**Background:** The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) procure employment services for their clients from approved Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) as part of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that result in community-based employment, at wages of minimum wage or higher. Since 2014, CRPs have been reimbursed for their services based upon an outcome based model called the Milestone Payment System or informally known as Milestones (MS). An examination of three years of data, which included an analysis of client outcomes and financial expenditures, has demonstrated that the Milestone Payment System did not meet the objectives or expectations of the program as initially projected. A Steering Committee comprised of CRPs, DVR staff members and others, was organized to evaluate and recommend changes to the payment system. Based on the recommendations provided by the committee, the CRP payment process changed from the Milestone Payment System to a system based on an hourly rate plus bonuses as of October 1, 2016.

*This CRP Payment System Description (specifically the table below and service definitions) has been updated and expanded in an effort to provide more clarity. These revisions are based on recommendations from CRPs and BRS staff over the first few months of the new CRP payment system roll out.*

**The CRP Payment System And Potential Additional Fees Are As Follows:**

| Services | Fees |
| --- | --- |
| Job Placement Assistance   * Job Development \* | $45/hour |
| Job Search Assistance   * Job Seeking Skills Instruction | $45/hour |
| * Labor Market Survey | $45/hour |
| * Job Analysis | $45/hour |
| Job Readiness Training   * Job Skills Training | $45/hour |
| Customized Employment | $45/hour |
| Assessment   * Discovering Personal Genius/Career Planning * Community Based Situational Assessment/ Assessment to Hire * Wages for Situational Assessment | $45/hour  $40/hour  Varies by CRP/location |
| Pre-Employment Transition Services   * Pre-ETS- Job Exploration Counseling | $45/hour |
| * Pre-ETS-Work Based Learning Experiences | $45/hour |
| * Pre-ETS-Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities | $45/hour |
| * Pre-ETS-Workplace Readiness Training | $45/hour |
| * Pre-ETS-Instruction in Self Advocacy | $45/hour |
| On-the-Job Supports- Short term \*   * Job Coaching - Short-term | $40/hour |
| On-the-Job Supports- Supported Employment   * Job Coaching – Supported Employment | $40/hour |
| Report Writing (¼ hour increments, not to exceed 1 hour per report) | $40/hour |
| Remote Area Travel\*\* | $40/hour |
| Job Coaching for Population Specific Certification/Competency \*\*\* | $45/hour |
| Job Development for Population Specific Certification/Competency \*\*\* | $50/hour |
| Bonus | Paid at Successful Closure |
| Employed 0-90 Days from Referral Date for Job Development or Customized Employment | $750 |
| Employed 91-180 Days from Referral Date for Job Development or Customized Employment | $500 |
|  | Paid When Substantiated |
| SSI/SSDI Recipients at SGA Earnings Level | $1000 |

\*Including JD or JC for CBSA or Assessment to Hire

\*\*As part of CRP contract, select agencies will be provided additional funding to travel to remote areas.

\*\*\* As part of CRP contract, select agencies will be provided additional funding to deliver planned services to specific populations pre-approved by central office (i.e. ASL and foreign languages)

**CRP Reporting and Payment Processing**

Utilizing the existing Authorization process, DVR will provide prior authorization of the individualized services to be provided by the CRP. Once the authorized service has been completed, the CRP will request payment by returning the Authorization for Payment with supporting documentation, utilizing the report formats that are available on the DVR web site: <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/crp/crp_forms/index.shtml>

**Pre-Authorization**

All services provided to clients of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) must be pre-authorized by the client’s Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. This requirement is defined in the CRP contract.

Inherent in the VR case flow process is the overlap between the issuing of an Authorization for Payment and providing services to clients of DVR and DBVI. This overlap is especially apparent when job coaching or other similar services are provided on a continuing basis, month to month. The requirement for pre-approval of Authorizations in cases such as this, can disrupt the flow of services provided since the CRP is required to submit an Authorization for Payment with the corresponding report and wait until the VRC and Support Staff review, process payment for the preceding month and concurrently issue the next month’s authorization. Following this process interrupts the natural flow and progression of the employment process developed by the CRP and VRC.

While it is important that the case flow process continues uninterrupted, it is equally crucial that on-going client services, such as job coaching, not proceed longer than a one month period of time without an Authorization for Payment being issued by the VRC and Support Staff. For instance, an Authorization for Payment is issued in the month of May for Job Coaching; at the end of May the report and Authorization for Payment is submitted and the Job Coach continues to provide Job Coaching uninterrupted during the month of June. At the end of June, the report is ready to submit but you have not received the Authorization for Payment. Job Coaching may not continue into the month of July. Job Coaching services must be discontinued until the proper Authorizations have been received from the local BRS office.

Should the CRP continue to provide services beyond a one month period of time without pre-authorization and the corresponding Authorization for Payment (as noted in the example above), the CRP will not be reimbursed for the services provided for that month and any following month.

