

Customized Employment for People with Disabilities

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Your Guide to Services

About the Agency

Customer Choice

Eligibility

Participant Relationship &
Plan of Service

Confidentiality

Request for Information

Employment Services

Grievance Procedure

Protection from
Employment
Discrimination

Government Benefits

Abuse

Comment from AHEDD's
President



About the Agency

AHEDD is a private, non-profit organization with a mission to serve the community as a catalyst in the employment and development of persons with disabilities. Since 1977, AHEDD has promoted employment as the means to promote community integration and independence for people with disabilities. AHEDD pursues its goals through collaboration with business, government, complementary community agencies and persons with disabilities.

Consumer Choice

Consumer Choice is the cornerstone of services for persons with disabilities in which individuals have a right and responsibility to be actively involved in decision-making about the type and extent of services, as well as the agency that will provide those services.

Through approaches like Self-Determination, people make choices based on preferences, beliefs and abilities, take control over and participate in decisions which impact the quality of their lives, take risks and assume responsibility for their actions, and advocate on behalf of themselves and others. AHEDD encourages each participant and individuals who support them to inquire about our agency and related services.

Eligibility

AHEDD relies on other organizations to assist in identifying candidates for AHEDD's services. An intake serves as an opportunity to enable the individual referral and AHEDD to determine if the agency's services may meet the needs of these parties. AHEDD's employment services are intended to help individuals achieve employment with maximum earnings and a corresponding decreased dependency and/or termination from government programs such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance.

Requests for information

In order to determine your need for or eligibility for services and related background, AHEDD may request certain information from or about you. This could involve contacting schools you have attended, counselors, physicians, and any other party who can assist in developing your case. All parties to be contacted will be named and approved through a Release of Information with your written approval.

Participant Relationship & Plan of Service

A participant is an individual who has agreed to receive services as verified by a signed Plan of Service. Within the planning process, AHEDD seeks to maximize the participant's involvement, and inclusion of input from relevant third parties. This involvement may be terminated by either party or via related third party. Generally, a contract exists between AHEDD and a sponsoring third party for the provision of services.



The written plan is a foundation of AHEDD's service process. Participant background, barriers, interests and goals are to be reasonably researched in order to design an individualized strategy with available new information incorporated into this ongoing process. The participant signature and witness, if required, are intended to serve as informed consent and collaboration.

Confidentiality

AHEDD assures that confidentiality is practiced by staff when developing services on the participant's behalf. Persons with a disability, referring

community based agencies, and entities of the government entrust AHEDD staff with information that is private in nature. AHEDD is discreet in releasing information that unauthorized disclosure could be prejudicial to persons for whom we are providing program services.



Participant Files

You have a right to know what information is shared about you with or from other parties. Nevertheless, participant files are the property of AHEDD. Individuals may review such files upon request at a designated site (e.g., AHEDD field office) with advance notice, and copies of information can be made for individuals or others with proper authorization. An administrative fee may be charged for this request.

Participant Rights

AHEDD strives to ensure that a participant's rights are explained and protected, including:

- Right to privacy (confidentiality of records);
- Explanation of the services to facilitate informed choices;
- Right to appeal by a party not involved in the initial service;
- Right to information about assistance in resolving disputes;
- Right to appoint another individual or legal representative;
- Right to be informed of any potential risk of refusing VR services offered after both parties

have agreed, in writing, to a rehabilitation program;

- Right to participate in the determination of the vocational goal and Plan of Service;
- Right to have access to information in the records concerning the participant.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may exist when AHEDD staff use contacts, time, or other company resources to gain personal compensation, recognition, or influence beyond that which is acceptable to or agreed upon through their employment relationship with AHEDD.

Officers, employees and agents of AHEDD are not permitted to solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from customers or contractors.

Participant—Employer Relationship

While AHEDD Staff may advise on the employment relationship of these two parties, the decision to begin or terminate this relationship, change terms, conditions or duties is outside the scope of AHEDD Staff.

