

# Project HIRE

A CARF Accredited Program

## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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Words Underlined and **Bold** are defined in the “Project HIRE Operational Definitions” on page 15

# **The Arc of New Jersey**

## **Mission Statement**

The Arc of New Jersey is committed to enhancing the quality of life of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families through advocacy, empowerment, education, and prevention.

### **Our Vision:**

The Arc of New Jersey, on behalf of all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, will:

- Secure the opportunity for them to choose and realize their individual goals.
- Take a leadership position in developing public policy, laws and regulations and serve as a public spokesperson and advocate for this constituency.
- Reduce the incidents and limit the consequence of intellectual and developmental disabilities through advocacy, education, research, and prevention activities.
- Develop, foster, and operate programs, services and supports, and work with local chapters and The Arc of the United States to carry out our goals.

# Project HIRE Purpose

Project HIRE is dedicated to assisting individuals living with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining **Competitive Employment**.

## Program Description:

Project HIRE provides Supported Employment services funded by several sources. Project HIRE aims to assist participants in obtaining and maintaining **Competitive Employment** through:

- Job Development
- Community Based Assessments
- Job Coaching
- Job Sampling
- Follow-Along Services

# Program and Service Structure

Individuals who are referred to Project HIRE are assigned a Region Coordinator who will coordinate Supported Employment services provided by Project HIRE staff. The plan defines services intended to assist progressing towards employment goals. This plan needs to be agreed upon by the funding source. Development of the plan may include other people in addition to the Job Developer and participant. The participant may include parents and/or guardian, the referring agency, Job Coaching staff, employers and residential or other support staff.

Once a referral is received, the Region Coordinator or designee schedules and completes the initial intake. Shortly after this meeting, a Job Developer is assigned by the Region Coordinator and begins to assist participants in obtaining **Competitive Employment**. This process is referred to as **Job Development**. Job development can occur at any time and in any location the Job Developer is available to complete services. This includes, but is not limited to, libraries, businesses and provider offices. It is the Job Developer's goal to meet at an interval frequent enough to provide quality service and at least on a monthly basis. Appointments and service days are determined by the availability of the Job Developer and participant, and will vary with each case. The number of hours Job Developers work with participants is determined by the funding source.

Should the participant successfully obtain employment and Project HIRE has been approved by the funding source, **Job Coaching** services can begin. These services help to stabilize a participant in his or her new job. In this scenario, the case is transitioned to a Job Coach, as assigned by the Region Coordinator, to be the primary provider of services on the job.

Participants who are stable on the job and have approval from a funding source can receive **Follow Along** services. (*explained further on next page*)

# Follow Along Services

The primary funder of Supported Employment services in New Jersey is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services(DVRS). Unless deemed ineligible by DVRS, any individual with a medically documented barrier to employment seeking assistance with finding work (Pre-Placement Activities) or initial, time limited support at a new job (Intensive Activities) will first receive services from the appropriate DVRS office located within the county they reside.

Once an individual is considered to be stable at a new employment by DVRS, the individual may be eligible for DVRS funded Long Term Follow Along services. If deemed appropriate by DVRS, Job Coaching services may continue in a limited fashion determined by DVRS.

For individuals who are enrolled in the Division of Developmental Disabilities(DDD) program, DVRS remains the primary funder of assistance finding a job and/or initial intensive supports. It is important to note that individuals who are receiving DDD services are not eligible for Long Term Follow Along services funded through DVRS. However, once considered to be stable or no longer eligible for DVRS funding by DVRS, the Long Term Follow Along Services may be funded by the DDD budget.

If you, or your dependent is receiving DDD services, make sure to let your DVRS Counselor and assigned Project HIRE staff member know to help facilitate a smooth transition between the funding sources. If you have questions on this process, ask your assigned Project HIRE staff member and they will be able to connect you to someone who can guide you.

# Participant Rights

To be treated with dignity and respect

To be believed to have the ability to make your own decisions

To have protection from physical, verbal, psychological, sexual abuse or punishment

To obtain equal employment opportunities and fair payment for your work

To have records about you kept confidential unless you or your legal guardians choose to release

To request changes in staff assignment, pending staff availability

To participate in the decisions regarding how your services are rendered or have someone help you

To a fair hearing if, for any reason, my services are denied, reduced, suspended or terminated. Per grievance procedure listed on page 12

## Non-Discrimination Policy

The Arc of NJ/Project HIRE shall not exclude any individual from participating in services on the grounds of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, or disability. Each employee of the Arc of NJ/Project HIRE will ensure the organization is free of harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any kind.

## Referral Policy

Referrals made to Project HIRE are made by funding sources such as the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities or local school districts. Referrals may be subject to the funding sources order of selection. Project HIRE does not receive referrals directly from the Department of Corrections. Any information gained regarding criminal background and/or legal history will be held confidential and only released during the application process by the participant, if applicable. Project HIRE does not accept private pay.