Communication between the VRC and CRP is critical to maintain the case flow process.

Please note: Exceptions to the pre-authorization process are not allowed. Authorization for Payment must be received prior to beginning to provide services.

**Reimbursement for Services Rendered**

As noted below in the two excerpts from the CRP contract, there is a requirement for each provider to submit invoices and the associated reports to the local BRS office as soon as possible after the service has been completed. This requirement is well defined in the contract and we would like to provide additional guidance for CRPs, VRCs and Support Staff.

The authorization for payment/invoice and associated reports must be received in the local BRS office as soon as possible after the service has been completed but no later than ten days after the end of the month in which the service(s) was provided. Unusual or unforeseen circumstances may prevent a Provider from submitting the Authorization for Payment/invoice within 10 days as required. To that end, an exception may be permitted at the discretion of the Regional Manager and payment of the authorization/invoice may be processed but no more than 60 days after the date of service has been completed/provided. Authorization for payment/invoices received more than 60 days after the service has been provided will not be honored.

Exception: Should an error in the issuing of an Authorization for Payment be made at the local BRS office, where services were pre-authorized and the services were rendered but no Authorization for Services form had been issued, the local BRS office will ensure that the authorization is created, sent to the Provider and sufficient time will be provided for the Provider to process the Authorization and submit a completed Authorization to the local BRS office for processing the payment.

The following is an excerpt from the CRP contract:

“Oversight of the services provided under this contract will occur primarily at the local BRS office level. The Provider will submit progress reports on all active clients to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who authorized services for that client. The Provider will also send invoices and associated reports detailing the description of services provided as soon as possible after the service was provided but no later than ten days after the end of the month in which the service(s) was provided.”

Additionally, in Rider B of the contract:

“The Department will pay the Provider as follows:

Provider submits an authorization for services with documentation for each client served, providing a description of services and hours utilized (if applicable), provided to BRS for reimbursement. Invoices should be submitted to the authorizing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, as soon as possible after the service was completed but no later than 10 days past the end of the month in which the services were provided.”

**Service Definitions**

**Job Development** – Direct or indirect contact and networking on behalf of clients with potential employers or organizations that have open job listings. This can include developing job sites for Situational Assessments (CBSA), employer negotiation, identification of employer needs, matching applicant skills and abilities with employer needs, clarifying job duties and work schedule, developing a job arrangement (such as job carving, job sharing, or a split schedule) or determining specifics of supervision.

**Job Seeking Skills Instruction -** Activities that support and assist an individual in searching for an appropriate job. Services include: career exploration; assistance with job applications, resume preparation, developing interviewing skills, identifying appropriate job opportunities, and job shadows.

**Labor Market Survey-** The systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of information gathered from employers, chambers of commerce, and industry associations that describe current employment conditions within a given geographic area. Key data metrics include current employment levels, projected employment growth, unemployment rates, average wages, job titles, minimum education requirements, industry trends, and workforce demographics.

**Job Analysis-** The process used to collect information about duties, responsibilities, necessary skills, outcomes, and work environment of a particular job.

**Job Skills Training -** Services provided to assist the individual in developing work skills, work habits, and job retention skills required to obtain and maintain employment. May include work adjustment training activities to improve and increase productivity, attendance, punctuality, ability to work with others, ability to work under supervision, and work tolerance.

**Transitional Employment Training-** A highly structured program for Psychosocial Clubhouse members returning to work in local business and industry. Transitional Employment placements are at the employer’s place of business, are part-time (15-20 hours per week), and include a lot of on-the-job and off-site support from Clubhouse staff and other members. These placements generally last from six to nine months. If a member is not able to work their shift, the position is covered by staff from the clubhouse. Clubhouse staff is also responsible for the training of the member on the job site, as well as providing job coaching on the job, thereby relieving the employer of these responsibilities. Transitional Employment is specifically designed as a vocational rehabilitation program where a member can gain or re-gain the skills and confidence necessary to have a job while he or she is employed in a “real world” position.

**Customized Employment**- Services that involve strategies based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer. Customized employment involves employer negotiation, including customizing a job description based on current unidentified and unmet needs of the employer and the needs of the employee; developing a set of job duties or tasks; developing a work schedule (including determining hours worked); determining a job location; developing a job arrangement (such as job carving, job sharing, or a split schedule); or determining specifics of supervision.

**Service Definitions**

**Business Consultation-** Consultation and other services providedto assist an individual to conduct market analyses, to develop business plans, and to provide resources to individuals in the pursuit of self-employment and small business operation outcomes.

