# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

**A. Description**

Supported employment services are services provided only to the most significantly disabled individual (MSD) who requires on-going support and [extended services](#Extended_Services) to achieve [competitive integrated employment](#Competitive_Integrated_Employment). Supported employment is for those individuals for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a most significant disability; and because of the nature and scope of the disability requires supported employment and extended services in order to perform work in a competitive integrated environment.

Supported employment may include progressive employment or a [customized employment](#Customized_Employment) opportunity. Supported employment services are provided for up to 24 months, at which time a review determines if an extension of time is necessary.

**B. Scope of Services**

Supported employment includes assistance with finding a job, job seeking skills training, job keeping skills training, and training on the job simultaneously. Development of the [IPE](#IPE) for supported employment requires not only the identification of the extended services to be provided, but also development of the [plan for natural supports](#Developing_Plan_Natural_Supports). The following are critical components required in supported employment services:

1. **Frequency of contact:** Is one time per month which may be done with the team. Once every three months is required with the job candidate.
2. **Provisions for Students:** Supported employment services may last up to 24 months and may be provided as early as is necessary for the student to achieve stability on the job by the time of graduation as long as the long-term supports can be assured by the graduation date. Staff should make arrangements with the [LEA](#LEA) to provide the job coaching and also work to arrange for the long term supports. IVRS considers job coaching to be an instructional service and as such is the responsibility of the LEA until, and at which time, the student qualifies for the long term support from the county/Medicaid waiver. A student may be stabilized on the job prior to graduation, at which time the long-term supports are then provided thereby allowing the case to be considered stabilized and then closed 90 days after graduation.
3. **Ongoing Support Services:** Means services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with the most significant disabilities in supported employment. These services must be specified in the IPE and arranged or furnished by IVRS from the time of job placement until movement to extended services. The ongoing support services must consist of: any assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs; the provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skills training at the work site; job development and social skills training; regular observation or supervision of the individual; follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, individuals, parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; facilitation of natural supports at the worksite; and any other service or similar service to the services described. These services are:
	* + 1. Needed to support and maintain an individual with the most significant disabilities in employment;
			2. Based on an assessment by the state of the individual’s needs as specified in an IPE; and
			3. Provided for a period not to exceed 24 months, unless a longer period to establish job stabilization has been established in an IPE, before transition is made to extended services provided under a cooperative agreement between IVRS and other appropriate state agencies and private non-profit organizations to ensure collaboration in a plan to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
4. **Extended services:** Means job coaching after stabilization (Status 22-0) and follow-along services that are required after 90 days of stabilized employment. IVRS staff must obtain a commitment from the funding source to provide, at a minimum, twice-monthly monitoring of these services at the work site to assess employment stability. If it is determined in the IPE that off-site monitoring is most appropriate, then it must, at a minimum, consist of two meetings with the individual and one contact with the employer each month. The IVRS counselor must assure that the plan of natural supports is implemented. For job candidates who are youth in transition, [SES for Students and Youth with Disabilities](#SES_for_Students_Youth).
5. **Developing a Plan for Natural Supports:** Before a plan for supported employment can be initiated at a work site, a plan for natural supports must be developed. Developing a plan must be well documented in which the following items are addressed:
	* + 1. Identification of the [natural support](#Natural_Support) and backup natural support should one of the supports be absent or resign;
			2. Training of the natural supports that includes:
				1. Disability awareness for the natural supports, and best practice would include the entire work unit;
				2. Training strategies and techniques, taught to the natural support, that facilitates the learning and skill acquisition of the person with a disability;
				3. Communication strategies and person-first language that foster teaming and a welcoming environment;
				4. Communication and business culture specifics that aligns the work and chain of command protocols between the person with a disability and the employer;
				5. Work station design that facilitates co-worker relationship development;
				6. Reasonable accommodations and [assistive technology](#Assistive_Technology) that enhances the skill development without disrupting the workflow.
6. **Requirements for Transitioning to Extended Services:** Means [extended services](#Extended_Services) provided by a state agency, [natural support](#Natural_Support), a private non-profit or any other appropriate resource.
	1. The funding source for this service is any organization other than IVRS that makes the commitment. The financial support for the extended services is paid from funds other than those received from the state and federal VR program.
	2. **Supported Employment Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities:** The MoAs developed with the Department of Education and [DHS](#DHS) outline the obligations of all three state agencies as it pertains to students and youth in need of supported employment services. Youth who are still in high school would receive job coaching services through the [LEA](#LEA) according to the MoA with the Department of Education. In rare and unusual circumstances, a youth who requires extended services after achievement of a supported employment goal in a competitive integrated environment may require IVRS to fund those services when they are on the waiting list for the waiver. After the student/youth graduates from high school, if the job is stable and consistent with the IPE and the student/youth is on the waiver waiting list, IVRS can fund the extended services on a time-limited basis. Said services are provided at a rate of up to two hours (8 units) per month and are only provided when the natural supports plan has been implemented and supervisory approval is obtained. In no circumstance may extended services be funded when the job candidate is age 25 and older.

