



HHS GUIDE TO

Employment for People with Disabilities



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Contributors to the development of this guide:	4
1. Introduction and Purpose	5
Success Story	6
How HHSC Funding Can Support People with Disabilities to Obtain and Maintain Competitive, Integrated Employment	6
Developing Interagency Partnerships	8
Preparing for Work	9
Utilizing Person-Directed Career Planning	9
What a Service Coordinator or Case Manager Can Do	9
What a Support Person, Including Family and Program Provider Staff, Can Do	10
Success Story	11
Help the Person Identify Work Interests and Preferences	12
Success Story	13
Gather Documentation	13
2. Getting the Job	14
Coordinating With TWS-VRS.....	14
What a Service Coordinator or Case Manager Can Do as Part of Developing and Implementing the Person-Directed Plan	15
Ensure the Team Considers the Entire Day	15
Help to Locate Services	15
Plan How to Monitor Services	16
Success Story.....	16
3. What a Support Person, Including Family, Can Do	17
Help the person choose an employment service provider.	17
Help Gather Outside Information.	17
What Service Providers Can Do.....	18

Success Story.....	19
Arranging Transportation.....	19
Additional Tips.....	20
Success Story.....	20
4. Keeping the Job.....	22
Success Story.....	23
5. Attachment A:	24
HHSC Employment-Related Policies.....	24
Informing the Person About Available Services.....	24
Service Planning.....	24
Providing Employment-related Services and Supports.....	24
Transportation.....	25
Other Services That Support Employment.....	25
TWS-VRS Referral.....	26
TWS-VRS Application.....	26
TWS-VRS Eligibility Determination.....	27
TWS-VRS Coordination of Services.....	27
Medicaid Buy-In.....	29
Ticket to Work Employment Network (EN).....	29
References: HHSC Employment-Related Policies.....	30
6. Attachment B:	32
First Steps to Employment for People with Significant Disabilities.....	32
Interests and Skills.....	32
Long-Term Supports.....	33
General.....	33
Transportation.....	33
Job Coaching.....	33
Employment Expectations.....	34
7. Attachment C:.....	35
Joint HHSC and TWS-VRS Providers: The Benefits.....	35
Why should an HHSC program provider consider becoming an ESP?.....	35
Person Receiving HHSC Services.....	35
HHSC Program Provider.....	35

Person’s Employer	35
8. Attachment D:	37
How Earnings from Employment Impact Cash and Medical Benefits and Where to Get Additional Assistance	37
Supplemental Security Income	38
Social Security Disability Insurance	38
Texas Medicaid Buy-In Program (MBI)	38
Success Story	41
Work Incentives	44
Texas Rules Regarding Medicaid Eligibility for an Employed Person with a Disability	46
Eligibility Types for People with Disabilities Include:	46
HCS, CLASS, DBMD and MDCP	47
TxHmL	48
ICF/IID	49
9. Attachment E:	51
Resources	51
General Employment Resources	51
State Agencies and Programs	52
Disability and SSA Benefits and Work Incentives	54
Real Job Success Stories	56
Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination	56
Person-Centered Career Planning	57
Career Exploration and Assessment	58
Accommodations	59
Transportation	60
10. Attachment F:	62
Questions and Answers	62
11. Attachment G:	66
Glossary of Acronyms	66

Contributors to the development of this guide:

- Staff from these state agencies:
 - ▶ Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
 - ▶ Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
 - ▶ Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
 - ▶ Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
 - ▶ Texas Education Agency
- People with disabilities
- Providers, case managers and service coordinators for people with disabilities
- Advocates of people with disabilities and of employment for people with disabilities
- Members of the System Redesign Advisory Committee and Day Habilitation and Employment Services Subcommittee
- Project staff from the State Employment Leadership Network (selnmembers.org)

HHSC would like to extend special thanks to the people and their support teams who agreed to share their stories of employment success.

This guide is available on the HHSC employment services webpage at hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first.

1. Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide information on how to support and assist people with disabilities who are receiving HHSC services and are of working age to obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment. Through this guide HHSC will provide information on best practices and resources that can help improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The guide includes success stories of people with disabilities who, because of receiving the appropriate supports and services, have secured fulfilling employment (see Attachment E).

House Bill (H.B.) 1230, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, was enacted to improve the services provided to Texas youth with disabilities as they transition from school age to adulthood with an emphasis on transitioning into successful employment. In 2008, the workgroup established by H.B. 1230 completed a plan to improve employment service delivery to youth with disabilities, including the recommendation for HHSC and the Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) to develop an employment manual for people in an Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions (ICF/IID). This guide implements and expands on that recommendation. It is also consistent with the HHSC's Promoting Independence Initiative, which seeks to improve the flow of information about supports in the community and remove barriers impeding opportunities for community integration considering the Supreme Court's Olmstead ruling.

This guide is based on the following principles:

- Employment in the community is an important part of one's self-identity and value in society.
- Jobs that were out of reach in the past for people with disabilities are accessible today thanks to new technology, new laws and better teaching methods.
- As a result of changes in federal and state laws, people with disabilities do not have to limit their work hours or earnings to keep their health care benefits as they did in the past (see Attachment D).
- Employers cannot discriminate against people with disabilities and must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ada.gov).
- Community work sites are safe places to be and can be modified to accommodate a person with a disability if needed (see Attachment E).

- Qualified job coaches and employment specialists are available to help people who need assistance in preparing for, locating and successfully managing the job of their choice.
- HHSC funding can support people with disabilities to obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment.
- People enrolled in HHSC programs have choices in the types of jobs they obtain and in their providers of support services.

Success Story

Even though Charles worked as part of a mobile crew doing lawn care and janitorial services, he wanted a more exciting place to work. He didn't want to work outdoors where it was too hot or in a quiet place where he could get bored. While getting to know Charles, his job developer learned his favorite food was pizza and he always celebrated his birthday at a local pizza place with his friends. Now he is celebrating 20 years of working 32 hours a week at the same pizza place where he continues to celebrate his birthdays in addition to his employment anniversaries.

How HHSC Funding Can Support People with Disabilities to Obtain and Maintain Competitive, Integrated Employment

HHSC programs that include employment services (hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers;))

- ICF/IID
- General revenue (GR)-funded services
- Medicaid 1915(c) waivers:
 - ▶ Home and Community-based Services (HCS)
 - ▶ Texas Home Living (TxHmL)
 - ▶ Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)
 - ▶ Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
 - ▶ Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP)

These programs include case management and service coordination, services specifically designed to assist a person to obtain and maintain employment, and other services that can assist a person in meeting their goals.

Note in the chart below that not every program includes every service. A person may only access the HHSC services that are available in the program they are enrolled in.

1915(c) waiver employment assistance (EA)— a service that assists a person to obtain employment.

1915(c) waiver supported employment (SE)— a service that assists a person to maintain employment.

Program	HCS	TxHmL	CLASS	DBMD	ICF/IID	ID/RC/GR	MDCP
Employment assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supported employment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other services that can assist in meeting employment goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential assistance • Day habilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support • Day habilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential habilitation • Prevocational services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted living • Residential habilitation • Intervener • Day habilitation 	Active treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support • Vocational training • Day habilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible family support services
Service coordination, case management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

See Attachment A for more information about program policies related to employment services.

Developing Interagency Partnerships

Employment support for people with disabilities can require coordination between various agencies and employers. HHSC participates in state-level interagency partnerships and recommends local, program provider-led partnerships for developing standard practices to promote employment for people with disabilities in HHSC programs. Partnerships should include the following persons and organizations:

- Case managers and service coordinators
- Program providers' vocational staff
- TWS-VRS representatives such as area managers, vocational rehabilitation counselors or other designees
- Secondary schools' special education staff and transition-related personnel
- Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) at local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects
- TWC Workforce Board
- Representatives of employers (i.e., chamber of commerce, municipal office of disability)
- People with disabilities and organizations representing people with disabilities

Each partnership should:

- Become acquainted with each member's role in employment services.
- Promote the development and use of employment services.
- Explore funding strategies to obtain and maintain employment.
- Build relationships that enhance the delivery of employment and nonemployment services that support integrated, competitive employment.
- Collaborate on and troubleshoot individual instances of people seeking employment.
- Coordinate existing resources related to obtaining and maintaining integrated, competitive employment and explore what makes a person a good candidate for referral to each of those resources.
- Facilitate the use of work incentives.
- Identify and eliminate local and statewide barriers to employment of people with disabilities.
- Report barriers to HHSC at SE.Questions@hsc.state.tx.us.

See Attachments C and E for more information.

Preparing for Work

Utilizing Person-Directed Career Planning

[Person-directed planning](#) is a process that empowers the person and legally authorized representative to direct the development of a plan of supports and services that meets the person's personal goals. The process must:

- Identify existing supports and services necessary to achieve the person's goals.
- Identify natural supports available to the person and negotiate needed service system supports.
- Occur with the support of a group of people chosen by the person and the legally authorized representative.
- Accommodate the person's style of interaction and preferences regarding time and setting.

This process is ideal for the service planning team as they discuss the person's employment goals and the steps needed to achieve these goals.

See Attachment E for more information.

What a Service Coordinator or Case Manager Can Do

The service coordinator or case manager plays a key role in locating, coordinating and monitoring employment support services for people in HHSC programs. Each person who receives services has a service coordinator or case manager. Many of the practices discussed in this section rely on the service coordinator or case manager to share information related to employment with people receiving services and their families, and to coordinate effectively with other agencies. The service coordinator or case manager is not an employment specialist, job coach or benefits counselor. They assist people receiving services and their families in locating and coordinating the various community employment resources they need. Clarifying roles and responsibilities of service coordinators or case managers, program providers, other agencies, and people with disabilities and their natural supports is a critical component of an efficient employment support system.

The service coordinator or case manager should:

- Share information about available employment services during the initial service planning meeting and as needed.

- Coordinate a person's employment goals into their service plan.
- Coordinate people's employment needs and preferences effectively with other agencies, particularly TWS-VRS, HHSC and local school districts.
- Determine if a person has an interest in employment, and if so, ensure the person's service plan reflects this goal.
- Devote time during a person's initial service planning meeting to discuss employment and the process to obtain employment services and supports with the person and their family.
- Continue to explore the possibility of employment at follow-up service planning meetings for people who are not employed in the community.
- Explain people can work and still maintain their medical benefits and have an increase in income.
- Introduce people and families who are unsure about pursuing employment to other people with disabilities who are employed.
- Explain rights to mediation, fair hearing or appeal if services are denied, reduced or terminated.
- Monitor whether the person's outcomes are being met and if the person and family is satisfied with their employment supports.
- Ensure transportation needs are addressed in the development and monitoring of the person's service plan.

