**BRS Quality Indicators for CRPs**

*Upon successful CRP approval, the following quality indicators are standard to ensure a high level of employment services. In order to maintain ongoing CRP accreditation,*

*CRPs will need to show evidence of these quality indicators during the initial site review as well as continuing compliance.*

1. **Staff Requirements:**

**Minimum requirements** for staff providing Employment Services (certified employment specialist) or certified job coach (if grandfathered) include a **H.S. Diploma or a GED and at least one year (FTE) of work experience.** At least one year of experience working with a person with a disability is preferred.

All direct service staff will have criminal **background checks completed**. Criminal convictions within the past five years may disqualify the staff person as a provider of employment services.

All direct service employees that transport clients (even if it is on an occasional basis) will have a **valid Maine driver’s license and current auto insurance**.

Staff will have **adequate training** to meet qualification standards. All staff providing employment services must complete at a minimum some formal training to be certified as an Employment Specialist. Approved trainings can be found at [www.employmentforme.wds.org](http://www.employmentforme.wds.org).

Any staff person not meeting this standard must complete this training requirement within six months of the agency’s approved accreditation status. New staff must meet this training requirement within six months of their date of hire; and must be supervised by a fully trained staff person until the training is successfully completed.

All staff will be supervised by a “Fully Qualified Employment Specialist”\* until completion of required training. A minimum of 5 hours per month of face-to-face supervision is required, and must be documented, dated and signed by the Supervisor (Employment Specialist) and the trainee, and maintained in the trainee’s personnel file. Newly hired staff must complete training within six months of date of hire.

\* Minimum requirements to be a Fully Qualified Employment Specialist are:

 A. Employment Specialist Certification (through documented completion of an approved training program)

 B. Two years (FTE) of directly related work experience as a Certified Employment Specialist.

**Specialty Services/Additional Staff Requirements:**

**Certified Employment Specialist as Business Coach**

Certified Employment Specialists who are interested and have a minimum of 3 years of experience in the employment services field can qualify to work with our business partners at the business site. Their on-site role has the employer/business as the primary customer. The Employment Specialist is loaned to a business for a defined time period\* to coordinate the start-up or expansion of the business’s strategies to integrate people with disabilities in the workforce. The Employment Specialist observes operations and consults with the business to understand their culture, core values, workforce needs and hiring practices in order to connect the business with both qualified job applicants with disabilities and resources to maximize successful employment outcomes. The role will vary depending on the needs of the business partner, and may, at times be limited to job and cultural analysis as well as on-site coaching.

In order to qualify as a Business Coach, the Employment Specialist must:

* Be a Certified Employment Specialist
* Have a minimum 3 years of experience in the field (FTE) as a Certified Employment Specialist
* Complete the BRS training for “ES as Business Coach”

CES Supporting Job Seekers who are Culturally Deaf must meet these additional requirements:

1. The Employment Specialist (Job developer/coach) is required to meet a defined standard of ASL proficiency via an assessment established by the Maine Division of Deaf/HH/LD.
2. The Employment Specialist is required to meet a defined level of Deaf culture awareness/ knowledge via an assessment established by the Maine Division of Deaf/HH/LD.
3. The Employment Specialist and his/her supervisor are required to  participate in a one-time, no-cost, employment training session through the Division of Deaf/HH/LD, targeting skill sets related to serving culturally Deaf individuals.
4. The Employment Specialist and supervisor are required to have knowledge of, and be accessible via the use of videophones and other communication devices (ie:  CART, TEP, Ipad, Ipod, with capabilities of video software, texting, etc.).
5. The Employment Specialist and supervisor are required to keep up with the current technology in order to support clients and employers with whom they are working.
6. The Employment Specialist and supervisor would each participate in 18 hours of on-going employment- related training within a period of every three years, as is currently required through our in –state accreditation process; 6 of those 18 training hours would be required to be related to Deaf culture topics and employment.