Pre Employment Services

AHEDD offers career exploration, community based work assessments, and guidance to enhance a participant's abilities to access employment such as resume development and interview instruction. AHEDD will coordinate its services in cases where an individual is attending school or receiving specific vocational training.



Job Placement

Job Placement is employment in the public or private sector whereby a participant receives at least minimum wage, but generally the prevailing wage for individuals performing a job within a business with comparable experience or expertise. In this regard, participants are entitled to the range of benefits, training, and personnel related experiences as co-workers within the company performing comparable work.

Job Coaching

Job Coaching is offered to participants and employers to complement the company's existing orientation, training, and/or supervision. Job Coaching should be delivered in a discreet, professional manner abiding by practices of the host company, specific needs of the participant, and the justified use of sponsor and agency resources (i.e., time, dollars and influence).

Follow-Along Employment Status

AHEDD will attempt to influence the employment retention of participants by proactive contact. AHEDD Staff are required to verify employment status in a manner described by the agency and/or a given sponsor in order to accurately assess the impact of services. Such follow-along is intended to be done in a non-intrusive manner and not to be burdensome to a participant or his/her employer.

On occasion, AHEDD may issue surveys to participants for feedback.

Grievance Procedure

Grievance procedures are available, if you have a problem or concern regarding AHEDD's services. Participants are entitled to have an advocate of their choice who can assist in presenting a grievance. AHEDD will respond to each concern and follow the procedure outlined below within 21 calendar days of the initial complaint.

- If your experience with AHEDD is not satisfactory, you may direct your concern verbally or in writing to the AHEDD staff who is providing service to you.
- If you feel that the matter remains unresolved, you may direct the concern to that person's supervisor.
- If still not resolved, a Grievance Committee consisting of these staff and at least one member of AHEDD's management will address your concern.
- Finally, if necessary, AHEDD's President or other designee of the Board of Directors, will make a final recommendation.

If you are still dissatisfied, you have the right to contact the sponsoring agency (if any) to request further consideration or resolution.

Those individuals who are participating in state or federal vocational rehabilitation programs can contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to get help with advocating for personal rights, questions about rehabilitation and/or assistance with appeal processes. Contact the CAP at:

- PA residents: 1 (888) 745-2357 voice/TT;
- DE residents: New Castle County- (302) 764-2400 (voice) or (302)764-8708 (TDD only); Kent & Sussex Counties- (302) 698-9336 (v/TDD)

Legal Protection From Employment

Discrimination

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against qualified persons with a disability. If you have a

disability, you must also be qualified to perform the essential functions or duties of a job, with reasonable accommodation(s). This means that you must satisfy the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, experience and skills. Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis and should be decided between you and your [potential/current] employer.

If you are applying for a job, an employer cannot ask you if you have a disability; nor can he/she ask you about the nature or severity of any disability you may have. An employer can ask if you can perform the duties of a job. An employer can also ask you to describe or to demonstrate how you could perform a job with a reasonable accommodation.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against in employment on the basis of your disability, you can contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. You can contact the Regional Office of the EEOC at (800) 669-4000.

Government Benefits

Many people served by AHEDD receive government benefits, primarily disability related benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA). It is expected that every customer will develop and maintain a system of properly reporting work activity on a regular basis to ensure that programs are operated with integrity and that individuals do not experience overpayments. It is also AHEDD's expectation that all customers will strive to make a sincere effort to achieve and maintain earnings of substantial gainful activity or greater through continued employment.



Abuse

People who experience physical and other forms of abuse may feel shame or embarrassment and be reluctant to ask for help. In the delivery of its services, AHEDD strives to create a relationship in which a participant feels comfortable to discuss any experience of physical abuse whether it takes place at the job site or in any setting. If you believe you have experienced abuse, please notify your point of contact at AHEDD

Comment from AHEDD's President

We are honored that you, your family member, or your client has selected AHEDD to assist with achieving successful employment. Be assured that this goal is our single focus and purpose of our agency. While our staff welcomes feedback regarding our service delivery, it would be a pleasure to speak with you directly about your experience.

Rocco Cambria, President AHEDD
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