See Attachments A, D and E for more information.

What a Support Person, Including Family and Program Provider Staff, Can Do

When helping a person with disabilities prepare for employment, reflect on your own early work history. Recalling your own work experiences will help you focus on the basic skills that are essential for the person when entering the workforce. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What were your first real work experiences and what did you learn from them?
- How did you decide what you wanted to do for work?
- What volunteer or other experiences helped you learn about what it is like to have a job?
- Who helped you?
- What connections did you make and how did you network?

In many situations employment opportunities can be found without relying on paid employment services, but rather through the family's or person's friends, school and business contacts. Support in obtaining and maintaining employment can be provided informally by a person's friends or co-workers without relying on a funded service. Even when employment-related services and supports are funded by the HHSC program, relatives and friends play a key role in contributing to the person's job success by helping in areas of preparation for work, transportation, reporting income, etc.

Success Story

Paco dreamed of becoming a football coach. While in high school, he always hung out with the coaches and the football team and developed a strong friendship with the coaching staff and the team. He had a wealth of knowledge about other Rio Grande Valley football teams and kept the coaches and team well informed of current status and rankings. After graduation, he could not imagine a life without his local team. This led his job developer to help create a job as an assistant to the head coach. The school district carved out and funded a position for Paco. He continues to hold the position after ten years of dedicated service.

People supporting a person with disabilities can assist the person to set their own employment expectations through career preparation and work experiences. Other program services can be used for many of these activities. Specific activities can include:

- Assigning paid or unpaid chores at home such as setting the table or washing a car.
- Asking co-workers, relatives and neighbors for ideas about where the person might volunteer or work.
- Reflecting on ways that further education might support career goals.
- Involving the person in learning to use money as you bank and shop together.
- Introducing the person to community organizations to create opportunities for social interactions.
- Supporting the person in learning how to use public transportation.
- Looking for times when the person can exercise initiative and build self-esteem, such as identifying and planning a weekend outing.
- Encouraging and nurturing the person's hobbies and interests, which can lead to job-related skills.

- Talking with other people with disabilities who are working, their families and support persons.
- Working with the person's case manager or service coordinator to understand the choices for employment services and day and support services in the area.
- Completing an employment assessment with the person. TWS-VRS uses this form: twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-04.

See Attachment E for more information.

Help the Person Identify Work Interests and Preferences

If a person does not know what type of work they are interested in, they can explore their interests through:

- Career interest inventory — a paper and pencil assessment that helps to identify the person's work interests and preferences (see Attachment E).
- Job shadowing — the person follows an employee during a typical day on the job.
- Mentoring — the person is matched with a mentor who serves as an advisor and offers employment guidance.
- Apprenticeship — a professional teaches the person a specific trade.
- Workplace visits and tours — the person observes different work settings.
- Career fairs — multiple employers gather together in single location to share information and meet with prospective employees.
- Mock job interviews — role-play and practice job interviews.
- Job clubs — a small group of people meet regularly to talk about job searching and career advancement with the goal of supporting the success of all members.
- Internships — time-limited, paid or unpaid work experience.
- Volunteering — unpaid, regular commitment of time in an area of interest.

In addition to the more structured activities listed above, a person with disabilities can take an active role in identifying career goals and preparing for employment by:

- Keeping a record of what they like and dislike about each work-related experience.
- Exploring and building on interests and hobbies through activities at home and in the community.

- Increasing self-responsibility to build independent living skills. For example, gathering information and scheduling appointments independently.
- Becoming comfortable describing their abilities, disabilities, strengths and weaknesses.

See Attachment E for more information.

Success Story

After working for more than five years at a cafeteria and another three years at a fast-food restaurant, Elizabeth took a year off to pursue other interests. She took several adult continuing education classes including computer and sewing classes. Since she loved animals, she also decided to volunteer at the zoo. Her volunteer work developed into a part-time job working at the zoo's gift shop.

Gather Documentation

In the process of looking for employment, a person will meet new people such as employers, co-workers and customers. The circle of new people will likely also include employment services staff. Think about what written information would be helpful for them to have about the person seeking employment, like a cover letter for a job application. This information could serve as a letter of introduction and present the person in a positive light. Documents may include any volunteer work, career assessments, program and service plans, and a summary of academic achievements (for transition-age people).

2. Getting the Job

Coordinating With TWS-VRS

TWS-VRS operates under TWC. This agency was formally known as the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

Also known as the vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, TWS-VRS is the state agency whose primary focus is to assist people with disabilities with getting integrated, competitive employment. TWS-VRS services include vocational counseling, evaluation and assessment, guidance and assistance with job placement, time-limited job coaching, training programs, technology services, and vehicle and home modifications.

The service coordinator or case manager should ensure the person and their support persons meet with the TWS-VRS VR counselor to apply for TWS-VRS services as soon as possible after the person identifies an employment goal. The following should be taken to this appointment:

- The information listed on page 2 of the TWS-VRS Applicant Guide (twc.texas.gov/files/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-guide-for-applicants-twc.pdf)
- A copy of the person's court-ordered guardianship documents if a court-ordered guardian has been appointed
- A copy of the person's most recent service plan
- Current vocational assessments or person-directed plans focusing on employment opportunities
- Other available records pertaining to the person's disabilities such as medical, psychological and psychiatric reports
- Contact information for the person's qualified developmental disabilities professional, qualified intellectual disabilities professional, case manager or service coordinator

The service coordinator or case manager uses the First Steps to Employment for People with Significant Disabilities tool (Attachment B) to guide the person's service planning team to consider the person's interests, strengths and supports before applying for TWS-VRS services. A planning team includes the person, legally authorized representative, service coordinator or case manager, and any other

parties the person chooses to participate, such as family members and service providers.

See Attachments A and B for more information.

What a Service Coordinator or Case Manager Can Do as Part of Developing and Implementing the Person-Directed Plan

Ensure the Team Considers the Entire Day

A person's daily activities must be based on their level of independence, support needs and interests. Some factors to consider are:

- Which community-based programs are available and of interest to the person?
- When not working, can the person be at home alone safely?
- What is the availability of family members or other non-Medicaid supports to supervise as needed?

Consider whether the person desires to work full or part time. Some people may choose to have more than one part-time job or to begin their own business in their spare time at home. Others can develop marketable skills through volunteer work, participation in community events, recreational outings and other activities.

Some people may require supervision or some assistance until a support person is available to pick them up while others may choose to be on their own when they are not working, whether at their residence or elsewhere.

Help to Locate Services

Assist people in locating employment-related services such as transportation. Encourage people and their families to choose their employment service provider (ESP) as early in the service planning process as possible. Provide the person with a list of ESPs to choose from.

The person may want their program provider or a new program provider to provide employment services.

- A list of local HCS, TxHmL and ICF/IID providers are available through the LIDDA.

- A person can search for CLASS, DBMD, and MDCP providers by area of the state on the Long-Term Care Provider Search (apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch)

The person may want to receive employment services from an ESP through TWS-VRS funding. If the person is not eligible for TWS-VRS services, HHSC funding can be used via the consumer-directed services (CDS) option or by the program provider subcontracting with the ESP.

A Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) eligible person has the option to receive employment services from an Employment Network (EN) through the Ticket to Work (TTW) program. A list of ENs in Texas can be found at choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp.

Plan How to Monitor Services

Establish the protocol for monitoring employment services as part of the service-planning process in collaboration with TWS-VRS (if applicable), service providers, the employer, and the person and their family. Incorporate alternative options into the plan if initial employment preferences are unsuccessful and assist the person in finding new options.

See Attachment E for more information.

Success Story

Sandra sometimes lived in an abandoned hotel where homeless people gathered. She didn't want to live at home with her mother anymore but could not afford her own apartment. She eventually learned that employment services were available to her. Sandra wanted to only work evenings and didn't want to work at a restaurant or around other people. Her choices were limited but her job developer found the perfect job, cleaning classrooms at a school district, where she can work with minimal supervision. She lives in her own apartment now and has continued to work at assigned campuses for more than 10 years.

3. What a Support Person, Including Family, Can Do

Help the person choose an employment service provider.

Help identify wants and needs. Start by identifying what's important to the person. Think about past jobs or community experiences and ask what services worked and what didn't. Encourage the person to consider other issues by asking questions like:

- Do you need help exploring the types of jobs and careers you might like and be good at?
- Will your support needs change over time?
- What is most important to you: Pay and benefits? Having fun people to work with? Safety and security? Location? Job satisfaction? Potential for promotions and growth?
- Will you need help managing benefits such as Social Security and Medicaid?
- Will you need job coaching services? How often and for how long?
- Will you need help identifying activities to do when you're not working?

Help Gather Outside Information.

- Talk to friends, families and teachers who may be familiar with employment services.
- Ask HHSC and TWS-VRS for a list of providers in your area.
- Ask TWS-VRS for information on how successful different programs have been in helping people find and keep jobs.
- Read annual reports and other written material from the service providers.
- Contact local self-advocacy and family advocacy groups for recommendations (see Attachment E).
- Ask others for ideas and recommendations and get a variety of viewpoints.

Remember, what is important to others may not be important to you and vice versa.

Help the person visit and interview a variety of ESPs and ask for consumer and family references. When you are visiting, pay attention to the general feeling you get about the program and staff. Take time to learn about the organization and the

basic services it offered, how the program works with people, and the program's staff.

- Is it a welcoming environment?
- Does the person feel comfortable and respected?
- Is it in a location that feels like part of the community?
- Does the program have a supportive approach to providing employment assistance or is it more of a take-charge, authoritative approach?

What Service Providers Can Do

In partnership with the person, a service provider can:

- Assist in identifying the person's network of natural supports including job leads and contacts.
- Develop a career plan to identify a job search direction and a job-finding process created with input from the person and their support team.
- Assess the person's skills and interests.
- Arrange on-the-job and job-shadowing experiences.
- Research and arrange for job-skills training, such as computer-skills training.
- Provide help with developing a resume.
- Provide job development assistance including locating and talking to employers about jobs and the hiring process.
- Contact prospective employers and negotiate the person's employment.
- Supply information and guidance on the impact of work earnings and receipt of public benefits (see Attachment D).

