

Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist

Important recovery concepts become reality when the challenges of active employment are pursued and supported. It is critical to the mission of CVAB that we support the active pursuit of employment and recovery. Supported Employment is an approach to vocational rehabilitation that emphasizes supporting individuals to obtain and maintain competitive employment that is consistent with their vocational goals.

The Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist is a vital part of CVAB's Employment Services. Successful employees demonstrate abilities to assist individuals in recovery to achieve goals related to competitive and meaningful employment. The role will include providing participants assistance in obtaining and sustaining employment that is consistent with their vocational goals and recovery; collaborating services with community partners; job development; onsite job support; and ensuring the Val Ogden Center is providing ongoing support activities.

The Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will meet the following preferred qualifications:

General for all CVAB Employees:

- Have alignment with CVAB Values.
- 3-5 years' experience in social services.
- Ability to use a variety of computer programs and support participants in doing so.
 - A working knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite.
- Ability to provide assistance and maintain collaborative relationships with other government and social services agencies.
- Must be a positive, self-motivated individual who has demonstrated ability to work independently and well with others as a member of various teams.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to deal effectively with diversity of individuals at all organizational levels.
- Ability to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner as a team member CVAB staff, community partners, and program participants.
- Ability and experience working with people from diverse cultures.
- Ability to work in an ever-changing environment and as an effective team player is essential.
- Experience with and/or knowledge of local health and human services.
- Innovative, flexible, and willingness to work in constantly changing environment and priorities without losing enthusiasm for the organizational mission.
- Ability to work flexible hours including weekends (Saturdays).
- Strong written and verbal communication skills are required.
- Ability to meet time-sensitive deadlines and requirements with good judgment with the ability to make timely and sound decisions.
- Demonstrates attention to detail.

- Bilingual; must be able to speak, read, write and understand English.
- Have educational degrees or credentials needed to be employed in the capacity required by the specific program and duties.
- Lived experience of mental health and/or addictions recovery and knowledge of mental health or substance use disorders services—behavioral health services.
- Confidence in your own wellness.
- Includes a willingness to share your own experiences as appropriate.
- Passion and enthusiasm for peer support and the belief that recovery is possible.

Specific to Employment/Benefit Specialist:

- An understanding of supported employment services.
- Certified Benefits Planner or willing to become certified upon hire.
- A demonstrated ability of identifying individual’s interests, strengths, skills, abilities, and unique set of challenges and match them with long-term competitive employment opportunities.
- Working knowledge of systematic instruction/onsite job support (job coaching).
- Ability to identify and arrange long-term supports for individuals to keep jobs.
- Ability to advocate effectively for individuals with team members and employers.
- Working knowledge of regional range of occupations and jobs.
- General knowledge and experience in job development and marketing.
- A demonstrated ability of relating well with employers in the community.

Required for all CVAB Employees:

- Valid Washington Driver’s license, reliable transportation and appropriate insurance coverages.
- Appropriate criminal background check clearance.
- Eligibility to work in the United States is verified through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services’ E-Verify website
- No presence on the U.S. Department of Helth & Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG), List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE) at <https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>.

A. In the area of individual vocational assessment and supporting vocational goals, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Promote employment and education as a means to recovery.
2. Engage participants in establishing trusting, collaborative relationships directed toward the goal of employment in integrated job settings.
3. Help participants think about long-term vocational goals, work history, strengths, personal culture (as defined by each person), justice involvement, and other factors that relate to a current vocational goal. Complete career profile for each new participant with information from the participant, behavioral health practitioners,

and with permission, family members or past employers. Update profile with each new job and education experience.

4. Support participants in setting and achieving educational objectives in keeping with employment goals.
5. Assist participants with completing employment applications, preparing resumes, interviewing skills, and job preparation.
6. Support participants in job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are consistent with participants' needs and interest.
7. Participate as needed in face-to-face meetings with behavioral health treatment team at least once a week to coordinate services for participants. Develop an individual employment (and/or education) plan with participants. Incorporate input from behavioral health treatment team and family members, with permission.
8. Assist participants with assessing vocational abilities and performance on an ongoing basis.