**Discovering Personal Genius-** Discovering Personal Genius™ (DPG) is a trademarked program that is provided by certified DPG Providers. It is person centered, comprehensive direct support provided to an individual that enables them to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment. Services assist in identifying skills, priorities, and capabilities determined through an individualized discovery process, and may include development of experiential learning opportunities and career options consistent with the individual’s skills and interests. DPG services are provided one-on-one, between the DPG provider and client and are not conducted in group settings; they can be provided within a variety of community settings such as a Career Center, the community, and local businesses.

**Situational Assessment-** A Community-Based Situational Assessment or CBSA is a short-term trial competitive placement that 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 determines what, if any additional support might be needed for the client to be successful. A CBSA can also be used as an Assessment to Hire, which provides the employer an opportunity to see the client “in action” performing the job duties, and identify the strengths and support needs of the individual.

**Wages for Situational Assessment-** This rate is determined by the CRP based upon at least minimum wage plus administrative payroll fees.

**Pre-ETS- Job Exploration Counseling-** The process of assisting individuals to learn about themselves and the world of work, to identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations, and to develop an effective strategy to realize their goals. Includes in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting such as internships, labor market information review, TCEW, CEW and other vocational interest inventories.

**Pre-ETS-Work Based Learning Experiences-** Work-based learning (WBL) is an educational strategy that provides students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop employability skills. Work-based learning experiences occur in the community, in school, or out of school. Work-based learning experiences provide career awareness, onsite career exploration opportunities, career planning activities, and help students reach competencies such as positive work attitudes and employability skills. Activities may include job club, informational interviews, worksite tours, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, mentoring, and Disability Mentoring Day.

**Service Definitions**

**Pre-ETS-Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities-** Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutes of higher education including college, vocational and technical training programs, certificate programs, and adult education. Activities may include tours of educational institutions, assistance with college application and admission processes, and providing information on disability support services.

**Pre-ETS-Workplace Readiness Training-** Training that assists individuals to develop and enhance Independent living and soft skills (personal characteristics and behavioral aptitudes that enhance an individual’s interactions, job performance, and career prospects across a broad range of settings). Training seeks to enhance skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, financial literacy, job seeking skills, and group orientation and mobility.

**Pre-ETS-Instruction in Self Advocacy-** Training that assists individuals to develop the ability to articulate one’s needs and make informed decisions about the supports necessary to meet those needs. This may include instruction in rights and responsibilities, requesting accommodations and services, person-centered planning, and peer mentoring.

**Job Coaching-Short Term**- Support services provided to an individual who has been placed in employment in order to stabilize the placement and enhance job retention. Such services include short-term job coaching for persons who do not have a supported employment goal consistent with the employment goal on the IPE. This can include off-site job coaching and check-ins.

**Job Coaching-Supported Employment-** Ongoing support services and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment for a period of time generally not to exceed 24 months. Such services, such as job coaching, are for individuals who have supported employment and long-term supports identified on the IPE.

**Remote Area Travel**- Reimbursement for travel time to provide employment provider services in an identified remote area (also known as underserved area) is authorized at the rate of $30 per hour. An area is considered remote (underserved) if there are two or less CRP agencies providing employment related services to BRS clients within that area. As part of the CRP contract, select CRP agencies will be reimbursed for travel to remote (underserved) areas. All CRPs are invited to request that a remote area travel designation be added to their contract.

**Job Coaching for Population Specific Certification/Competency-** This certification is available to individual job coaches who are determined to be competent in American Sign Language (ASL) or a foreign language. This service is authorized at the rate of $35 per hour. As part of the CRP contract, select CRP agencies that employ certified competent job coaches will be reimbursed for population specific competent/certified job coaching services.

**Job Development for Population Specific Certification/Competency-** This certification is available to individual job developers who are determined to be competent in American Sign Language (ASL) or a foreign language. This service is authorized at the rate of $40 per hour. As part of the CRP contract, select CRP agencies that employ certified competent job developers will be reimbursed for population specific competent/certified job development services.

**Progressive Employment-** The Progressive Employment model is an employment strategy predicated on a dual-customer philosophy, making information about [business engagement](http://www.explorevr.org/toolkits/business-engagement-toolkit) key to better serving VR consumers in finding work experiences while ensuring employer needs are optimally met by the VR program. The model takes the “Everybody is Ready for Something” approach and offers a full array of work experiences.  These include low and high dose strategies such as job tours, mock interviews by employers through to 6-week work experiences and internships.  It is focused on rapid engagement in real life work settings with a reduced focus on “job readiness” assessments and evaluations.

**Service Definitions (Fees vary for the below listed services)**

**Apprenticeship Training**- An apprenticeship program is a work-based employment and training program that combines hands-on, on-the-job work experience in a skilled occupation with related classroom instruction. **Fees**: Vary based on the apprenticeship program.

**On-The-Job Training-** Training by an employer in which the client works for wages while learning the skills of the job. Wage costs are usually shared by the VR agency on a reducing schedule. **Fees**: Based on individualized negotiation regarding shared wage costs.