Use best practices for successful job placement:

- Assist in gaining the necessary expertise. Using qualified staff greatly enhances the effectiveness of employment services. There are many training opportunities available, including training through:
- University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (wise.unt.edu)
- Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (vcurrtrc.org/training)
- College of Employment Services (directcourseonline.com/employment-services)
- Focus on individual jobs in the community paid directly by the employer.

- Ensure placement is based on the person’s interests, needs, and preferences and that the person is supported to take ownership and control of their job planning process.
- Emphasize job matching — searching for employment that closely matches what the job seeker wants, is good at doing and where they will be comfortable.
- Think broadly about where the person might work, not limiting ideas to traditional workplaces such as supermarkets and fast-food chains.
- Take advantage of personal networks, family and staff contacts to gather information, resources and potential job leads.

See Attachments C and E for more information.

Success Story

Shelly, a 19-year-old with disabilities, decided she wanted to work in the community. Her goal was to work with children, but she needed first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training. With the help of her service provider, she received one-on-one training to assist her with achieving her first aid and CPR certifications. She is now 22 years old and has been employed for three years as a daycare worker. After living with her mother all her life, she moved into her own apartment. Staff helped her learn how to ride the city bus and now she is now able to access the community to work and participate in leisure activities. With the necessary supports and training, she realized her goal to live independently.

Arranging Transportation

Job choices are often dictated by [transportation options](#) and the person’s ability to use them. This is especially true for those living in places where public transportation is lacking, such as rural areas. While there are no magic answers for transportation issues, you can find transportation solutions for the people you support with some research and creativity. Job seekers, families, HHSC program providers, case managers and service coordinators need to work together from the beginning to identify reliable, safe and affordable transportation options.

Start with generic options available to everyone in your area. Not only does this promote independence, integration and inclusion, but it can be less costly and complicated than using disability-specific services.

Additional Tips

- Brainstorm with family members, the service planning team, the employer and all other networks for creative ideas.
- Could the person walk or bike to work? Focusing the job search close to the person's home may be helpful.
- Find out if public transportation is available and explore travel training resources, if needed.
- Does the person have access to a vehicle? Regardless of whether the person uses their own or someone else's vehicle, the cost of hiring a driver may be an Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) (see Attachment D).
- Explore all transportation services in your area including paratransit, elder services, and medical or college shuttles.
- Paratransit systems provide shared-ride, curb-to-curb van transportation.
- How do co-workers get to work? Seek out carpooling and employer resources.
- Consider employment with larger corporations who provide transportation for employees.
- Consider options for moving closer to the job site, especially for a stable job with high pay and benefits.
- Transportation is included in the rate for some employment-related services (see Attachment A).
- Use Social Security Administration (SSA) work incentives to cover transportation expenses for those receiving SSI including Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), IRWE and Blind Work Expenses. People can contact their local WIPA project or SSA's Work Incentive Information and Referral Center at 866-968-7842 (voice) or 866-833-2967 Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) for assistance applying these work incentives (see Attachment D).

See Attachment E for more information.

Success Story

By age 18, Robert had already lost both of his parents to illness. At the recommendation of his aunt, he was assessed for HHSC programs and was determined eligible and began receiving services. Upon receiving SSI checks, family members began to exploit him and left him to fend for himself in unlivable conditions. Through a training and support program, he learned how to use the city transit system. Shortly after, he began vocational training and became crew leader

for an interstate mowing and litter removal business. After three years of employment and training, he got his driver's license — something family members told him he could never do. Now he lives in his own apartment, has control over his income and is saving for a down payment for a car. Employment gave him the confidence to know that not only can he survive and be independent, but he can accomplish anything he chooses to do.

4. Keeping the Job

The service planning team, including the program provider, is responsible for monitoring employment services and outcomes. Monitoring should not disrupt the person on the job or their co-workers and at times it can be accomplished without going to the job site. If monitoring at the job site is needed, visits should be arranged in advance with the person and the employer. Monitoring must ensure that:

- The person's health and safety issues are addressed, including personal care needs at the work site.
- The person understands the employer's expectations on the job and is ready and equipped to meet these expectations.
- People are learning their job responsibilities and becoming as independent as possible in all aspects of their work life.
- Supervisory staff and co-workers are providing reasonable accommodations and a supportive environment in which to work.
- The person feels comfortable at the work site. For example, they've met co-workers, and know the layout of the area.
- The work environment is appropriately adapted to meet the person's specific needs with assistive technology or other accommodations (see Attachment E).
- Resources are used efficiently. For example, having one job coach assigned to support different people at a certain job site can be more efficient than having multiple job coaches at the same site.
- Support duration and frequency are matched to the person's needs. Services can be reduced and eliminated as the person becomes more acclimated to their job and enhanced when support needs to be increased.
- The employer is satisfied with the employee's performance and any concerns are promptly and effectively addressed.
- The person is satisfied with their work situation and employment-related services, and any concerns are promptly and effectively addressed.
- Ensure the person and their legally authorized representative or representative payee understand they are responsible for reporting income and assets to SSA and HHSC benefits office as needed.
 - ▶ Depending on the program, the program provider, the case manager or service coordinator, or the consumer benefits officer would assist with this if needed.

- ▶ To obtain information on reporting requirements for SSI or SSDI, call 800-772-1213 (voice) or 800-325-0778 Text Telephone (TTY), or contact a local WIPA project.

Success Story

Francisco told his job developer that he only wanted to work at a local H-E-B store near his home. Once he became employed, natural supports from his employer provided most of the support he needed to be successful on the job. He is still employed after nine years of dedication to his job and only requires minimal, periodic HCS services to support him in his employment.

5. Attachment A:

HHSC Employment-Related Policies

Informing the Person About Available Services

Programs	Policy
All programs	At the time of program enrollment, the service coordinator or case manager is required to explain all services, including employment-related services and supports, available in the program. After this time, the service planning team is responsible for ensuring the person is informed about available program services.

Service Planning

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP, ICF/IID	The service planning team is responsible for developing a program plan that is responsive to a person's needs, including a request for employment.
ID/RC/GR	Pending the availability of funding, the service planning team is responsible for developing a program plan that is responsive to a person's needs, including a request for employment.

Providing Employment-related Services and Supports

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, ICF/IID, MDCP	The program provider is responsible for providing or arranging services and supports, including employment-related services and supports that are responsive to and support achieving goals identified in the person's program plan.

Transportation

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	Transportation to and from potential job sites is included in the employment assistance rate.
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	Transportation to and from a job site is included in the supported employment rate.
TxHmL, ID/RC/GR	Community support includes transportation as an allowable activity, which may be used to get to and from a community location, including a job.
HCS	Residential assistance includes transportation as an allowable activity, which may be used to get to and from a community location, including a job.
CLASS	Habilitation includes transportation as an allowable activity, which may be used to get to and from a community location, including a job.
ICF/IID	Transportation to and from a supported employment work site is included in the daily rate and is part of the ICF/IID service array.

Other Services That Support Employment

Programs	Policy
HCS	Supported home living may be provided at community locations, including on the job site.
TxHmL, ID/RC/GR	Community Support may be provided at community locations, including on the job site.
CLASS	Habilitation may be provided at community locations, including on the job site.
DBMD	Intervener services and habilitation may be provided at community locations, including on the job site.
MDCP	Flexible family support services may be provided at community locations, including on the job site.

TWS-VRS Referral

Programs	Policy
All programs	Any HHSC consumer interested in obtaining integrated, competitive employment may apply for TWS-VRS services.
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	In accordance with §1915(c)(5)(C) of the Social Security Act, an HHSC consumer enrolled in a 1915(c) Medicaid waiver that offers employment assistance is required to seek TWS-VRS services before receiving HHSC-funded employment assistance.
ICF/IID, ID/RC/GR	An HHSC consumer enrolled in a program other than a 1915(c) Medicaid waiver that offers employment assistance and wants assistance finding integrated, competitive employment is not required to seek TWS-VRS services, but has the option to apply for such services.
All programs	An HHSC consumer who needs assistance maintaining employment is not required to, and should not seek, TWS-VRS services in order to receive supported employment or another HHSC-funded service that assists with maintaining employment, or to use TTW funding.

TWS-VRS Application

Programs	Policy
All programs	A person is not ineligible for TWS-VRS services because they have access to HHSC-funded services.
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP, ID/RC/GR	HHSC providers may provide employment assistance using HHSC funds or other funding such as TTW to HHSC consumers who have applied for TWS-VRS services until TWS-VRS has developed the individual plan for employment (IPE). The HHSC representative must maintain communication with the TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselor regarding services provided between the TWS-VRS VR application and the start date of TWS-VRS Services as defined in the person's TWS-VRS VR IPE.

TWS-VRS Eligibility Determination

Programs	Policy
All programs	In accordance with 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §361.42(a)(I) and 29 U.S. Code (USC) §722 et seq., people receiving TWS-VRS services must meet the eligibility requirements for VR services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A determination by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment • A determination by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant • A determination by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated state unit that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice • A presumption that the applicant can achieve an employment outcome, unless an extended evaluation demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant cannot achieve an employment outcome because of the severity of the applicant's disability
All programs	TWS-VRS Division for Rehabilitation Services' (DRS) processes for initial contact, application eligibility and assessing and planning can be found in their entirety in the DRS Rehabilitation Policy Manual at the following link: twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-toc . TWS-VRS Division for Blind Services' (DBS) processes for intake, eligibility and planning can be found in their entirety in the DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Manual at the following link: tws-vrs.state.tx.us/dbs/vr/default.htm .
All programs	TWS-VRS, in accordance with 29 USC §722 will notify a person in writing if they are determined to be eligible, or ineligible, if TWS-VRS services are unavailable and when TWS-VRS services have been completed.

TWS-VRS Coordination of Services

Programs	Policy
All programs	With permission of the person, and along with the person, the HHSC team members supporting the person receiving HHSC services and determined eligible for TWS-VRS services must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend any DRS/DBS planning meetings related to the person's employment if possible. • Take an active role in providing input to the TWS-VRS IPE if possible. • Ensure the person's HHSC service plan is updated as necessary to incorporate the comparable benefits and extended supports identified in the IPE and needed for the person's successful job maintenance. • Provide or arrange the comparable benefits and extended supports necessary for successful job retention before TWS-VRS closes the person's case.

