

COVID-19 Response - Interim Guidance for Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers - FAQ

OOD has waived the participant signature requirement for Intakes and Job Development plans. Could OOD also waive the requirement for the participant signature on the “Job Start” form? How should the participant approval/acknowledgment be documented?

Yes, OOD’s Director has now approved the waiving of participant signatures on the “Job Start” form. When participant signatures cannot physically be obtained in these circumstances, document on the form how the acknowledgment occurred e.g. “Jane Doe provided approval via e-mail on 3/23/2020.” An email acknowledgment best demonstrates an individual’s consent and should be attached to the form.

How can we best provide services to students whose participation in Project Search was interrupted or ended early?

OOD has issued direction to counselors that for Project SEARCH interns who are no longer able to report to the host business site. Counselors should continue to work with each student, guardian, and IEP team to discuss the student’s needs moving forward. As part of these discussions, staff may consider authorizing hourly JSST per recent OOD allowances, either as a standalone service or in combination with Performance-Based Job Development.

Will OOD waive the CESP requirement for staff offering Supported Employment Job Development (Tiers I & II) who had the experience to sit for the exam, but whose testing is being postponed by APSE?

While the CESP requirement for Supported Employment Job Development (Tiers I & II) remains a requirement of this service, provider staff do not need to have a CESP to provide the additional hourly JSST for individuals in Supported Employment Job Development. Staff who have not yet obtained their CESP can provide these additional hourly JSST services.

Can providers assist individuals they are working within filing for unemployment or pursuing other resources as a result of job loss during this time, such as through an On-the-job Supports authorization?

Yes. During this time, OOD is expanding the definition of On-the-job supports to allow providers to bill OOD for assisting individuals they are working with who have interrupted employment to apply for unemployment benefits. This can be authorized as up to 2 (two) hours of On-the-job supports and can include remote support, such as phone calls, Skype, FaceTime, GoToMeeting, and other screen-sharing programs to support an individual in completing an application. Please consult with the individual’s counselor/coordinator to request an authorization and referral.

With remote services being approved at this time, are in-person services still allowed? Can providers meet with participants in the community, offices, or homes?

Governor Mike DeWine's recent Stay at Home Order allows for Human Services Operations to continue to be conducted, including individuals leaving their homes to engage in services, and also includes Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and its service providers. However, service delivery methods must also consider the comfort level of the participant and provider. OOD understands providers need to make decisions based on the safety of their staff and participants and supports remote service delivery at this time.

OOD is not allowing for services to take place in participants' homes, within their personal vehicles, or in unsecured public spaces (e.g., picnic table at a park). Services which are traditionally authorized as part of an in-home service, such as Activities of Daily Living to assist an individual in improving their cooking skills, are an exception and will continue to be allowed to be provided as they have in the past.

How do we handle an interrupted job search or a Tier III payment that cannot be made due to an individual losing a job or being laid off?

Work directly with the counselor/coordinator and the individual to determine their needs at this time. This may vary from additional hourly JSST (up to 100 UOS per month), exploring new job goals, or continuing with their job search (which could result in an additional placement). If a participant is expected to return to work, the 90-day count toward Tier III will be suspended until the person returns to work e.g., if the person is at Day 78 of work and laid off but wants to keep the job once called back, they can do that. Once the person is called back, Tier III would pick up at Day 79 and complete the 90 days of stable employment.

Can Pre-ETS be provided remotely?

Yes, Pre-ETS services can be provided remotely, with provider staff working directly with students via phone, Skype, FaceTime, or other electronic communication methods.

Is OOD accepting new Pre-ETS applications?

Yes, OOD is accepting new Pre-ETS applications for those who have attended the required training. An alternative to the in-person Pre-ETS training is being explored.

SSA Offices are closed, and there are difficulties in obtaining BPQY's. Will OOD waive the requirement to verify benefits?

No, the BPQY is necessary to complete a work incentives plan, and OOD does not plan to waive the requirement of the BPQY. It is important to note that SSA will still provide a copy of the BPQY to the individual. Therefore, providers should work with participants to obtain their BPQY by either contacting the SSA Office or requesting it online so that the WIP/CWIC can complete the work incentives plan.

How can we support individuals who do not have technology in place (e.g., no Skype, etc.)?

Some individuals may not have a laptop or home internet connection. In these cases, consider if they can receive remote services through their phones or tablets, such as by utilizing FaceTime, free application versions of Skype, and other video services. In cases where an individual does not have home internet access or a cell phone, please consult with the counselor/coordinator to determine if technology can be supported through the IPE.

OOD will be providing additional guidance on the remote provision of services, including more information on available technologies for providers to consider in implementing remote service delivery.