**Ongoing Training Requirement:** Effective July 1, 2011, all certified Employment Specialists are required to complete at least 18 hours of related training every three years in order to remain eligible to provide employment services. Courses do not need prior approval, but must be reasonably related to the field of employment services. For each training completed towards this requirement, a copy of the agenda and a certificate of completion must be maintained in the personnel file of the certified employment specialist.

NOTE: Employment Services provided by any person not meeting the training requirements above are not eligible for reimbursement by the Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. If payment has already been made, CRP will be required to reimburse BRS on a dollar for dollar basis.

A Personnel Record will be maintained for each employee to include at a minimum:

* A current job description identifying essential functions and clear performance expectations and evidence this has been communicated to the employee
* Annual performance reviews
* Annual employee development plan/goals
* Documentation of supervision (for ES who have not completed training)
* Evidence of minimum entrance requirements, training and educational programs completed
* Current SOM drivers’ license
* Current auto insurance
* Current professional insurance ($400,000 minimum)
* Acknowledgement regarding understanding of rights of recipients/clients’ rights
* Acknowledgement of confidentiality policy

 **II. Integrated Employment/Service Settings**

Services are provided in an ***employment setting with the highest level of integration possible***. The level of integration should be evaluated on an individual basis, reflecting the following environmental and employment factors:

* + CRP owned/operated businesses are subject to the same integration standards as other businesses (see below). Staff providing employment services at the worksite are not considered non-disabled employees in determining the level of integration. Employees with disabilities should constitute no more than 50% of the business’ workforce at any given worksite or location.
	+ Job coaching services in CRP owned/operated businesses must be provided by a CRP other than the CRP operating the business. On a case by case basis exceptions will be allowed for large entities with a clear separation between business operations and employment services; and in areas of the state where other CRP services are not available.
* The job is one that is available to the general public. Note: Customized Employment (job carving, job creation, negotiating job descriptions) as needed and home-based employment are acceptable outcomes when consistent with client choice.
	+ The individuals with disabilities work under similar work conditions as others without disabilities in similar positions including access to lunch rooms, breaks, restrooms, performance and attendance expectations; and they are provided benefits and paid a wage commensurate (**at least minimum wage**) with other employees in similar jobs or occupations.
	+ The individuals with disabilities perform their work duties with ongoing interaction with other workers without disabilities, supervision and contact with customers, suppliers and general public to the same degree as workers without disabilities in the same or comparable occupations.
	+ The individuals with disabilities are part of the fabric of the company, organization or individual acting as the employer, including invitation and participation with company-wide events such as holiday parties, outings and social activities.
	+ Individuals are on the employer’s payroll. However, it is customary that wages be paid through the community provider agency for trial work or situational assessments.
	+ The employer provides primary supervision for the worker with a disability in a manner identical to other employees. It is permissible for a support agency or CRP to provide job coaching as needed, but responsibility for supervision remains with the employer.
	+ Job coaching must be provided in accordance with a written long term support plan with benchmarks and timelines for transitioning to natural supports at the worksite.
1. **Consumer Choice and Participation**
* Services must be ***individualized***, reflect the client’s ***informed choices and personal strengths,*** and be consistent with the ***Individualized Plan.***
* CRP actively engages job seeker in planning and delivery of services (does not do for the job seeker what he/she is capable of doing him/herself – fosters independence)

1. **Business Relations**
* CRP uses multiple, creative approaches to identifying potential job sites
* Developing and maintaining a comprehensive employer resource base
* CRP is responsive to employers’ needs – supports the employer but does not “take over” supervision (i.e., respectful of employer’s time, readily available to employer as needed, etc.)
* Understands and honors the employer’s Human Resource policies and procedures
* Refers well qualified candidates/good job matches
* Shares knowledge of resources, training, best practices, etc. with employer and other employees
* Engages businesses even when they are not hiring
* Maintains regular contact/communication with each employer