Programs	Policy
All programs	With written consent from the person, the TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselor will maintain contact with an HHSC representative about planning meetings related to the person's employment through contact information listed on application documents.
All programs	<p>Upon request and with proper authorization for disclosure, the HHSC representative will provide copies of any of the person's records to the TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselor, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's most recent service plan. • Any current vocational assessments or person-directed plans that focus on employment opportunities. • Any other available records pertaining to the person's disabilities, including medical, psychological and psychiatric reports. • For DRS applicants, items described in the TWS-VRS Guide for Applicants: twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-adults#applyForServices. <p>For DBS, call 800-628-5115 or use the following link: twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/criss-cole-rehabilitation-center to obtain the local office number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the person's court-ordered guardianship documents if any guardian has been appointed. • Contact information for the person's qualified intellectual disability professional, case manager or service coordinator.
All programs	<p>TWS-VRS, in accordance with 29 USC §722 will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an IPE with the eligible person within 90 days of determination of eligibility for services. • Begin coordinating the provision of services as identified on the IPE, including supported employment services. • Upon request and with proper authorization for disclosure, provide copies of any of the person's records to the HHSC representative (e.g. provider, case manager or service coordinator), including the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A completed copy of the person's application statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A person's completed IPE. ○ Written documentation specifying a person's eligibility status. ○ The notification letter indicating TWS-VRS services have been completed.
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	If a person is receiving services from a 1915(c) Medicaid waiver that offers employment assistance and the vocational rehabilitation counselor determines TWS-VRS is not the appropriate resource to meet the person's needs and the person still requests assistance in locating competitive, integrated employment, the HHSC representative must document this in the person's file and may begin to provide and bill HHSC for HHSC-funded employment assistance.

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	If a person is receiving services from a 1915(c) Medicaid waiver that offers employment assistance and the person refuses to contact TWS-VRS, they may not receive HHSC-funded employment assistance.

Medicaid Buy-In

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP	People receiving waiver services can continue to receive waiver and other Medicaid-funded services as a Medicaid Buy-In (MBI) recipient.

Ticket to Work Employment Network (EN)

Programs	Policy
HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, MDCP, ICF/IID	There is no conflict when a Medicaid provider receives payment for employment assistance or supported employment and then later receives ticket outcome or milestone payments based on employment outcomes.

References: HHSC Employment-Related Policies

Program	Topic	Reference
CLASS	Informing the person about available services	Provider Manual, Sections 2310 and 2320
	Service planning	Provider Manual, Sections 2310 and 2320
	Providing employment-related services and supports	40 TAC 45.805(a)(1)
	Transportation	CLASS Waiver Application
	Other services that support employment	CLASS Waiver Application
HCS	Informing the person about available services	40 TAC 9.158(e)(1); 40 TAC 9.173(b)(4)
	Service planning	40 TAC 9.190(e)(1)
	Providing employment-related services and supports	40 TAC 9.174(a)(46)
	Transportation	HCS Waiver Application
	Other services that support employment	HCS Waiver Application
TxHmL	Informing the person about available services	40 TAC 9.583(m)(3)(B)
	Service planning	40 TAC 9.567(a)(3)
	Providing employment-related services and supports	40 TAC 9.578(e) and (n)(1)(2)(3)
	Transportation	TxHmL Waiver Application
	Other services that support employment	TxHmL Waiver Application
DBMD	Informing the person about available services	40 TAC 42.212(c)(1)(A) and 40 TAC 42.223(b)(3)(C)
	Service planning	40 TAC 42.214(d)
	Providing employment-related services and supports	40 TAC 42.404(e),(f)
	Transportation	DBMD Waiver Application
	Other services that support employment	DBMD Waiver Application

Program	Topic	Reference
MDCP	Informing the person about available services	Case Manager MDCP Handbook
	Service planning	Case Manager MDCP Handbook
	Providing employment-related services and supports	40 TAC 51.411(a)
	Other services that support employment	40 TAC 51.103(4)(A)(iii)
ID/GR	Informing the person about available services	40 TAC 2.307(b)(1)
	Service planning	40 TAC 2.307(b)(4) and (e)(1)(A)
	Transportation	Performance Contract, Attachment F
	Other services that support employment	Performance Contract, Attachment F
ICF/IID	Informing the person about available services	40 TAC 9.244(d)
	Service planning	CFR 483.440(c)(4)
	Providing employment-related services and supports	CFR 483.440(d)(3)
	Transportation	40 TAC §9.254

Sources:

- <https://www.sos.texas.gov/tac/index.shtml>
- hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks
- hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/policies-rules/waivers

6. Attachment B:

First Steps to Employment for People with Significant Disabilities

The TWS-VRS, HHSC, and DSHS have collaborated to develop this tool for people with disabilities and their family and friends who are interested in competitive employment in integrated settings. The tool is intended to guide the team, including the person, to consider the interests, strengths and supports available to them before applying for TWS-VRS DRS or DBS vocational rehabilitation services. This way TWS-VRS staff will be better informed of the person's likes and dislikes, as well as what works or does not work well in various situations.

No one is required to use this tool to apply for DRS or DBS VR services. Using this tool does not guarantee eligibility for DRS or DBS VR services. Information about the DRS application process is available online at: tws-vrs.state.tx.us/drs. Information about the DBS VR program is at: tws-vrs.state.tx.us/dbs/vr.shtml.

Page 2 of Guide for Applicants lists the documents needed for the first appointment with a DRS counselor: <https://twc.texas.gov/files/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-guide-for-applicants-twc.pdf>.

Below are topics to discuss as part of the employment planning process. While they were developed in consultation with TWS-VRS, considering these topics as a team should help a person receiving HHSC or DSHS services be successful in employment even if they don't receive TWS-VRS services.

Interests and Skills

Everyone has a reason why they want a job. Some people want to make money, meet people or do what they are interested in for a living. Explore the reason the person wants to work. Begin by asking them why they want to go to work at this time.

The DRS/DBS vocational rehabilitation counselor will ask about any previous work or volunteer experience the person must get an idea of the person's interests, current skills and what skills they might need to develop to get a job matching their

interests. Even without work or volunteer experience, everyone has skills and interests that can help in or lead to a job. Explore the person's interests and skills. Begin by asking the person what interests they have that might lead to a job and how they might get the skills needed to hold a job that matches their interests, such as on-the-job training or volunteer experience.

Long-Term Supports

DRS and DBS provide time-limited services. People who require on- or off-the-job supports for an extended period will be required to have those support services in place before the end of DRS or DBS services.

General

Most people need some help to keep their jobs. Sometimes a person's parent or spouse will make them a lunch to take to work or help with laundry. Sometimes a roommate will make sure the person wakes up in time to get ready for work. Explore who might support the person once they get a job. Begin by asking the person who in their life, such as family members, direct support staff, a case manager or legally authorized representative, would support their goal of going to work, and who might help them if needed.

Transportation

Some people drive their own cars, ride the bus or walk to their job. Some people have friends, relatives or paid staff drive them to a job. Explore the person's preference for transportation. Begin by asking the person how they might reliably get to and from a job.

Job Coaching

Anyone in a new job needs assistance and mentoring before being able to do the job independently. If the person might need long-term, paid, on-the-job coaching, in addition to the natural supports provided by supervisors and co-workers, explore the funding sources for that coaching, as well as where the person might access job coaches. Talk about a plan for gradually fading the support, such that the person is eventually doing the job with no or infrequent paid, on-the-job coaching.

Employment Expectations

All jobs come with certain expectations and responsibilities of employees, regardless of having or not having a disability. Talk about these expectations. Begin by asking the person how they, with the help of their team if needed, can meet them. These expectations include:

- Letting the employer know in a timely manner if they will be late for work or out due to illness.
- Meeting a company's dress code or if there is no dress code, dressing appropriately for the particular job.
- Conducting themselves in a manner that is socially acceptable in that particular workplace. Begin by asking the person if they have any habits or routines that might make it hard to get or keep a job. If so, talk about how they might address these.
- Following a supervisor's directions.

Finally, explore what else the person may need to be successful finding and maintaining employment.

7. Attachment C:

Joint HHSC and TWS-VRS Providers: The Benefits

TWS-VRS contracts with ESPs to provide a variety of employment services.

Why should an HHSC program provider consider becoming an ESP?

When people enrolled in an HHSC program are determined eligible for TWS-VRS VR services and choose their HHSC program provider as their ESP, everyone benefits.

Person Receiving HHSC Services

- Receives both job placement and ongoing employment supports from the same person, creating a smooth HHSC to TWS- VRS to HHSC transition.
- Receives both employment and other long-term supports from the same organization where a relationship has already been built.
- May be more likely to qualify for TWS-VRS services with a potential ongoing support agency already identified.

HHSC Program Provider

- Provides and receives TWS-VRS payment for assisting the person to find and become stable in employment, creating an extra income source.
- Provides and receives HHSC payment for ongoing support services needed to assist the person in maintaining employment.
- Has an opportunity to improve competence in employment services through the training TWS-VRS provides.
- Is in the best position, already being familiar with the person, to help determine career goals.
- Is in the best position, as the long-term support agency, to help develop the ongoing support plan (e.g. transportation, personal assistance services, job coaching).

Person's Employer

- Must establish a relationship with only one support staff person for the up-front and ongoing employment supports, **creating minimal disruption to business.**

An organization must fulfill certain requirements to contract with TWS-VRS as an ESP. These requirements are described in detail in the TWS-VRS Standards for Providers: twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-standards-providers-manual

For information about TWS-VRS contracting opportunities, visit twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1000#c1004. Note that TWS-VRS will accept applications to contract as an ESP only when a need has been established for a particular region. To inquire regarding such a need in the areas of interest, follow the instructions listed in the relevant solicitation on the Electronic State Business Daily: txsmartbuy.com/sp.

8. Attachment D:

How Earnings from Employment Impact Cash and Medical Benefits and Where to Get Additional Assistance

Fear of loss of benefits is a leading cause for people with disabilities to remain unemployed or underemployed. To help people who want to work and keep their benefits to retain services, the SSA created work incentives — a series of exclusions that may reduce cash subsidies but help to retain health insurance and service eligibility. See “Comparing SSI and SSDI and their Work Incentives: Texas Edition” within this attachment for details and ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/detailedinfo.htm.

CWICs who work at WIPA projects are available to counsel people with disabilities receiving SSI and SSDI about earned and unearned income limits to help them manage their earnings over time. CWICs are especially helpful in providing an earnings profile for SSI and SSDI recipients so they will know what effect earnings will have on their Social Security benefits. By working with the staff at the SSA and the CWICs, most people will be able to have a job they want and keep the supports they need to live in the community.