B. In the area of Benefits Planning, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Coordinate the provision of SSDI/SSI benefit analysis for participants.
2. Assists participants in learning how their benefits will be affected by earned income. For example, provide participants with benefits planning to learn about work incentives offered by Social Security Administration.
3. After employment is achieved, assists with an individualized plan for reporting earnings to Social Security Administration or other sources of benefits.

C. In the area of community job development, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Conduct job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are individualized to the interests and uniqueness of the participants that he/she supports, following the principles and procedures of IPS Supported Employment.
2. Conduct a minimum of six employer contacts per week. Employer contacts are designed to learn about the needs of the business, describe supports offered by the program and describe participant strengths that are relevant to the position.
3. Conduct informational interviews, job analyses and job shadows of potential employment opportunities to determine if appropriate for participants.
4. Establish and maintain connections with individuals and businesses offering competitive employment opportunities.
5. Support participants in researching possible employment opportunities using available job search tools and methods.
6. Empower participants building their own networks that lead to employment opportunities.
7. Spend 50% or more of scheduled work hours in the community. For example, meet participants at community locations such as home, workplace, coffee shop, meeting with potential employers, library, One-Stop, family home, etc. or takes participants to apply for jobs, investigate local GED or colleges, etc.

8. Responsible after first year for maintaining at least 40% of participants engaged in competitive employment jobs.

D. In the area of providing active employment and educational supports, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Provide supported education, using principles similar to supported employment, for participants who express interest in education to advance their vocational goals.
2. Assess participants' vocational functioning on ongoing basis utilizing background information and work experiences. With the participant's permission, provides education and support to family members. Discuss participant's preference for disclosure of psychiatric status to employers.
3. Regularly "check-in" with each person regarding employment issues.
4. Provide individualized and follow along services to participants, employers and educators as necessary.
5. Assist participants when negotiating job or educational accommodations.
6. Empower participants as employees successfully living their recovery and wellness.
7. Provide outreach services as necessary to participants when they miss appointments. Use a variety of methods to discover what is interfering with the person's employment plan.

E. In the area of general supports, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Coordinate services with treatment teams and supports including public behavioral health agencies (e.g. CSNW) and other CVAB programs.
2. Stay "in-tune" with the needs of individuals.
3. Listen to needs (expressed verbally or through actions) and seek solutions.
4. Provide guidance on taking next steps in recovery, employment and community involvement.
5. Ensure that all employment and education information is kept up-to-date.
6. Encourage and support individual and organizational values.
7. Be an advocate.
8. Maintain an upbeat, welcoming, encouraging, hopeful, and friendly attitude towards all participants.
9. Maintain current documentation on program Participants.
10. Help develop and operate Employment Services in accordance with the organization Policies and Procedures.
11. Work directly with participants within the context of the program's philosophy standards to assist them in accessing community resources and mental health, medical and dental care as appropriate to his/her needs.

F. In the area of center management, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Assists in planning, scheduling and facilitating Employment Center services including Job Prep, Life Skills, groups, and classes.
2. Prepare and maintain Employment Center displays that are informative, functional and support a learning environment.
3. Provide training and support for volunteers of Administrative, Facility Maintenance and Food Services teams.
4. Provide orientation to the Employment Center, including an overview of available services, to community members.
5. Responsible for the front desk area, computer lab, group room, receiving & distributing mail/packages, restocking supplies, , assuring that confidential information is secured, filing and maintaining a professional and clean Employment Center.
6. Ensuring proper opening and closing procedures of the Employment Center.
7. Maintains individual safety and building security.

F. In the area of administration, the Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist will:

1. Help with preparation of reports.
2. Properly secure all materials.
3. Promptly perform all data entry required by Team Leader.
4. Interact with staff and participants in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and helpful in a way that supports the development of a strong team and a healthy working environment.
5. Manage time effectively and meet deadlines.
6. Know and work within the guidelines of the program Policies and Procedures.
7. Come prepared to meetings.
8. Perform daily duties as required.

In addition, you will be responsible for attending scheduled employment team meetings, keeping an accurate record of your time and any additionally assigned duties.

The Employment Consultant/Benefits Specialist reports to the Employment Services Team Leader.

The position is critical to our being a community of hope.