1. **Other/Program Operations**
* **Employment sites are assessed** as to their appropriateness for the job seeker with regard to: adequacy of supervision, safety, specific work-site requirements, potential job accommodations, accessibility, and expectations for quality and quantity of work, job/task/work culture analyses, potential employment opportunity, and other considerations identified as appropriate to the individual.
* CRP obtains **adequate information** from VRC at point of referral and **integrates** that information into the individual’s service plan
* **Files/plans** are kept **current** and are periodically reviewed internally by CRP
* **Ongoing input and approval** are obtained (and documented) from client and VR Counselor or other funding source
* **Job site analysis** including barrier modification when appropriate is completed and documented using the standard BRS job analysis/CBSA form.
* There is evidence that CRP develops/facilitates **natural supports**
* CRP has established procedures for a documented internal records review process
* There is evidence that **Job site training activities** utilized by the CRP include at a minimum orientation to job culture and environment, orientation to job duties and responsibilities, work site modifications, assistance in developing strategies for resolving workplace issues, facilitating workplace inclusion and integration, assistance with transportation planning and implementation.
* There is evidence that **Job Support Activities** utilized by CRP include at a minimum: Developing a clear understanding of job requirements and functions; Maintaining a positive working relationship with employee; Maintaining a positive working relationship with employer; Providing assistance to employer when appropriate and Implementation of a timely plan to fade support

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Certified Employment Specialist** is a professional who has completed required training, hence is qualified to provide an array of community based employment services. Specific services may vary depending on funding sources and regulations. Services for the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services include: Trial Work, Situational Assessment, Job Development & Placement, Job Coaching, and Long Term Supports (limited).

**Certified Job Coach** is a professional who has completed required training, hence is qualified to provide job supports to employees placed in community jobs. Specific job coaching activities may vary depending on funding source and regulations. Job Coach activities supported by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services are those necessary to train and integrate the new employee to meet job site expectations; and help the employee sustain employment. Effective July 1, 2011, there is no longer a training option for job coach. All staff must be trained to a minimum level of certified Employment Specialist. Job Coaches completing required training prior to July 1, 2011 are grandfathered to provide job coach activities/services.

**Community Based Situational Assessment (CBSA):** A CBSA is utilized to assess a client’s skills, abilities, strengths, barriers, and need for long term support in a competitive work environment.

In a CBSA, the Employment Specialist would determine what, if any additional support might be needed for the client to be successful. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) may be reasonably certain a client can do well in a specific job but may be unsure of what services might be necessary to best insure the client’s success over time.  It is often necessary to evaluate the client’s abilities to meet those demands by observing them in the actual work environment.

NOTE: A CBSA also provides the employer an opportunity to see a client “in action”.

A job offer may be an outcome of the CBSA, in which case, the information gathered during the CBSA will be utilized to create the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

**Trial Work Evaluation (TWE) :** A TWE is conducted with the goal of helping the VRC determine eligibility for an individual whose ability to benefit from VR services is uncertain.  The document used for this is the Trial Work Experience/ Extended Evaluation form.  This assessment will provide information about the individual’s skills, abilities, strengths, barriers and/or need for Long Term Support (LTS) in an employment setting.  If the individual is not found to be work-ready, the VRC will refer the individual to other services that may help them to be able to benefit from VR services in the future.  NOTE: The expectation of the TWE is to use the information provided by the assessment to help determine eligibility for VR services and plan for future VR services.

**CRP, or Community Rehabilitation Provider** is an individual or organization who has been deemed by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services as qualified to provide community-based employment services for VR clients. These services include Situational Assessment, Trial Work Experience, Job Development/Placement, Job Coaching and Long Term Supports. Services must be provided by a certified Employment Specialist or a certified Job Coach.

**Customized Employment** is a process for individualizing the employment relationship between a job seeker or an employee and an employer in ways that meet the needs of both. This is generally accomplished through Job Carving (creating a job description that contains one or more, but not all, tasks from the original job description); or negotiating an individualized job description by selecting tasks from all tasks performed in a work setting); or by creating a new job description based on the employer’s unmet needs in the workplace).