Each person is unique with their social security history and benefits. To learn about their benefits and status in the Social Security system, a beneficiary can request a Benefits Planning Query. This report is a basic planning tool that is critical for a person, SSA staff and benefits counselors to understand the person’s work benefits and to take the next steps with confidence.

People may also contact a representative at SSA’s Work Incentive Information and Referral Center at 866-968-7842 (voice) or 866-833-2967 (TDD) to get assistance with understanding SSI and SSDI programs, Social Security’s work incentives and the effects of earnings from work on cash benefits and health care coverage, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Supplemental Security Income

- SSI monthly cash benefit amount is determined by a mathematical formula. Regardless of the amount of earned income from a job, a person receiving SSI will always have more money in their pocket if they work.
- SSI Medicaid continues as long as a person gets any amount of SSI cash benefit — even as low as \$1 in SSI cash benefit a month.
- A person who is working will continue to receive Medicaid, even they don't receive a monthly SSI cash benefit, up until earned income reaches the state threshold. Refer to this link to see the current state threshold:
ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm.
- Even after the person who is working makes above the state threshold, there is a possibility of retaining Medicaid depending on what medical services and work incentives programs are used. There are currently people with disabilities in Texas with an individualized threshold of \$65,000 and higher.

Social Security Disability Insurance

- SSDI works in stages. Many safety nets exist for people trying to work in the SSDI system.
- SSDI has provisions for getting back into the program even if a person is terminated from cash and health care benefits.
- Medicare continues as long as the person receives an SSDI monthly cash benefit. Extended Medicare ensures people continue to receive health insurance for a certain period of time after cash benefits cease.

Texas Medicaid Buy-In Program (MBI)

- MBI gives working people with a disability access to health insurance by allowing them to purchase, or “buy in,” to Medicaid.
- Some people pay a premium each month to “buy in” to Medicaid. How much a person pays varies based on their earned and unearned income.
- People receiving SSDI, or those who have recently “earned off” SSI (have gone over the threshold and are not eligible for an individualized threshold), must meet the disability criteria for MBI and demonstrate they meet the financial criteria for the program, such as the income and asset limits.

Ticket to Work Helpline services may include helping people select a TTW EN, developing Benefits Summary and Analyses and Work Incentive Plans (WIPs), counseling on state-specific benefits, offering guidance about reporting earnings in

a timely manner, and referring them to community-based supports and financial services providers. Under the TTW program, SSA issues a ticket to an SSI and SSDI beneficiary who may assign the ticket to an EN of their choice to obtain employment services. The EN, if it accepts the ticket, helps the beneficiary obtain and maintain employment, and receives payment from SSA based on the beneficiary's employment outcomes.

Some local HHSC Benefits Offices are available to provide information and assistance to people regarding their earned and unearned income limits under Medicaid. To find a local HHSC benefits office that handles Medicaid for the elderly and people with disabilities (MEPD), call 2-1-1 or go to yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov/programs/health.

People with questions about Medicare should contact an HHSC regional benefits counselor working for the Texas Health Information Counseling and Advocacy Program at their local Area Agency on Aging.

Table 1 shows how an SSI recipient in 2019 can retain Medicaid benefits and increase income as they earn more, even while SSI cash benefits are decreased.

Refer to this link to see the current state threshold:

ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm. Refer to this link for the current SSI

Program Rates and Limits:

ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/prog_highlights/index.html.

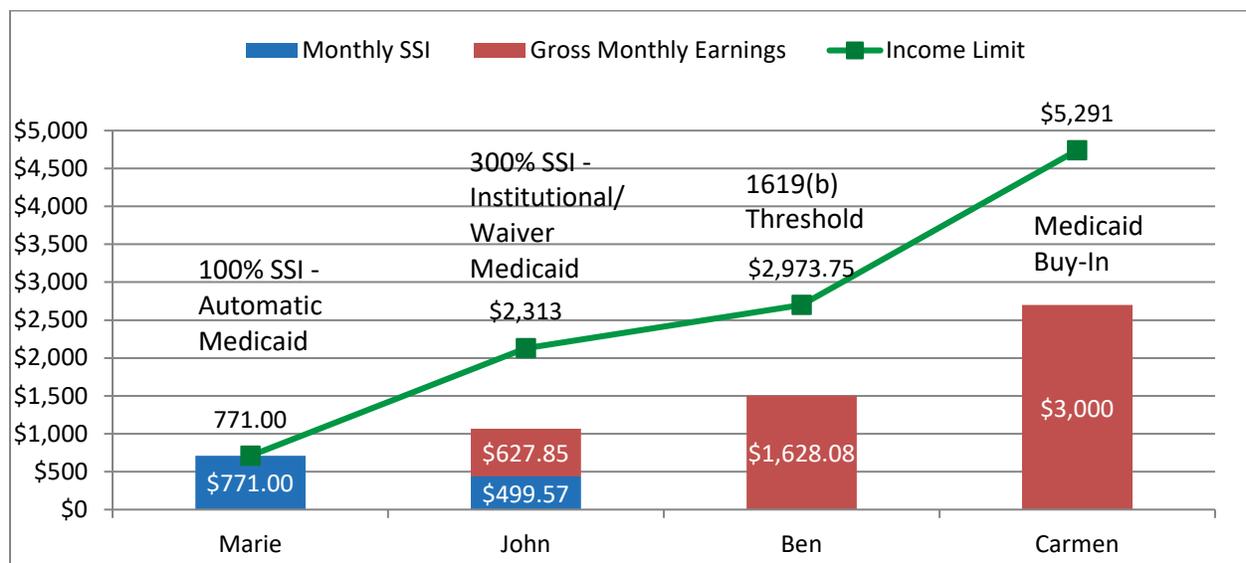


Table 1: How a person with a disability retains Medicaid as income rises, 2019

Note: Table does not include use of any SSA work incentives.

Marie

Marie is not working and receives a full monthly SSI benefit check, \$771 per month for 2019.

John

John begins working at a job earning \$7.25 an hour and works 20 hours per week. This means John's monthly gross income is \$627.85. John still receives (in calendar year 2019) an SSI monthly cash benefit of \$499.57 in addition to his earned income of \$627.85. He also continues to receive his Medicaid benefits for free.

Ben

Ben's works 40 hours a week making \$9.40 an hour. This makes his monthly gross income \$1,628.08 a month. John has reached the break-even point in SSI and will no longer receive an SSI monthly cash benefit. However, he is now eligible for SSI's 1619(b) program, which allows him to earn up to \$35,685 gross annual salary in calendar year 2019 and still continue to receive Medicaid for free even though he no longer receives a monthly cash benefit.

Carmen

Carmen earns \$3,000 gross each month. She earns over the 1619(b) threshold of \$35,685 in calendar year 2019. If Carmen's annual Medicaid expenses are more than the state average of \$16,161 in calendar year 2019, she may still be eligible for Medicaid through 1619(b) by getting approval for an individualized income threshold from SSA. If Carmen's annual Medicaid expenses are not more than the state average, Carmen is no longer eligible for Medicaid through SSI 1619(b).

However, Carmen can continue to receive Medicaid by paying a monthly premium and purchasing MBI.

If Carmen is on SSDI:

If Carmen received SSDI, rather than SSI, she could purchase the MBI at any time. Carmen would then have health care coverage from both Medicare (a person gets Medicare after receiving two years of SSDI cash benefits) and Medicaid.

If Carmen is not on SSDI and was never on SSI :

Carmen is a person with a disability who works. She has never received SSI or SSDI. If Carmen's disability meets certain criteria, she can purchase health insurance through the MBI.

Success Story

Jarron is a Social Security beneficiary and receives SSI. His cash subsidy was \$771 per month based on the SSI rate from 2019 and he was receiving Medicaid health insurance.

Jarron's support staff noticed that he had the ability to work with hand tools and was proficient at putting together the base assembly of a rolling chair. They helped him to find a job working 20 hours per week at \$7.25 per hour. His job resulted in gross monthly earnings of \$627.85 per month, increasing Jarron's monthly income by \$356.42 to a total of \$1,127.42. Although his SSI check is reduced each month by \$271.43 using SSA's basic calculations for exclusions and countable income, his total income was greater than if he were not working and he was able to retain his Medicaid.

Because Jarron needs support getting to and from his job every day, he hired a co-worker to take him to and from work for \$250 per month. Using an IRWE, this expense is calculated into his monthly SSI cash subsidy. The work incentive allows \$137 — half of the cost of the transportation — to come from SSI funds. Using this IRWE, Jarron's monthly income increased to \$1,252.42, leaving \$1,002.42 after paying for the transportation.

Successful on the job, Jarron received a pay raise of 10 cents per hour and an increase in hours to 40 hours per week. His gross earnings increased to \$1,273.02. He continues to use the IRWE for transportation support at \$250 per month. Using SSA's exclusions, work incentives and basic calculations, Jarron still has a SSI cash subsidy of \$301.99 per month. After paying for transportation, his income is now up to \$1,325.01 per month and continues to receive his Medicaid health insurance.

Comparing SSI and SSDI and Their Work Incentives: Texas Edition

John Coburn, Esq., Health and Disability Advocates, September 2011

Parts based on document produced by University of Montana Rural Institute in 2010

Supplemental Security Income ¹	Social Security Disability Insurance ²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program may be called Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Title XVI (16). • Funding comes from annual congressional appropriation from the general fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program may be called: Disability Insurance Benefits (DIB), Title II (2), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Old Age, Survivor and Disability Insurance. • Funding comes from the Social Security Trust Fund, which is supported through Federal Insurance Contributions Act taxes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No work history is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work history is required. • Must have worked and paid Social Security taxes and accrued work credits, or be a child, widow or widower of an insured worker. • A maximum of four credits can be earned per year. • The amount of earnings per credit changes annually in January.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits are only paid to the person with a disability. • Other family members can only get benefits if they are independently disabled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits may be paid to the individual worker and to certain family members who are dependent, elderly or disabled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs based — must have little or no income and resources. • Any income could affect and possibly reduce or eliminate benefits. • Resource and assets must be below \$2,000 for an individual or \$3,000 for a couple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No resource or asset limit and no limits on unearned income. • Generally, there are no income limits. Certain federal or state disability benefits may affect payment level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No waiting period from onset of disability to when benefits can be paid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five month waiting period is required from date of onset of disability until benefits can be paid.

¹ **Legal Citations:**

- Title XVI (16) of the Social Security Act (Title 42 US Code, The Public health and Welfare, Chapter 7, Subchapter XVI);
- Regulations in 20 CFR, Part 416.

