

What is IPS supported employment?

Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidence-based employment approach that assists clients in finding and keeping a job, of one's choosing, that pays a competitive wage, capitalizes on personal strengths, and provides the support necessary to be successful in the workplace.

Examples of specific services include, but are not limited to: finding a job, keeping a job, an updated résumé, career exploration and improving interview skills. IPS services help clients to identify supports, such as friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, etc. as their personal team who will encourage them, naturally, on their employment journey.

What is an employment specialist (ES)?

At this agency, an employment specialist is a professional trained to provide IPS supported employment services as part of mental health treatment. The ES participates in clinical treatment team meetings and collaborates with other mental health clinicians to provide integrated, wrap-around services. A central focus for the employment specialist is to assist clients in meeting vocational goals as part of their mental health treatment, and connecting them to job and training opportunities available to any other members of a community.

The employment specialist also serves as a resource to employers on matters such as the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Federal Bonding Program, and job accommodations.

How does IPS supported employment help?

Research has shown that employment is important in a person's journey through mental health recovery. With proper support, clients are twice as likely to find and keep employment under the IPS model. Supported employment can lead to:

- building self esteem
- skill development
- financial independence
- development of coping skills
- improved social skills
- acquiring a work history
- broadening of interests
- identifying career possibilities
- educational pursuits
- purposeful community connection

Is this the same as DOL Bureau of Rehabilitation (VR)?

No. VR Counselors work for the Department of Labor (DOL), whereas our IPS employment specialist works as part of our agency's treatment team.

VR offers resources and services unavailable in other programs, and serves individuals across the entire state.

Our ES serves clients of this agency and provides a highly individualized service. VR counselors and ESs often work together on behalf of a job seeker. Depending on your vocational preferences, needs, and goals, your case manager or ES will be able to assist with a referral to VR, if and when you could benefit from their resources and support.

Who is eligible for supported employment?

Those wishing to be employed are considered ready, regardless of symptoms, work history, or other barriers, such as substance use or involvement with the legal system.

In Maine, eligibility is limited to individuals who qualify for case management or Behavioral Health Home services.

Notes:

Frequently asked questions

If I work, will I lose my SSI/SSDI benefits?

Your treatment team can help you to get an appointment with a Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) who will talk with you about how working will – or won’t – affect your eligibility for benefits like MaineCare and Social Security. The rules are more generous than you may think!

How does an employment specialist connect me to jobs?

ESs develop relationships with employers who need your skills, then match you with those employers. ESs also support clients who prefer to pursue jobs independently. The approach is decided in a Job Search Plan.

How often do we meet?

Usually once a week for an hour, however the employment specialist and client work together to create an employment plan that best suits the client's schedule and needs.