After six months, the case must be reviewed and evaluated to determine if continued funding is necessary and supervisory approval is obtained each time it is evaluated. This process continues every six months until one of the following conditions is met:

1. The service is no longer needed;
2. Another funding source is identified;
3. The service has been funded for four years; or
4. The youth’s 25th birthday.

The IVRS case record may not be closed successfully, even if the employment stabilized, until the extended supports have transitioned to the Medicaid waiver or other public/private funding. A plan of natural supports should be implemented simultaneously with the extended services.

For youth who are age 24 and younger, and for whom waiver funding had not yet been sought at the time the plan for supported employment was first developed, IVRS staff will discuss the options of extended services funding:

* + - 1. Private pay
			2. Waiver funding
			3. PASS plan
			4. IRWE
			5. County Funding
			6. Other

IVRS staff will provide the necessary information and referral to the youth and his/her representative so they apply for waiver funding, if they decide they do not want the other options for extended services. Assisting the youth to complete the application process is critical in these situations so that by the time the program of supported employment stabilizes, he/she will have the waiver available. This discussion should occur no later than the sophomore year of high school when it is clear that supported employment is a necessary service and written into the IPE.

If the [youth with a disability](#Youth_With_Disability) is on the waiting list for waiver funding for supported employment, IVRS may fund extended supports on a time-limited basis with supervisory approval. In these cases IVRS staff may fund a maximum of three units per month, for a period of six months.

**C**.[**Integrated Work Setting**](#Integrated_Work_Setting)

**Supported Employment Plan Requirements:** An IPE for an [individual with a most significant disability](#Individual_With_MSD) for whom a competitive [employment outcome](#Employment_Outcome) is needed must:

1. Specify the supported employment services to be provided by IVRS;
2. Specify the expected [extended services](#Extended_Services) needed, which includes [natural supports](#Natural_Support);
3. Identify the source of extended services or, to the extent that is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the IPE is developed a plan for natural supports and a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those services will become available;
4. Provide for periodic monitoring to ensure that the job candidate is making satisfactory progress and the criteria for satisfactory progress, as it pertains to the weekly work requirements, will be achieved by the time of transition to extended services;
5. Provide for the coordination of services with other federal and state programs;
6. Identify the training that will be provided on the work site;
7. Include placement in a competitive integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on informed choice; and
8. The need for post-employment services;
	1. Identify the expected need for post-employment services prior to closing the record of services for job candidates who achieve stabilized competitive employment;
	2. Description of the terms and conditions for the provision of post-employment services; and
	3. Description of how post-employment services will be arranged with other entities.

**D. Exceptions**

1. Providing extended supports while the job candidate is on a waiting list for waiver services.
2. Paying for extended supports.
3. Paying for more than 8 units per month of extended supports.
4. Exceeding the short duration of IVRS funding for extended services (6 months).
5. No exception may be allowed to exceed the age limit, as the age limit is statutory.
6. Exceeding the limits established in the [Menu of Services](http://www.ivrs.iowa.gov/partners/CRPpage.html) or using a non-approved facility.
7. Using an individual who is not employed by a CRP or does not hold the Employment Specialist Certificate but has the education and training on how to teach and instruct.