² **Legal Citations:**

- Title II (2) of the Social Security Act (Title 42 US Code, The Public health and Welfare, Chapter 7, Subchapter II);
- Regulations in 20 CFR, Parts 400-499.

Supplemental Security Income ¹	Social Security Disability Insurance ²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to bring income up to Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) of \$771 month or \$1,157 for a couple in 2019. Refer to this link for the current benefit rate: ssa.gov/ssi/text-benefits-ussi.htm. Amount received depends on living situation, earnings and unearned income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either eligible for full benefit check or ineligible and receive no benefits except workers compensation offset if applicable. Amount received is based on earning history of the wage earner, age when benefits begin and number of people in addition to the wage earner who are receiving benefits. If the benefit amount is less than SSI FBR plus \$20 (or \$771 in 2019), the wage earner may also be eligible for SSI.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks are paid for the month they are received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks are paid for one month behind.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks are paid on the first of the month. If the first is a holiday or weekend, the check arrives on business day before the first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks are paid on a staggered schedule throughout the month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those qualified before May 1997 — the third day of the month. For those qualified after May 1997 and their birthday is between the 1st and 10th — the second Wednesday of month. For those qualified after May 1997 and their birthday is between the 11th and 20th — the third Wednesday of month. For those qualified after May 1997 and their birthday is between the 21st and 31st — the fourth Wednesday of month.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSI and Medicaid eligibility are tied together. Once a person is found eligible for SSI they receive Medicaid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicare coverage benefits begin after 24 months of receiving cash benefits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicaid continues through 1619a and b even after cash benefit stops. Up to \$35,685 annual salary (in 2019), or higher if individualized threshold is established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicaid may be available if eligibility requirement for a category, Home and Community-based Services waiver or another waiver are met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBI if not qualified through 1619b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBI

Work Incentives

Supplemental Security Income ¹	Social Security Disability Insurance ²
General Income Exclusion — \$20	Trial Work Period (TWP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nine months over a rolling 60-month period in which a person can earn whatever amount they are able to earn. Monthly benefit check continues during TWP.
Earned Income Exclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$65 and then divide by two (two for one) 	Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 months which starts immediately after the TWP ends
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person under the age of 22 who is in school and working and has monthly or annual income excluded up to annual threshold. 	Grace Period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three consecutive months that begin the first month after the TWP where countable income is greater than substantial gainful activity (SGA).
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid for out of the person's pocket, are not reimbursable from another source, are reasonable and are directly related to enabling the person to work. 	Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid for out of the person's pocket, not reimbursable from another source, are reasonable and are directly related to enabling the person to work.
Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-financed work incentive that requires an occupational goal tied to expenses which are paid for by setting aside SSDI, wages or resources. 	Subsidy and Special Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When an employer pays the person for work which may not have the same value as a nondisabled employee or when another entity, like DRS, pays for a job coach or other supports on the job. These can be applied only after the TWP when working at SGA.
Blind Work Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxes, union dues, work uniform, service animal expenses and more 	Un-Incurred Bus Expenses and Unpaid Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-employment

¹ Legal Citations:

- Title XVI (16) of the Social Security Act (Title 42 US Code, The Public health and Welfare, Chapter 7, Subchapter XVI);
- Regulations in 20 CFR, Part 416.

² Legal Citations:

- Title II (2) of the Social Security Act (Title 42 US Code, The Public health and Welfare, Chapter 7, Subchapter II);
- Regulations in 20 CFR, Parts 400-499.

Supplemental Security Income ¹	Social Security Disability Insurance ²
<p>1619 a and b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Medicaid even after the SSI check stops, up to annual state threshold of \$35,685 (in 2019) or higher if individual threshold established. 	<p>Extended Medicare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 93 months after the TWP.
<p>Property Essential to Self-Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-employment allows a person to have resources that support the business and still be eligible for SSI and Medicaid. 	<p>Unsuccessful Work Attempt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When earnings are over SGA but stopped or produced earnings below the SGA level after six months or less. This is used during EPE or application.
<p>TTW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person can choose the EN provider to work with to attain an occupational goal. While the ticket is active, a person is protected from regularly scheduled medical Continuing Disability Review. 	<p>TTW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person can choose the EN provider to work with to attain an occupational goal. While the ticket is active, a person is protected from regularly scheduled medical Continuing Disability Review.
<p>MBI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBI allows the person to “buy-in” to full Medicaid coverage. Depending on the amount of earned and unearned income, a monthly premium may be required. 	<p>MBI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBI allows the person to “buy-in” to full Medicaid coverage. Depending on the amount of earned and unearned income, a monthly premium may be required.
<p>Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For people who successfully return to work and later lose their entitlement to SSI benefits and payments. If ineligible for SSI or Medicaid for any reason other than medical recovery or work, the person may be able to restart the SSI cash payment and Medicaid coverage within 12 months without a new application. If cash payment and Medicaid benefits ended because of work and earnings and work stops within five years of when benefits ceased, SSA may be able to start benefits up again. 	<p>Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safety net for people who successfully return to work and later lose entitlement to SSDI benefits and payments. If cash payments ended because of work and earnings and work stops within five years of when benefits ended, SSA may be able to start benefits up again and provide up to six months of provisional cash benefits while SSA conducts a medical review to determine whether or not the person meets the definition of disability.

Texas Rules Regarding Medicaid Eligibility for an Employed Person with a Disability

For individualized information and planning, consult with a MEPD eligibility specialist.

For all Medicaid beneficiaries with a disability, assets held in certain types of accounts may not be counted when determining Medicaid eligibility. It is recommended people consult with an attorney to establish trusts or other accounts that ensure they meet Medicaid requirements. See the Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook: F-6000, Types of Trusts (hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/chapter-f-resources/f-6000-types-trusts).

Eligibility Types for People with Disabilities Include:

- Medical Assistance Only (MAO)— for people whose eligibility is not determined by SSA and who are not SSI eligible, eligibility for MAO is determined by the state of Texas based on a person's income, resources and disability.
- SSI — Medicaid eligibility is tied to SSI eligibility as determined by the SSA.
- SSI-related — the person is no longer receiving SSI:
- Because of Social Security cost-of-living increases they got since they were last entitled to get an SSI and Social Security payment in the same month. The SSA calls this a Pickle.
- Because the person is entitled to an increase in Social Security widow or widowers benefits they got an increase in those benefits and are not eligible for Medicare. The SSA calls this Reduction Factor Adjustment (ARF) for Disabled Widows or Widowers.
- Because the person is entitled to an increase in Social Security disabled adult children's benefits or they got an increase in those benefits. The SSA calls this Childhood Disability Beneficiary or Disabled Adult Child.
 - ▶ MBI — allows a working person with a disability to purchase Medicaid benefits when they earn more than the MAO, SSI or SSI-related Medicaid income limits.

Here are some guidelines for how people in the following programs can work and keep their Medicaid benefits:

HCS, CLASS, DBMD and MDCP

- **MAO:** Without establishing a qualified income trust (QIT), combined countable gross earned and unearned income cannot exceed 300 percent of the SSI benefit amount or \$2,313 per month [for 2019](#). See the [Appendix XXXI, Budget Reference Chart](#).
 - ▶ Income held in a QIT is not counted for the purpose of establishing Medicaid eligibility. However, people may be required to contribute earnings in excess of 300 percent of the SSI benefit amount, minus allowable deductions, toward the cost of their care.
- **SSI:** SSA will determine if a person can continue to remain Medicaid eligible through section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act if their income exceeds the SSI benefit amount. This provision allowed beneficiaries to earn up to \$35,685 per year in 2019, or a higher individualized threshold if applicable ([SSA](#)). Refer to the current state threshold at the link above or the approved individualized threshold. The person may be able to continue to receive Medicaid benefits and waiver services through MBI.
 - ▶ 1619(b) eligibility may or may not be automatic and Social Security may apply a medical use test to determine that earnings are not sufficient to meet medical needs. Providers should contact their local SSA office and inquire about eligibility under 1619(b).
 - ▶ The person does not contribute toward the cost of their care.
- **MBI:** To be eligible for waiver services under MBI, countable earned income must be less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$2,603 per month for 2019. Because some income is not counted, a person can make up to \$5,291 per month, not counting possible work incentives or income disregards. See the [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook: Chapter M, Medicaid Buy-In Program](#).
 - ▶ Transfer to MBI is not automatic as a person increases their earnings. The person must apply for MBI.
 - ▶ HHSC will calculate an MBI premium but not a copay for a person in a waiver.
 - ▶ In addition to regular Medicaid resource exclusions, the following resources are not counted when determining MBI eligibility:
 - ◇ Retirement-related accounts
 - ◇ Independence accounts

- ◇ PASS
- ◇ \$3000 MBI Resource Exclusion

TxHmL

- SSI-related: Combined countable earned and unearned income must be less than the SSI benefit amount, or \$771 per month for 2019. If it does, the person may be able to receive Medicaid benefits and waiver services through MBI. See the [Appendix XXXI, Budget Reference Chart](#).
- SSI: SSA will determine if a person can continue to remain Medicaid eligible through section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act if their income exceeds the SSI benefit amount. This provision allows beneficiaries to earn up to \$35,685 per year in 2019 or a higher individualized threshold if applicable ([SSA](#)). If the person's income exceeds \$35,685 per year or the approved individualized threshold, the person may be able to continue to receive Medicaid benefits and waiver services through MBI.
 - ▶ 1619(b) eligibility may or may not be automatic and Social Security may apply a medical use test to determine that earnings are not sufficient to meet medical needs. Providers should contact their local SSA office and inquire about eligibility under 1619(b).
 - ◇ The person does not contribute toward the cost of their care.
- MBI: To be eligible for waiver services under MBI, countable earned income must be less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Because some income is not counted, a person can make up to a certain amount that will vary yearly, not counting possible work incentives or income disregards. See the [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook: Chapter M, Medicaid Buy-In Program](#).
 - ▶ Transfer to MBI is not automatic as a person increases their earnings. The person must apply for MBI.
 - ▶ HHSC will calculate an MBI premium but not a copay for a person in a waiver.
 - ▶ In addition to regular Medicaid resource exclusions, the following resources are not counted when determining MBI eligibility:
 - ◇ Retirement-related accounts
 - ◇ Independence accounts
 - ◇ PASS
 - ◇ \$3000 MBI Resource Exclusion

