

- 1. If a customer is in Phases 3-5 (i.e. hours have been negotiated and the services are in-progress) and the job is put on-hold and the customer does not wish to seek alternative employment, how can the provider support the customer through this time and the return to work period?**
  - Job Mentoring (SE009) may be used to provide this type of support during the COVID-19 mitigation period with VRC approval and an IPE amendment if necessary. The mentoring may include contacts with customer and employer, referral to other community services, assistance with applying for unemployment benefits and other off-site supports.
  
- 2. If a customer is in Phases 3-5 (i.e. hours have been negotiated and the services are in-progress) and the job is put on-hold and the customer wants to seek alternative employment, can providers assist with this?**
  - Customers who make the informed choice to seek alternative employment while their primary job is on-hold may be supported through Job Mentoring (SE009) during the COVID-19 mitigation period with VRC approval. This is allowed even if the alternative job is considered "temporary".
  
- 3. What is the procedure for utilizing Job Mentoring as specified in questions #1 and #2?**
  - In these situations, the VRC may authorize Job Mentoring (SE009) apart from the existing performance-based SE or customized employment services which are on-hold. If the customer is expected to return to his/her primary employment, existing phases may remain in effect (i.e. the PO's can stay open).
  
- 4. What if the customer is laid off before the end of Phases 3, 4, or 5? For example, what if the customer reaches the 90<sup>th</sup> day from stability while laid off?**
  - Phases 3-5 may not be partially billed as customers must meet the established phase milestones for payment to be issued. When a customer's job is temporarily on hold, the phase should be paused until they return to that job, at which time the phase may continue from where it left off. In the example for this question (i.e. Phase 5), if the customer is laid off at the time they would have reached the 90<sup>th</sup> day from stability, they didn't actually reach 90 days in stability. Upon returning to work, the customer must complete the remaining days of employment to equal 90 days in stability.
  
- 5. What happens if the employer will not allow a provider access to the workplace to render onsite supports during Phases 2-5?**
  - If the employer will not allow a provider access to the workplace to render onsite supports during Phase 2, the provider may continue to support the customer off-site as needed until the phase ends. After Phase 2 has concluded in this instance, services should transition to Job Mentoring rather than continuing with negotiated hours. The employer's refusal of access must be documented by the VRC in CWDS.
  - If the employer will not allow a provider access to the workplace to render onsite supports during Phases 3-5 (i.e. hours have been negotiated and the services are in-progress), the provider may continue to support the customer off-site as needed. The employer's refusal of access must be documented by the VRC in CWDS.

**6. What documentation is the provider required to submit when an employer refuses to allow the CRP staff on-site?**

- Examples of acceptable documentation include but are not limited to:
  - Letter or email from the employer; or
  - Verbal report from the CRP or employer to the VRC captured in a Case Progress Note within CWDS indicating the date, names, and details of the communication.

**7. If a provider has to support a customer "off-site" due to an employer restricting access to the worksite, what are some examples of "off-site" activities?**

- Off-site support during this time may include but is not limited to:
  - Researching/planning transportation to and from work;
  - Establishing natural supports and job accommodations;
  - Team meetings;
  - Instruction in self-advocacy;
  - Social skills training;
  - Behavior management;
  - Money management training;
  - Job skills instruction (if the skills can be effectively instructed off-site in person or virtually);
  - Referral to other services (e.g. Benefits Counseling);
  - Coordination of accommodations and/or assistive (rehabilitation) technology;
  - Employer contact on behalf of customer;
  - Phone calls to customer, employer or supports; and/or
  - Identifying and negotiating essential job functions.

**8. How do we authorize a second phase 2 when the customer returns to work if the provider reports and bills for partial hours under the current PO?**

- An additional Phase 2 authorization in this instance may be completed through CWDS as long as the Needs Determination & Hours Negotiated form has not been saved as final. If the system prevents the authorization, please contact your local SE coordinator and/or the SETech resource account for assistance ([RA-LIOVR-SETECH@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LIOVR-SETECH@pa.gov)).

**9. If we partial bill for Phase 2, what date do we use on the report and when we return to working with the customer on site, what date do we start with?**

- The Phase 2 reporting period is generated using the customers first day of employment followed by the date the customer reached the first 40 hours of employment. In order to end the report early, the 40 hour date will need to reflect the *actual* end date of service. When doing this, the COVID-19 SE guidance should be referenced in the comments box in the report (SESR).
- If an additional Phase 2 report is needed when the customer returns to work to complete his or her first 40 hours, you may reference the original employment start date. The COVID-19 SE guidance should be referenced in the comments box in the report (SESR).

**10. Should we still track clients' work hours in the PPR if on-site coaching is on hold but the client is still working?**

- Yes—the PPR and Daily Work Hour Tracking section should be updated as long as the customer is still working.

**11. Is the job mentoring available for customers in Extended Services who have been laid off, or could we be allowed to use current ES authorizations/POs to support them and coordinate their return to work?**

- For customers in extended services, virtual services may be provided while the person is working or on-hold temporarily due to COVID-19.

**12. The SE COVID-19 guidance states that if a provider is unable to deliver on-site supports (because of provider agency policy), an alternate provider must be used. What if an alternate on-site vendor cannot be located?**

- If all attempts to secure an alternate provider to deliver on-site supports have failed, the original provider may be allowed to continue under the negotiated hours using the highest level of support possible.

**13. If another provider covers for the on-site, does the customer return to the original provider when the agency opens again?**

- Only if the customer chooses to and it is feasible, as services are based on customer choice and individual circumstances. If a customer transitions to a new provider for on-site supports, the customer and VRC may choose to remain with the alternative provider or return to the original as identified in the customer's IPE.

**14. Does a vendor need a new PO if they are now rendering an SE service virtually instead of in person?**

- For SE services, existing PO's may remain open as long as providers follow the OVR SE Guidance for Community Providers During COVID-19.

**15. Should we continue to submit monthly reports as a place holder? Do we have to continue with monthly reports for no activity if customers are laid off?**

- As long as the authorization for service remains effective providers should continue to enter monthly reports indicating no activity occurred.

**16. Since Community Based Work Assessments have been suspended, what happens to the remaining units that have not been used?**

- This will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis with the VRC. CBWA PO's may remain open or the balance of hours may be cancelled and re-authorized if deemed appropriate. If an additional CBWA is completed within the same PO, another report will need to be submitted.

**17. Should providers suspend work on just Discovery or also on the Discovery Profile, Visual Resume and the Customized Plan for Employment meeting (virtually)?**

- Please see the amended guidance under section 1 for a complete explanation. If enough information was gathered through Discovery activities, prior to initiation of COVID-19 mitigation restrictions, to complete the Discovery Profile and Visual Resume they may be completed and, if the documents are accepted by the VRC, may be invoiced. The Customized Plan for Employment meeting may occur virtually if all parties agree to proceed and have the technology to participate.