

PIT – CASE STUDY 6

Vocational Rehabilitation Supports the Discovery Process

“We can’t accept the personal/vocational profile as a vocational evaluation.” This is the statement that one parent faced at the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office when she presented the profile that contained the information gathered during her daughter’s Discovery process.

The parent then followed up with Partners in Transition Training and Technical Assistance (PIT TA) and in turn, the PIT TA staff requested clarification from the central VR office. Pam Hinterlong, Program Administrator for VR Supported Employment, clarified: “*VR Policy does not require a formal assessment for supported employment eligibility purpose. VR does recognize Discovery as a viable alternative to assessment and I am working to spread the word to field staff.*”

Pam also referred to section 17.01 “Eligibility” in the VR Counselor Policy Manual, which states: An individual shall be eligible to receive supported employment services if:

- 17.0101 The individual is eligible for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services;
- 17.0102 The individual is determined to be an individual with a most significant disability;
- 17.0103 The individual’s rehabilitation, career, and employment needs have been assessed by the counselor. (*When appropriate, existing documentation that outlines the individual’s work skills, support needs and prior work experience, may be utilized in lieu of an assessment*); and
- 17.0104 Supported Employment has been determined to be an appropriate rehabilitation objective for the individual.

Discovery is fairly new for the state of Florida and not all of the employees within community organizations are familiar with the process. The supervisor who made the comment above was not part of a Discovery team and she made the comment before she had the opportunity to carefully read the student’s profile.

VR counselors who have actively been involved in the Discovery process consistently note that they gain a much better understanding of the individual. Job developers and work evaluators have also commented on the thoroughness of the profile created through the Discovery process. Most VR contracted job developers do not receive this level of holistic information on the individuals they will be providing services; and it lays the foundation for customized employment.

A work evaluator also noted in one case that the traditional Vocational Evaluations that he usually performs would not have captured all of the individual’s skills. Sometimes traditional vocational evaluations document what an individual can’t do, rather than defining the person’s abilities, including skills such as social, communication, recreation/leisure, academic, physical, etc. Discovery captures all of this information and more.

Although VR supports Discovery, they do not currently have a mechanism to fund Discovery, except as a portion of the Supported Employment Benchmarks.

For more information about VR's Supported Employment services contact:

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