ICF/IID

- MAO: Without establishing a QIT, combined countable gross earned and unearned income cannot exceed 300 percent of the SSI benefit amount or \$2,313 per month for 2019. See the [Appendix XXXI, Budget Reference Chart](#).
- A person residing in an ICF/IID without earned income contributes all but \$60 per month (their personal needs allowance) of their unearned income minus other allowable deductions toward the cost of their care. A resident with earned income retains some of it (protected earned income) as follows:
 - ▶ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of \$30 or less they retain 100 percent of earnings.
 - ▶ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of more than \$30 but not more than \$120, they retain 100 percent of the first \$30, plus 50 percent of the remaining earnings up to \$45.
 - ▶ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of more than \$120, they retain 100 percent of the first \$30, plus 50 percent of the remaining earnings up to \$45, plus 30 percent of earnings over \$120 up to 300 percent of the SSI benefit amount. See the Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook: [H-5110 ICF/IID Individual](#).
 - ▶ Earned income held in a QIT is not counted for the purpose of establishing Medicaid eligibility. However, people may be required to contribute earnings in excess of 300 percent of the SSI benefit amount, minus allowable deductions, toward the cost of their care.
- SSI: SSA will determine if a person can continue to remain Medicaid eligible through section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act if their income exceeds the SSI benefit amount. This provision allows beneficiaries to earn up to \$35,685 per year in 2019, or a higher individualized threshold if applicable ([SSA](#)).
 - ▶ 1619(b) eligibility may or may not be automatic and Social Security may apply a medical use test to determine that earnings are not sufficient to meet medical needs. Providers should contact their local SSA office and inquire about eligibility under 1619(b).
 - ▶ A resident with earned income retains some of it (protected earned income) as follows:
 - ◇ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of \$30 or less, they retain 100 percent of earnings.
 - ◇ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of more than \$30 but not more than \$120, they retain 100 percent of the first \$30, plus 50 percent of the remaining earnings up to \$45.

- ◇ If the resident earns a net monthly amount of more than \$120, they retain 100 percent of the first \$30, plus 50 percent of the remaining earnings up to \$45, plus 30 percent of earnings over \$120 up to \$35,685 per year (or the approved individualized threshold). See the Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook: [H-5110 ICF/IID Individual](#).

Sources:

- hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/appendices/appendix-xxxi-budget-reference-chart
- hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/chapter-m-medicaid-buy-program/m-1000-medicaid-buy-mbi-program
- ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/prog_highlights/RatesLimits2019.html
- ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm
- hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/chapter-h-co-payment/h-5000-icfiid-co-payments

9. Attachment E:

Resources

Being creative and resourceful are essential when planning for employment. Even with HHSC and TWS-VRS funding in place, all desired services and supports might not be available. It is important to consider all resources for putting together a package of services that support employment. Other sources of help are listed below. Additional possibilities to consider include connections and resources in your own community, what the person's family can do, and any typical and natural supports available.

General Employment Resources

Advocacy Associations

Organizations such as [The Arc of Texas](#), [Disability Rights Texas](#) and [Centers for Independent Living](#) offer support for people and families. The Arc of Texas has created an information packet on employment for people with disabilities which is available by contacting The Arc through their website.

Business and Community Service Associations

Chambers of commerce and community service associations such as the Elks and Kiwanis can be a source of jobs, funding, contacts and information sharing. The [Disability:IN](#) as information on employers across the state with job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employment Agencies

Employment agencies in the community are a source of temporary and full-time jobs. Some employment agencies specialize in finding jobs for people with disabilities and many have job openings that people with disabilities can fill. Internet job seekers can find disability-related information at online job sites such as [monster.com](#). Employment agencies are listed in newspapers or the phone book.

Newspaper Ads and Online Job Banks

Probably the most common source to find job openings are newspaper ads and online job banks that offer an array of possible career and job choices. The want ads section is a great source of information for the types of jobs that may be available in the community.

State Agencies and Programs

HHSC Employment for People with Disabilities webpage

(hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment-people-disabilities)

Visit for links, resources, tools, etc.

TWS-VRS Field Offices

(<https://twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices-services>)

TWS-VRS field offices are located across the state to assist people with disabilities who are seeking employment. People must apply to TWS-VRS for a determination of eligibility before services can be offered. Services are authorized based on an IPE that is developed with the TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselor. TWS-VRS offers funding for intensive work training, job coaching, assistive technology, training and education, incentive programs for employers and other services necessary for the achievement of the job goal.

TWS-VRS Employment Service Provider

(twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1000#c1004)

ESPs contract with TWS-VRS to provide employment services to people determined eligible for TWS-VRS services. ESPs, in collaboration with and under the supervision of TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselors, assist people with disabilities to locate and become stable in integrated, competitive employment.

HHSC Regional Offices

(apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/search.cfm)

HHSC regional offices are located across the state and house HHSC staff who provide intake, eligibility, enrollment and case management services for long-term

care programs administered by HHSC. These programs serve people who are elderly or have physical disabilities.

Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authorities

(hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/local-idd-authority-lidda)

Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authorities (LIDDAs) are located across the state and are governed by local boards of directors appointed by local taxing authorities. HHSC holds a contract with each LIDDA to provide community-based services to people with an intellectual disability or related condition (RC), including employment services, and to assist people and families with access to other Medicaid-funded services.

HHSC Regional Benefits Offices

(yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home)

HHSC benefits offices are located across the state to help people arrange for Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other benefits. Some local offices are available to provide information and assistance to people about their earned and unearned income limits under Medicaid, including MBI. To find an office that handles MEPD, call 2-1-1 or go to yourtexasbenefits.com.

Texas Workforce Solutions

(twc.texas.gov/about-texas-workforce)

Texas Workforce Solutions is a statewide network comprised of TWC and 28 workforce development boards and their contracted service providers and community partners. This network gives customers local access to employment, training and support services at numerous TWS offices.

The major functions of TWC include oversight and support of an employer-driven, integrated system that consolidates employment, job training, work-related services such as the regulation of career schools, support services such as providing child care for targeted populations participating in workforce training and administering the unemployment benefits and unemployment tax programs through six telecenters and numerous local tax offices across the state. TWC also provides

information and analysis on shifts in occupations, industries and general labor market trends within the state.

Work In Texas

(WorkInTexas.com)

This is TWC's internet-based, job-matching system for both job seekers and employers. It provides recruitment assistance to Texas employers and job search assistance to anyone seeking work in Texas. Information on system accessibility can be found here: twc.texas.gov/twc-accessibility-policy.

Workforce Solution Offices

(twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices-services)

TWC, Workforce Development Boards and their service contractors work together to provide workforce solutions for Texans. Workforce Solutions offices are located throughout Texas.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

(twc.texas.gov/businesses/work-opportunity-tax-credit)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal income tax benefit administered by the U.S. Department of Labor for private, for-profit employers who hire from target populations. Work Opportunity Tax Credit reduces a business' federal tax liability, serving as an incentive to select job candidates who may be somewhat disadvantaged in their efforts to find employment. Employers can receive up to a \$2,400 tax credit for hiring vocational rehabilitation referrals — people who were referred by a rehabilitation agency or an EN approved by the State of Texas or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Disability and SSA Benefits and Work Incentives

People with disabilities often perceive employment-related regulations for Social Security benefits as impossible barriers but many people misunderstand the effect of employment on individual benefits. By learning, gathering and understanding accurate information on SSA requirements, along with learning about work incentive programs that make it easier to go to work, people with disabilities can

feel more confident in their employment search. See Attachment C for more information.

Social Security Offices

(ssa.gov/locator)

One of the SSA's highest priorities is to help people with disabilities achieve independence by helping them to take advantage of employment opportunities. The [SSA](#) posts up to date information on its website which is also the source for obtaining copies of the Red Book (ssa.gov/redbook), a standard reference guide to employment support for people with disabilities.

Ticket to Work Employment Networks

(choosework.ssa.gov)

Ticket to Work is a Social Security Administration program that encourages people who receive SSI and SSDI to return to work. The Ticket program allows people to choose a qualified EN to provide their job training and support (socialsecurity.gov/work).

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects

(choosework.ssa.gov/about/meet-your-employment-team/index.html)

People age 14 to 64 receiving SSI and SSDI can access the area WIPA project for counseling to help people understand the impact of work on their benefits. Counselors offer strategies to enhance self-sufficiency and financial independence and can help people and their families determine how employment earnings will affect their benefits over time. People who receive SSI, SSDI or Childhood Disability Benefits can get these services free of charge from the Texas programs found at choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp/

Going to Work: A Guide to Social Security Benefits and Employment for Young People with Disabilities

(communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=211)

A resource to learn about how benefits are affected by working. You can get printed copies of the guide from the Institute for Community Inclusion's Publication Office at 617-287-4300.

Changing the Culture and Message about Benefits: A Comprehensive Approach for Promoting Employment

(employmentfirstma.org/pages/bens.html)

A guide to increasing awareness about how earnings affect benefits for people with disabilities. Printed copies can be obtained from the Institute for Community Inclusion's Publication Office at 617-287-4300.

Real Job Success Stories

Real Work Stories

(thinkwork.org/project/real-work-stories)

This site highlights the employment successes of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through the use of innovative employment support practices, people with disabilities are earning money, forming networks and contributing to their communities. Learn more about these people and the promising practices that led to their successes.

Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination

From assessing interests and goals to researching employment opportunities to starting a new job, opportunities exist in school and professional settings for people to direct their career development. Increasing a sense of empowerment often contributes to employment success.

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

(apse.org)

APSE is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for people with disabilities. APSE is a growing national nonprofit membership organization founded in 1988.

Self-Determination Resource Library

[\(letsgettoworkwi.org/index.php/lgtw-project-resources/self-determination-resource-library/\)](https://letsgettoworkwi.org/index.php/lgtw-project-resources/self-determination-resource-library/)

This Self-Determination Toolkit is designed for teachers, parents, students and other professionals interested in supporting self-determination in home, school and community settings. This toolkit is a collection of resources which provide a basic framework to build self-determination activities into traditional and adapted curriculums for students of all ages.

Self-Determination: A Fundamental Ingredient of Employment Support

communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=205

This brief examines self-determination in the employment process and suggests strategies for employment professionals to apply these principles in their work.

Person-Centered Career Planning

Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers

communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=54&type=topic&id=3

A person-centered approach can help people with disabilities make satisfying job choices. This document guides job seekers through a three-stage career development process that includes assessing their interests, researching the job market and marketing themselves to potential employers.

