

Supported Employment (Employment Specialist) (b)(3) Waiver Service

H2023 U4 – Individual Supported Employment (IDD Only)

H2023 U4 HH – Individual Placement & Support-Supported Employment (MH/SU Only)

H2026 U4 – Individual Supported Employment Maintenance (LTVS – IDD Only)

H2026 HQ U4 – Group Supported Employment Maintenance (LTVS – IDD Only)

SERVICE

Supported Employment (SE) is a person-centered service with a focus on employment. SE services provide assistance with choosing, acquiring and maintaining employment for individuals who are diagnosed with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and/or substance use disorder and are 16 years and older for whom competitive employment has not been achieved and/or has been interrupted or intermittent.

The primary outcome of **SE** is competitive employment, which is defined as a job that pays at least minimum wage, for which anyone can apply and is not specifically set aside for people with disabilities. SE services must be provided in integrated work settings where the individual works alongside people who do not have disabilities or in a business owned by the individual.

SE does not occur in licensed community day programs or in licensed residential facilities as the place of service.

SE promotes North Carolina's vision of Employment First: *"Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all citizens with disabilities regardless of level of disability, in a job of their choosing with supports and accommodations provided as necessary to achieve and maintain employment."*

All **SE** services are community- based.

SE is offered using the Individual Placement and Support (**IPS**) model for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) to severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI), and co-occurring disorders (including a primary substance use disorder diagnosis). **IPS-SE** helps individuals living with behavioral health conditions to achieve competitive employment of their choosing. **IPS-SE** is colocated with an agency's behavioral health treatment services to ensure consistent behavioral health integration for the individual.

SE services include the following:

- Onboard training/education
- Vocational assessment
- Career/educational counseling
- Job shadowing
- Assistance in the use of education resources
- Resume development training
- Job interview skills training
- Assistance in learning skills necessary for job retention
- Monitoring, supervision, assistance in job tasks, work adjustment training and counseling as needed to assist the individual in completing job training

SE services may also include assisting the individual in the development and operation of a micro-enterprise or small business. This assistance includes:

- Aiding individual to identify potential business opportunities
- Assisting in the development of a business plan, including potential sources of business financing
- Identification of supports necessary for the individual to operate the business.

SE maintenance, often referred to as Long Term Vocational Support (LTVS), includes the following:

- Coaching and employment support activities that enable an individual to maintain employment
- Ongoing assistance, counseling and guidance for an individual who operates a micro-enterprise or small business
- Monitoring, supervision, assistance in job tasks, work adjustment training and counseling as needed to assist the individual in maintaining employment
- Consulting with the employer to identify work-related needs of the individual and proactively engage in supportive activities to address the problem or need

SE includes transportation directly between the individual's residence the site of the **SE** service or among the **SE** sites (if applicable). *For individuals who are eligible for educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA), **SE** does not include transportation to or from school settings. This includes transportation to and from the participant's home, provider home where the participant is receiving services before/after school or any community location where the participant may be receiving services before or after school.*

Collateral contacts and telephone calls to the individual are billable; however, 80 percent (80%) of contacts must be face-to-face with the individual receiving services. Face-to-face contacts may be subject to reasonable accommodation that are HIPAA-compliant and are not intended to replace or decrease the frequency of face-to-face contact.

SE is a periodic service.

For individuals with an I/DD diagnosis LTVS is only available consistent with group LTVS offered through the N.C. Innovations waiver. Group **SE** and LTVS do not align with the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, and therefore they are not available for individuals with MH/SU diagnoses who are covered under the service definition.

PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

SE providers must meet the provider qualification policies, procedures and standards established by the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS), the requirements of 10A N.C.A.C 27G and N.C.G.S. 122C, and any competencies specified by the N.C. Division of Health Benefits (DHB).

SE providers for programs for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must meet all N.C. Innovations Waiver provider requirements and be enrolled 1915(c) waiver providers.

SE providers for programs for individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) *must meet all fidelity provider requirements as outlined by the state for evidence-based practices for individuals with serious mental illness.* The state-approved evidence-based practice for individuals with SMI is **IPS** and the **SE** Fidelity Scale developed by the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center and promoted by SAMHA. Information regarding the IPS model can be found at: <http://www.ipsworks.org/>.

All **SE** providers delivering services to individuals with SMI will participate in fidelity evaluation, and services must be provided to fidelity per the Transition to Community Living Initiative based on the U.S. Department of Justice Settlement agreement.

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

SE staff must meet requirements as specified in 10A N.C.A.C. 27G 0104, and supervision of staff must be provided according to the supervision requirements specified in 10A N.C.A.C. 27G.0204.

SE staff, including the Employment Specialist and Employment Peer Mentors for IPS-**SE** services, must complete within 90 days of employment training which includes, but is not limited to:

- CPR/first aid
- Client rights
- Confidentiality/HIPAA
- Crisis intervention
- Training specific to the individual needs of the individual

IPS-SE services must be in a team structure per the IPS fidelity scale organizational item 4 and must be provided by Employment Specialist and Employment Peer Mentor professionals trained in national research standards that support the vocational needs of individuals. This service must be adequate to ensure fidelity and consistency with the non-Medicaid funded IPS-SE services. Supervisors shall be full-time employees dedicated to this program and who meet qualified professional (QP) status.

POPULATIONS ELIGIBLE

Individuals age 16 and older who are not otherwise eligible for service under a program funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 94-192, and meet one of the following criteria:

1. Individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability who are functionally eligible for the Innovations Waiver but not enrolled in the Innovations Waiver

OR

2. Individuals with serious mental illness who are clinically appropriate for **SE**

UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT

SE Guidelines

Supported Employment, initial – A maximum of 86 hours (344 units) per month. Services may cover up to the first 90 days of SE services for initial job development, training and support.

