Using the Employment Support and Retention Plan to Request Authorization for Supported Employment or On-the-Job Supports

As an Indiana employment consultant or specialist, you use the Employment Support and Retention Plan (ESRP) to report your job seeker’s progress to Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The ESRP also has other purposes. In this document, we’ll go through the steps of using the ESRP to request authorization from VR for supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term hours.

“Supported employment” services are ongoing supports needed to help a supported employee with MSD (Most Significant Disabilities) maintain and retain employment. Hourly supported employment services begin after the fourth week of employment and end when your client has achieved stabilization.* Supported employment services can be in place for up to 24 months.

“On-the-job supports short-term” are supports needed to help a supported employee with an NSD (Non-Significant Disorder) or SD (Significant Disorder) maintain and retain employment. As with supports for clients with MSD, hourly services begin after the fourth week of employment.* Short-term job supports typically last for 3-6 months.

*Note that for both supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term there can be exceptions during the first four weeks of employment if support needs are extensive. Refer to pages 13-16 of the VR Manual for more information.

Remember that all authorizations for supported employment or short-term support hours must be requested using the ESRP. A phone call or email will not suffice.

First, so that you can refer to it as you read this quick reference guide, here’s a quick link to the ESRP form: Employment Support and Retention Plan Report. If you’re unfamiliar with how to complete the ESRP, be sure to watch the short videos embedded within the ESRP (just click on the links beside the little camera icons).

Where to State Your Request in the ESRP

1. Requesting Authorizations. When you are requesting supported employment or short-term supports, use the long box located near the middle of the Original Plan (Quarter 1) tab. (Find the tabs on the bottom of the ESRP form.) See the graphic, below.

   In this box, write in:

   “[Agency name] is requesting [number of hours] of [supported employment/short term job supports] each month.”

2. Specifying the Authorization Service Period. Make sure that you also note the dates for which you are requesting services. You’ll do that in the small Authorization Service Period box. Write in the dates of the quarter. For example, January – March 2017.
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The following screen shot of the ESRP, shows you where the Request for Authorizations and the Authorization Period boxes are on the form.

In short, complete the ESRP thoroughly when asking for hours for either Supported Employment or On-the-Job Supports Short Term. You will be repeating this process every three months.

At a glance, the process is:

- Describe
- Report out monthly
- Evaluate additional need
- Request hours
- Repeat every three months

Sample Request Language

This part of the guide includes suggestions for language to use when requesting supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term hours from Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation
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Services. Your knowledge of the job seeker will guide your wording. It is important that you describe, in detail, the specific supports required for each supported employee that you think will be necessary to achieve stabilization. The VRC should NOT be expected to approve requested support hours without understanding why they are needed.

“[Agency name] is requesting [number of hours] of [supported employment/short-term job supports] each month. [Job Seeker’s name] experiences significant impacts of disability and needs support in: [ES will need to provide a written description of the challenges and support required].

The list below is intended only to help you become more comfortable with identifying and describing tasks and behaviors that need supports. It should not be used as a one-size-fits-all reference. The numbers refer to the screen shot of the ESRP form that follows the list, so that you’ll know where to write in “task and behaviors” and “strategies and techniques” on the form.

3. Examples of tasks or behaviors that need support

Communication
- Expressing needs
- Asking to take a break
- Figuring out who, when, where, and how to ask for help
- Understanding the difference between “working” and “social” time
- “Fitting in” socially at work
- Navigating work tasks, from starting to ending point.
- Receiving instructions (verbal or written)
- Communicating with colleagues

Social aspects of work
- Maintaining workplace hygiene and appearance
- Meeting requirements for work dress code on a regular basis
- Clocking in and out
- Using break time in a socially acceptable way, for the prescribed amount of time
- Reading social cues
- Using coping strategies to manage difficult situations

Mobility
- Getting around the workplace safely
- Getting help from the right people, including during break time
- Using self-monitoring skills

Learning
- Integrating new learning into work habits.
- Developing decision making skills
- Using accommodations [specify] effectively and consistently
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- Meeting productivity requirements

Self-Direction
- Implementing sufficient coping strategies
- Maintaining attention to detail
- Maintaining appropriate social boundaries
- Staying on task
- Continuing to produce quality work
- Using natural supports for help

4. Examples of evidence-based strategies and techniques for providing support
- Developing natural supports
- Prompting (e.g. Natural, gestural, verbal, visual, model, physical)
- Task analysis
- Systematic instruction
- Reinforcement
- Visual Supports
- Data tracking
- Positive behavior support
- Modeling
- Feedback
- Practice
For example, if supported employee Andre is confused when asking his supervisor for time off, you might fill in the ESRP Plan of Service with:

**Date of Plan:**
Jan.-March 2017

**Tasks or Behaviors that Need Support:**
Andre does not understand the process for asking his supervisor for time off.

**Onsite or Offsite:**
Onsite

**Strategies and Techniques to Provide the Training and Support Needed:**
EC will provide task analysis and modeling and will practice filling out the appropriate time-off forms with Andre. EC and supervisor will provide appropriate reinforcement.

Keep in mind that supported employment service supports may occur on or off the job site. For instance, if a supported employee develops a crush on a co-worker and begins to follow her/him around or act inappropriately, it may be difficult to address the problem in the workplace. You may want to meet with the employee at a coffee shop or at their home, not only to work on strategies and supports but also to avoid embarrassment.