# Criteria for Acceptance

The Arc of NJ/Project HIRE will observe and maintain standards for acceptance into its Competitive Employment program as follows:

- Individuals must be at least 18 years of age except in cases of students participating in a School to Work Program
- Individuals must be referred by approved funding sources (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services or Division of Developmental Disabilities)
- Individuals must have the desire to work in the competitive market with the goal of eventually working independently
- Individuals must not have current evidence of aggressive or violent behavior that would be harmful to themselves or others
- Individuals must maintain compliance with eligibility requirements from funding sources

The determination to accept referred individuals into the program is made by the Job Developer and Region Coordinator. When there is a question, the Program Director, or designee, will be notified for consultation and make the final decision. If a person is determined as ineligible for the program, the individual/guardian and the funding source will be notified of the reasons.

# Behavior Management Policy

It is the policy of Project HIRE that staff will use positive behavioral interventions to assist consumers in crisis. Situations requiring restrictive behavior modification techniques will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

In cases where an individual meets the “Criteria of Acceptance” for Project HIRE and are in need of restrictions on their individual rights, staff will access expertise available through DDD or through an appropriate training source, prior to implementation of the plan or service.

In an event where restrictive procedures are required, prior authorization and consent will be obtained from the participant and/or guardian. Prior to implementation, staff will receive proper training on the use of restrictive methods.

# **Employer Related Work Rules and Disciplinary Action**

When employed, participants report directly to the supervisor at each job site. The employer determines the work rules and regulations, call-out procedures, terms of employment, salary, benefits, and schedules. The employer is primarily responsible for providing staff training. The participant agrees to follow the policies and procedures established by the employer and is subject to the disciplinary action of that organization.

A review of company policy is given by the supervisor prior to the start of work. Project HIRE staff will assist the participant in reviewing and understanding the rules of the company and may accompany the participant to his/her scheduled employee orientation.

# Participant Responsibilities

In order to maximize the potential of the participant to obtain Competitive Employment, Project HIRE expects participants to take ownership and responsibility for his or her job search in the following areas. Failure to meet these responsibilities can result in discontinuation of services.

## **Hygiene and Professional Attire**

As a participant, you are required to manage your own personal hygiene and wear professional attire appropriate to the setting and/or type of work held or sought.

## **Reasonable Notice When Cancelling Appointments**

It is a requirement of Project HIRE participants to notify staff when they are unable to attend scheduled appointments at least two hours before the scheduled meeting.

## **Calling Out of Work**

During the Intensive phase of Project HIRE services, the participant is responsible for notifying Project HIRE staff if he or she will not be reporting to work on a previously scheduled day. The participant is also responsible for notifying his or her employer of absences according to the employer call-out policy.

## **Responding to Staff Inquiry**

Interaction with Project HIRE staff is a requirement of Supported Employment and it is expected that participants will return calls or other correspondence in a timely manner.

## **Notifying Staff Regarding Changes to Contact Information**

Should there be any changes to telephone number, home address or email addresses, it is the participant's responsibility to forward these changes to Project HIRE staff.

## **Maintaining Eligibility for Services as Defined by the Funder**

Participants must remain eligible for the funding that enables Project HIRE services. If participants become ineligible to receive funding, then Project HIRE services will cease.

# **Project HIRE Staff Responsibilities:**

## **Returning Correspondence in a Reasonable Time Frame**

Due to the nature of the work of Project HIRE, it can be difficult to return correspondence immediately after it is received. Project HIRE staff are committed to returning correspondence within two business days of receipt.

## **Project HIRE Will Treat All Participants with Dignity and Respect**

Staff will interact with participants, families and employers in a professional manner.

## **Respect Privacy and Follow HIPAA Guidelines**

Project HIRE staff will not discuss or disclose any confidential information without the signed consent of the guardian or individual served. All staff will adhere to HIPAA guidelines

## **Away Messages for Extended Absences**

Should a Project HIRE staff member be out of the office for an extended period of time, they will engage an out of office response that gives instructions on how to reach the immediate supervisor in cases requiring immediate attention.

# Services Not Provided

Project HIRE does not provide non-employment related services. For non-employment related services, Project HIRE staff will refer the participant to funding source staff.

## **Medication**

Project HIRE staff does not prescribe, dispense, administer or physically control any medication for persons served. It is the sole responsibility of the participant to monitor and administer his or her own medications.

## **Ambulation and Personal Care**

Project HIRE staff do not provide any personal care assistance. Project HIRE staff are not certified to complete duties traditionally performed by a personal aide including, but not limited to ambulation, safety monitoring, bathroom assistance and entering or exiting transportation.

## **Transportation**

Project HIRE is not responsible for transportation to and from employment-related activities. Unless Project HIRE has specific written authorization from the funder to provide transportation to employment and career development related locations, it is the responsibility of parties served to seek and employ acceptable transportation for work and career related travel. However, Project HIRE is available to provide **Travel Training** using available transportation.

## **Legal Advice**

Project HIRE staff members do not provide legal advice to participants, families or employers or pursue legal actions against employers on behalf of the participant. If you or your dependent feel appropriate, it is the responsibility of the participant and/or his/her guardian to obtain appropriate legal representation from a qualified legal professional.