Supported Employment, individual – A maximum of 43 hours (172 units) per month. Services may cover up to 90 days of SE services for intermediate development, training and support. This service is not intended to be authorized on an ongoing basis but may be approved for more than one authorization period if medically necessary.

Long-Term Vocational Support (individual or group)– A maximum of 10 hours (40 units) per month/480 units per year. Services may cover up to 12 months for the initial authorization period for LTVS. To continue, reauthorization should be based on the level of intensity required to maintain community employment.

IPS-SE Guidelines

Supported Employment, initial – No prior authorization is required for the first and initial 64 units (16 hours) of IPS-SE services for the initial engagement (motivational interviewing and assertive outreach) of the individual.

Supported Employment, individual – The individual must obtain prior authorization for services received after the initial 64 units (16 hours). Services may cover up to 12 months for the initial authorization period. To continue IPS-SE, reauthorizations should be based on the level of intensity required to acquire stable employment or interventions required for continued employment.

CONTINUED STAY CRITERIA

The individual continues to meet the eligibility criteria and meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. The individual has obtained employment and needs additional support to acquire or develop work-related skills.
2. The individual needs support or training to change jobs, increase hours or otherwise advance in his or her career.
3. The individual needs support in managing benefits such as Social Security, Ticket to Work, etc.
4. For IDD LTVS, the individual requires this service to maintain community employment.
5. The individual has made little progress in meeting employment goals, and there is documentation that supports that continuation of IPS-SE services will be effective in meeting employment goals identified in service plan.
6. The individual is making progress in meeting employment goals, but the interventions identified in the PCP or Employment Plan need to be modified to achieve competitive employment
7. The individual has obtained a job, it has been less than a year since starting employment and requires follow along supports as identified in the PCP or Employment Plan.

DISCHARGE CRITERIA

The criteria for discharge include one or more of the following:

- The individual can maintain employment without assistance.
- The individual has requested discharge or expresses a decision not to work.
- The individual no longer meets criteria for the service.
- The individual has not achieved treatment goals despite documented efforts.
- The individual has requested that IPS-SE be discontinued.
- The individual has moved outside of the LME/MCO catchment area.
- The individual has long-term medical issues and is unable to work.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A daily full service note or grid that meets the criteria specified in the DMH/DD/SAS Records Management and Documentation Manual (APSM 45-2) is required.

In addition, a Person-Centered Plan or Employment Plan is required. Refer to APSM 45-2 for a complete listing of other documentation requirements.

For IPS-SE if the individual receives an enhanced service concurrently with IPS-SE, a Person-Centered Plan and a detailed Employment Plan are required; otherwise, either a PCP or Employment Plan is required. Employment and other services received must be identified on the PCP and/or Employment Plan.

For IPS-SE a documented discharge plan shall be discussed with the individual and included in the service record. In addition, a completed LME-MCO Consumer Admission and Discharge Form shall be submitted to the LME-MCO.

SERVICE EXCLUSIONS

Total expenditures on **SE** cannot exceed the 1915(b)(3) resources available.

SE shall not be provided if the service is otherwise available under a program funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 94-142, or under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.). For individuals with SMI per the IPS model, an individual may be open with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) at the same time he or she is open with an **SE** provider. At no time should a provider bill both VR and the LME/MCO at the same time for the same person. Medicaid is always the payer of last resort.

For individuals who are eligible for educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA), **SE** does not include transportation to or from school settings. This includes transportation to and from the participant's home, provider home where the participant is receiving services before/after school or any community location where the participant may be receiving services before or after school.

Individuals on the Innovations Waiver are not eligible for **SE** (b)(3)-funded services.

SE shall not be provided

- during the same time/at the same place as any other direct support Medicaid service
- during the same authorization period as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- by relatives or other family members of the participant
- in licensed facilities (including, for example, day programs and residential treatment facilities). Specifically, **SE** shall not be provided to children ages 16 to 21 who reside in a Medicaid-funded group residential treatment facility.
- to individuals living in an institutional care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF-IID).

SE shall not include pre-vocational services of any kind.

SE shall not include supports and/or services to help individuals with volunteering.

Federal Financial Participation (FFP) is not to be claimed for incentive payments, subsidies or unrelated vocational training expenses such as the following:

1. Incentive payments made to an employer to encourage or subsidize the employer's participation in a supported employment program;
2. Payments that are passed through to users of supported employment programs; or
3. Payments for training that are not directly related to a beneficiary's supported employment program.

While it is not prohibited to both employ a beneficiary and provide services to that same beneficiary, the use of Medicaid funds to pay for **SE** to providers who are subsidizing their participation in providing this service is not allowed. The following are non-exclusive examples of situations indicative of a provider subsidizing its participation in **SE**:

- The job/position would not exist if the provider agency was not being paid to provide the service;
- The job/position would end if the beneficiary chose a different provider agency to provide the service;
- The hours of employment have a one-to-one correlation with the amount of hours the services are authorized.

Service delivery to individuals other than the recipient may be covered only when the activity is directed exclusively toward the benefit of that recipient (for example, assisting recipient with small business models)

Additional IPS-SE-Specific Service Exclusions

An individual may receive **IPS-SE** services from only one IPS-SE provider organization during any active authorization period for this service.

IPS-SE services shall not be provided in groups, facilities and/or congregate settings.

IPS-SE services do not include enclaves, group employment, work crews, or group employment searches and/or classes.