More Than Just a Job: Person-Centered Career Planning

communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=16&type=topic&id=3

Sometimes people think that person-centered career planning has to involve a big meeting or is only for people with the most significant disabilities. This publication lays out the principles of listening to job seekers to help them shape and achieve their career goals.

The Most Important Member: Facilitating the Focus Person's Participation in Person Centered Planning

communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=30

This article summarizes research exploring the participation of young people in person-centered planning and gives specific recommendations to assist facilitators in maximizing student participation.

Building Authentic Visions: How to Support the Focus Person in Person Centered Planning

communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=31&type=pubtype&id=3

This publication summarizes research on team behavior during a planning session that increased or decreased participation of the focus person. Recommendations challenge team members to think about how their own behavior influences the focus person's participation.

Person-Directed Planning Guidelines, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/long-term-care/lidda/persondirectedplanningguidelines.pdf

This document provides direction to people, families, professionals, program providers and LIDDAs in the development of effective person-directed plans. This planning process will be used to develop services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving community services. Person-directed planning is consistent with the recent emphasis in Texas on self-determination and the achievement of personal outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Career Exploration and Assessment

TWS-VRS Career and Community Supports Analysis

lmci.state.tx.us/explore/TSC/jobseekers.asp

Employment assessments like this assess the person's work history, career objectives and other aspects related to employment support. It can help lead the

person to consider whether employment is a goal that should be included in their service plan. An employment assessment is intended for anyone with an interest in employment and should not be limited to people who meet a certain skill set, work performance level in a vocational program, or program eligibility criteria.

O*Net Online

(onetonline.org)

This online database describes a wide variety of occupations, required skills and earning potential.

YES! Your Employment Selections

(qualitymall.org/products/prod5.asp?prodid=618)

This is a job preference program using online videos. For a fee, this program allows people with limited or no reading skills to watch videos of 120 different jobs, listen to a narrator describe key tasks in each job and select preferred ones. With the help of a facilitator, people can identify their best-matched job, strengths and weaknesses and training priorities.

Accommodations

Job Accommodation Network

(askjan.org)

This federally funded program provides information and consultation on job accommodations. Job Accommodation Network (JAN) consultants are available by phone to assist in identifying potential accommodations. They have instant access to the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about different approaches, devices and strategies. JAN's website has a searchable online database which can also be used to research accommodation options. JAN also offers fact sheets and publications about the Americans with Disabilities Act.

AbleData Assistive Technology Information

(abledata.acl.gov)

AbleData provides objective information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment available from domestic and international sources to consumers, organizations, professionals and caregivers within the United States. This site presents a comprehensive range of devices that are available and includes general information and news about topics related to assistive technology.

Transportation

American Public Transportation Association

(apta.com)

This website contains all available public transportation resources by state and county. The site includes links to bus, train, ferry and paratransit information.

Texas Department of Transportation

(txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/find-ride.html)

The Texas Department of Transportation website helps people to find contact information for transit providers by county or category.

Community Transportation Association of America

(ctaa.org)

The Community Transportation Association of America has designed an individual transportation planning process along with forms and worksheets. These can be downloaded from their website.

Easter Seals Project Action

(projectaction.com)

The Easter Seals Project Action Consulting website has a variety of information on travel training, including training curriculums and an array of travel training publications. Easter Seals regularly holds travel instructor training around the country.

Getting to Work: Addressing the Transportation Challenge

(dda.health.maryland.gov/Documents/SELN_transportation_brief_final.pdf)

This publication contains helpful information and guidance on solving job-related transportation challenges for people with disabilities.

10. Attachment F:

Questions and Answers

Submit your questions to SE.Questions@HHSC.state.tx.us.

Related to all programs:

1. Can people be paid subminimum wages or participate in unpaid work in day habilitation or vocational training?
 - a. Regardless of whether the program provider bills day habilitation, vocational training or no service, wages (or lack of) must be in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. See the Department of Labor site on subminimum wages: dol.gov/whd/workerswithdisabilities.
 - b. For unpaid training, a good test for HHSC compliance is if the person is performing duties that would otherwise be performed by paid staff, then the person should be paid, too.
2. If a person with disabilities receiving HHSC services applies for TWS-VRS VR services independently of their program provider, case manager or service coordinator, does the agency responsible for providing services change?
 - a. No. If TWS-VRS determines the person eligible, they will pay the upfront costs of obtaining and becoming secure in a job. If not, the HHSC program funds those services. In either case, if the person needs ongoing support, the HHSC program funds those supports, if available in the program where the person is enrolled.
3. How much can a person with disabilities earn and still be eligible for Medicaid?
 - a. A working person with a disability can earn up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level (\$2,603 per month for 2019) and still qualify for Medicaid, including a Medicaid long-term care waiver, through MBI. This amount does not include any work incentives. If the person has eligible deductions, such as IRWEs, they could earn more and still qualify for Medicaid.
4. If the provider assists a person in operating their own business, can this activity be billed as Supported Employment?
 - a. Yes.
5. Does the service plan need to contain a plan for fading Supported Employment?

- a. Yes. There should be a plan for reducing or fading the amount of Supported Employment.
6. What other funding sources are available for a HHSC program provider to assist in a person's job quest or job maintenance?
 - a. TWS-VRS contracts with ESPs to provide a variety of employment services, including Supported Employment E. An organization must fulfill certain educational, experiential and training requirements to contract with TWS-VRS as an ESP. See the Division for Rehabilitation Services (twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-program-overview) or Division for Blind Services (twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/criss-cole-rehabilitation-center) provider manuals for more details.
 - b. An ESP provides and receives payment for services that assist a TWS-VRS consumer to obtain and become stable in paid, individualized and competitive employment in the community. An organization that is contracted to provide services through both HHSC and TWS-VRS can provide to a person both the upfront employment services as an ESP and the long-term employment supports as an HHSC program provider.
 - c. Under the Ticket to Work program, SSA issues a ticket to an SSI and SSDI beneficiary who may assign the ticket to an EN of their choice to obtain employment services. If the EN accepts the ticket, they help the beneficiary obtain and maintain employment and receive payment from the SSA based on the beneficiary's employment outcomes.
 - d. Other services may also be appropriate depending on the circumstances.
7. For a person receiving services from TWS-VRS, at what point should Supported Employment or any other job maintenance services be added to the person's service plan? At what point should the person begin receiving those services from HHSC?
 - a. The time when TWS-VRS coaching ends and HHSC Supported Employment begins varies by the person. It is best practice to coordinate with the TWS-VRS VR counselor from the beginning of the person's relationship with TWS-VRS. Long-term services and supports must be in place before TWS-VRS will pay for services or close the case, so the person will need to have supported employment — or whatever long-term services are needed to help the person maintain the job – approved on the service plan as soon as possible.
8. What if a person wants help finding a job but refuses referral to TWS-VRS? Can EA be billed in that case?

- a. If the person is enrolled in HCS, TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD or MDCP, referral to TWS-VRS is required before using EA funds.
 - b. If the person is receiving intellectual disability/related condition/general revenue (ID/RC/GR) services, referral to TWS-VRS is optional and the EA can be billed.
 - c. See the HHSC/TWS-VRS Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for more detail. For issues that arise with TWS-VRS that cannot be resolved at the local level between the program provider, case manager or service coordinator and the VR Counselor, contact HHSC at SE.Questions@HHSC.state.tx.us.
9. Are program providers able to provide day habilitation to a person who is competitively employed but works within the supervision of an enclave?
- a. As long as the outcome of the service is related to “assistance with acquiring, retaining or improving self-help, socialization and adaptive skills necessary to live successfully in the community and participate in home and community life” (part of the day habilitation definition), day habilitation can be billed, regardless of the setting or wages. The program provider must ensure that skills, other than vocational skills, are being taught while people are participating in the enclave. Only goals that would be applicable across settings are habilitation goals.
 - b. The program provider should evaluate whether supported employment is an option for the person to promote their full integration into the workforce.
10. We are an ESP. We recently served a TxHmL person in TWS-VRS Supported Employment and received a successful closure. He and his family are now requesting Employment Assistance to assist him to secure another job. He will continue to work present job until we can secure another placement for him. Will we be able to bill TxHmL for Employment Assistance services?
- a. If a person, including a previous TWS-VRS consumer, is underemployed, they may be eligible for TWS-VRS funding again. If employment services are not otherwise available through TWS-VRS, the person may use HHSC Employment Assistance.
11. We are serving a person who was denied by TWS-VRS. We recently learned he is refusing to submit to a drug or alcohol test due to recreational drug use. He has requested we attempt to secure employment for him where they do not require drug screenings. Will we be able to bill for Employment Assistance under these conditions?
- a. Yes. You may bill Employment Assistance under these circumstances.

12. If a staff person transports a person to and from an employment site, do they have to first exhaust supported employment then use other available program services to cover the remainder of the year?

- a. There is no requirement that supported employment be used prior to other available program services for employment-related transportation.

11. Attachment G:

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
APSE	Association of People Supporting Employment First
ARF	Reduction Factor Adjustment
CDS	Consumer Directed Services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLASS	Community Living Assistance and Support Services Waiver
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CWIC	Community Work Incentives Coordinators
ESP	Employment Service Provider
DBMD	Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities Wavier
DBS	Division for Blind Services
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
DIB	Disability Insurance Benefit
DRS	Division for Rehabilitative Services
DSHS	Department of State Health Services

Acronym	Full Name
EA	Employment Assistance
EN	Employment Network
EPE	Extended Period of Eligibility
ESP	Employment Service Provider
FBR	Federal Benefit Rate
GR	General revenue
H.B.	House Bill
HCS	Home and Community-based Services Wavier
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
ICF/IID	Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions
ID/RC/GR	Intellectual Disability/Related Condition/General Revenue
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
IRWE	Impairment Related Work Expense
JAN	Job Accommodation Network
LIDDA	Local Intellectual and Development Disability Authority
MAO	Medical Assistance Only
MBI	Medicaid Buy-In

Acronym	Full Name
MDCP	Medically Dependent Children Program
MEPD	Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
PASS	Plan to Achieve Self-Support
QIT	Qualified Income Trust
RC	Related Condition
SE	Supported Employment
SEIE	Student Earned Income Exclusion
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TDD	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf
TTW	Ticket to Work
TTY	Text Telephone
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission

Acronym	Full Name
TWS-VRS	Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services
TWP	Trial Work Period
TxHmL	Texas Home Living Wavier
USC	U.S. Code
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIPA	Work Incentives Planning and Assistance
WIPs	Work Incentive Plans



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

20D0680C