# **Exit or Discharge from the Program**

Discharge from program services may occur when any of several conditions occur. In each case, the discharge will be accompanied by a completed Discharge Form. If no further supported employment services are needed from any program, an explanation to that effect will be recorded. Services may be terminated for any of the following reasons.

1. At the request of the participant, if the program no longer meets his/her needs
2. At the request of the participant, based upon job success.
3. When the funding source determines that participation is terminated.
4. When the participant relocates out of the program's service area.
5. When the participant or family/guardian determine that competitive employment is not an appropriate vocational direction.
6. When a participant no longer meets the criteria for acceptance.

## **Program Re-Entry:**

Any individual receiving services paid for by the Division of Developmental Disabilities who has been discharged from the program can request re-entry into Project HIRE services from DDD within 90 days from the discharge.

# Grievance Procedure

A grievance is a formal procedure initiated by a participant that claims an arbitrary and/or unfair application of the program's rules, regulations or policies may have been made. Every participant or their legal guardian has the right to have his or her grievance considered without retaliation or obstruction of services. If a participant (or representative of a participant) would like to question or protest a matter with Project HIRE, he or she can file a formal grievance, provided that no resolution is reached through informal, verbal discussion with the Job Developer or Region Coordinator.

## Steps:

1. A participant shall submit a written grievance within five days of the incident to his/her Job Developer. A written response must be made to the participant within five working days. (Individuals not able to write the grievance can be assisted by their Job Coach).
2. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, or the response is unacceptable, the participant may submit a written grievance to the Assistant Executive Director (AED) of The Arc of New Jersey within five working days. The AED shall render a written decision within five working days.
3. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 2, a written grievance may be submitted to the Executive Director (ED) of The Arc of New Jersey. The ED shall then render a decision within five working days, and this decision will be given in writing to the participant.
4. If the decision of the Executive Director is unacceptable, the participant will be assisted in contacting advocates outside the agency for further appeal.



# Participant Feedback and Inquiry

Project HIRE welcomes and encourages feedback about our services, as well as questions participants may have about their individualized plans.

A number of methods are available to voice opinions or concerns, including direct verbal or written communication to Job Developers, staff referral sources, or administrative personnel.

Additionally, the program routinely conducts surveys and sends out questionnaires to participants, families, and referral sources, all designed to help the project best serve its consumers.

Aside from typical scheduling of appointments and regular services handled by the primary assigned staff member, the Region Coordinator is the overseer of the participant service plans in his/her designated region. The Region Coordinator can resolve most issues and advise you of who to contact if questions or concerns need to be brought to a higher level manager.

Project HIRE values the input of participants in our program. We invite you to fill out a Satisfaction Survey by scanning the QR code or visiting the following link. Thank you for your input!

<https://forms.gle/BYuK4aao2WnRCz5g9>



# Project HIRE Operational Definitions

## **Supported Employment**

Individualized services that may include, but are not limited to training and systematic instruction, job coaching, benefit support, travel training, and other workplace support services, including services not specifically related to job-skill training that enable the participant to be successful in integrating into the job setting.

## **Competitive Employment**

This means placement of a participant in an individual employment situation according to the person's interest, vocational skills, and ability. Working hours for participants in an individual placement will vary according to the needs and requirements of the employer. Individuals will be placed in jobs that pay a commensurate wage or better, paid directly to the participant by the employer, and offer the participant an integrated work environment.

## **Job Coaching**

This service is offered initially to assist the employee in training for the specific skills of the job. During the coaching phase, other supports are also given, such as travel training, social skills, confidence building, identifying natural supports, etc., all designed to help make the transition into the job a successful one. The eventual goal is to fade away from job coaching to enable the participant to perform all aspects of the job independently and up to the standards of the employer.

## **Follow-Along**

These visits are provided by the job coach at a minimum of one visit to the job site per month to continue ongoing training and performance improvement.

## **Community Based Vocational Assessments**

These assessments are designed to determine an individual's current level of vocational performance, interest, training needs, and appropriate support. These assessments utilize community based work sites where information is gathered from job sampling and/or shadowing in actual work at the site. Input from questionnaires and family may also serve as additional data to be used in the assessment process.

# Operational Definitions (Continued)

## **Job Sampling**

This gives participants the opportunity to try work in different career areas. Through Job Sampling, participants and Project HIRE staff identify specific job tasks in which the participant has an interest and aptitude.

## **Job Development**

This occurs when participants are seeking employment. Project HIRE staff use many different strategies to find employment opportunities. These include, but are not limited to, internet sources, community job boards, development on behalf of the client and exploration of existing networks with employers and family. Job development can also occur when Project HIRE staff work with the participant to develop their employment seeking skills. These include, but are not limited to, resume/cover letter creation, interview preparation, online application assistance and proper follow up coaching.

## **Travel Training**

This service is available to participants who need assistance using public transportation to get to employment related activities. While Project HIRE does not supply transportation to participants, staff is able to accompany and train participants in the use of public transit, so long as the intended outcome is independence using public transportation in the future.

## **Time-Limited Placements**

These are available in certain cases where follow-along services are not funded by traditional methods due to ineligibility.

# Project HIRE Service Areas

## Main Office

The Arc of New Jersey  
985 Livingston Ave  
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