Employment Specialist Job Description

**Overall Function:** Helps clients find and keep competitive employment that is consistent with their vocational goals.

**Responsibilities:** Engages clients and establishes trusting, collaborative relationships directed toward the goal of competitive employment in community settings.

Assists clients in learning how their benefits will be affected by earned income. For example, refers clients for benefits planning to learn about work incentives offered by Social Security Administration. After employment is achieved, assists with an individualized plan for reporting earnings to Social Security Administration or other sources of benefits.

Helps clients think about long-term employment goals, work history, strengths, personal culture (as defined by each person), justice involvement, and other factors that relate to a current vocational goal. Completes career profile for each new client with information from the client, mental health practitioners, and with permission, family members or past employers. Updates the profile with each new job and education experience.

With the client’s permission, provides education and support to family members about work and gathers input about skills, interests, strengths of the client and ideas for support.

Discusses client's preference for disclosure of psychiatric status to employers, including possible costs and benefits and specific information to be disclosed. Provides assistance with the job search regardless of client’s preferences regarding disclosure (i.e., support without employer contact when client chooses not to disclose).
Develops an individual employment plan with the client and with input from the mental health worker, other treatment team providers (for example, the VR counselor) and family members (with permission). Incorporates information about the person’s culture (as defined by each client) that related to work and school. Updates the employment plan quarterly or when there is a change in employment or education status.

Conducts job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are individualized to the interests and uniqueness of the people on his/her caseload, following the principles and procedures of IPS.

Conducts at least six employer contacts each week to learn about businesses and employer needs, to talk about specific clients who are looking for work and/or to talk about employer services offered by the IPS program.

Is responsible for a minimum of 12 job starts each year after the first year of employment.

Supports clients making employer contacts by applying for jobs, or learning more about jobs available in the community, within 30 days of program entry, on average.

Provides individualized follow-along supports to assist clients in maintaining employment. Provides frequent in-person supports during the first month of a new job and at least monthly after working steadily and desired by clients.

Provides education and support to employers as agreed upon by clients, which may include negotiating job accommodations and follow-along contact with the employer/educator.
Provides outreach services as necessary to clients when they miss appointments. Uses a variety of methods to discover what is interfering with the person's employment plan.

Participates in weekly meetings with mental health treatment team and communicates individually with team members between meetings in order to coordinate services and generate ideas to help people achieve their employment goals.

Attends monthly meetings with VR counselors to discuss possible referrals and shared clients. Communicates with VR counselors between monthly meetings.

Spends at least 65% or more of total scheduled work hours in the community. For example, meets with clients in community settings and develops relationships with managers at their businesses.

Helps clients with career development including finding jobs that are more desirable, helping people ask for raises and promotions, and helping with education and training programs that are available to the general public. Provides supported education, using principles similar to IPS, for clients who express interest in education to advance their employment goals.

**Qualifications:** Education and experience equivalent to undergraduate degree in mental health, social services, or business. Experience working with people with serious mental illnesses, experience providing employment services, and knowledge of the work world are preferred. Ability to work as an effective team member is essential.
IPS Supported Employment Supervisor Job Description

**Overall Function:** Ensures good employment outcomes for clients in the IPS supported employment program. For example, at least 45—50% employment on the IPS team and an average of 12 job starts per employment specialist each year.

**Responsibilities:** Hires and trains employment specialists. Evaluates job performance and helps each specialist set goals for improved performance.

Assigns each employment specialist to one to two mental health teams
Monitors referrals to the IPS program and ensures that each employment specialist is assigned to work with clients from their mental health treatment team(s).

Conducts weekly group supervision to the IPS team through vocational unit meetings that follow the principles and procedures of IPS. Meetings are designed so that specialists can think of strategies to help people in their working lives, discuss how to further employer relationships and share job leads, and celebrate successes.

Teaches essential job skills to employment specialists including building employer relationships, engaging clients, conducting the career profile, developing individualized employment goals, client interviewing skills, and providing job supports. Models and observes skills in the field, as well as providing office-based individual supervision. For example, goes into the field with employment specialists to meet with employers and shadows employment specialists while meeting with clients in order to help each specialist develop good client interviewing skills.
Monitors the employment specialist’s role and participation on the mental health treatment teams to enhance integrated services at the delivery level. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.

Acts as liaison to other department supervisors in the mental health agency. Communicates regularly with mental health supervisors to ensure that services are integrated, to problem-solve programmatic issues, and to serve as a champion for employment.

Works with the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office to coordinate programming issues and client services. Provides outreach to VR to offer integrated services (i.e., meetings to discuss client status, shared office space, etc.).

Tracks employment outcomes on a monthly basis, and by employment specialist, including job dates, hours worked, wages earned, employers, and job titles. Also tracks process outcomes including number of employer contacts by each specialist, fidelity scores, and number of days to first employer contact by the employment specialist or client. Reviews employment outcomes with employment specialists on at least a quarterly basis. Helps employment specialists to set numeric goals for improved performance and develops written plans to help specialists reach their goals.

Participates in development of IPS supported employment steering committee that meets two to four times annually to oversee the implementation and sustainability of the IPS program.

Arranges for IPS fidelity reviews to ensure agency is implementing the critical components of evidence-based supported employment. Assists with the development of the IPS fidelity action plan, based on recommendations from the IPS supported employment fidelity review report.
Meets with the executive team at least twice each year to discuss facilitators and barriers to the IPS program.

**Qualifications:** Master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or related field. Previous experience as an employment specialist assisting clients with serious mental illness in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment is desired. Previous supervisory experience is desired.