mental Retardation Authorities

[signature on file]

Eugenia Andrew
Director, State Schools

c: Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner, DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services