

Provision of Customized Employment (CE) Services By Employment Service Organization (ESO)

This Appendix defines general expectations applicable to the provision of Customized Employment (CE) Services by an Employment Service Organization (ESO) to eligible appropriate individuals funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Service Description

Customized Employment (CE): Individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is 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. It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability. In 2014, customized employment was added to the Rehabilitation Act's definition of supported employment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). CE is defined in the final WIOA regulations, Federal Register, 361.5 (c) (11).

Customized Employment is appropriate for individuals who:

1. Require and meet criteria for supported employment services; and
2. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, are not likely to meet the competitive demands set by employers in existing job descriptions even with the provision of supports; and
3. Due to the nature and severity of their disability, they would not likely benefit from traditional supported employment services or have been unsuccessful with traditional supported employment services; and
4. Require employment that is individually negotiated to fit the individual's needs as well as employer needs.

I. Scope of Services

The Provider shall provide the following services to eligible individuals in accordance with CE Fidelity Standards outlined in each of the three fidelity scales published by GHA ([Resources | Publications | Griffin-Hammis Associates \(griffinhammis.com\)](#)). Additional information regarding these services can be found in ***The CE Technical Guide*** and in DARS Services Descriptions. Specific reporting requirements are noted in the Reporting and Billing section of this Appendix.

Customized Employment Service is a person-centered and team-oriented placement strategy combined with employment support strategies. It is a process-driven concept that begins with a CE Consult and Launch meeting followed by three required phases.

1. ***CE Consult and Launch Meeting:*** introduce the CE provider to the career seeker and familiarize the career seeker (and support team) with the CE process including activities, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes. If proceeding with services, the CE team initiates funding and develops the CE Implementation Plan.
2. **Complete the Discovery Process Phase 1**
 - a. During Discovery Stage 1, Discovery begins at home, with familiar people, and in familiar places. Starting with the familiar helps the employment specialist learn who the employment seeker is, who and what is important to them, what they care about and do well. The employment specialist gathers this information by completing four key steps with the person: (1) a home visit, (2) community and neighborhood exploration, (3) conversations with people who are important to the person, and (4) two to three familiar Discovery activities. These steps provide the foundation for determining additional activities to explore during Stage 2.
 - b. During Stage 2, the focus turns to the community. The employment specialist and employment seeker go to new places, talk to new people, and participate in new activities related to the employment seeker's interests and skills revealed during Stage 1. The employment specialist facilitates this stage by completing three key steps with the person: (1) at least three unfamiliar Discovery activities, (2) identifying emerging vocational themes, and (3) informational interviews related to the three vocational themes. Stage 2 culminates with three verified vocational themes.
 - c. During Stage 3, the employment specialist and employment seeker wrap up Discovery and lay the foundation for customized job development. The employment specialist facilitates this stage by completing two key steps with the person: (1) write a career narrative that captures the critical information learned during Discovery, (2) sharing the career narrative with team members, and (3) scheduling the employment planning meeting.
3. **Customized Job Development Phase 2:** Customized job development differs from more conventional job development practices in its focus on creating employment opportunities. Instead of looking for job openings, employment specialists identify and connect with businesses that align with the employment seeker's vocational themes and explore options that emerge for mutually beneficial employment.
 - a. During Stage 1, the employment specialist and employment seeker review the career narrative with the employment team, confirm the three vocational themes, and then work with the team to identify 10-20 specific local businesses for each of the three themes. Next, the team creates the Customized Job Development action plan and targets the first five businesses to contact.

- b.** During Stage 2, the employment specialist facilitates this customized job development by completing several tasks with the person: (1) conducting informational interviews, (2) creating a job analysis when a potential match is identified, (3) developing a job proposal when a potential match is identified, (4) negotiating employment when a potential match is identified, and (5) developing a consultative employment supports plan when a job is negotiated.
- 4. Consultative Employment Training and Supports Phase 3**
 - a.** Following CE development and negotiation, and before the employment seeker begins the new job, the employment specialist spends time onsite to develop the Consultative Employment Training and Supports Plan (CETS Plan). The CETS Plan details the company culture, all core work projects and tasks, and opportunities for connection and interaction with coworkers and other company personnel.
 - b.** Following completion and confirmation of the CETS Plan, intensive on-site supports are implemented to assist the participant in new employee orientation, learning the assigned job tasks, implementing needed accommodations, addressing workplace behaviors, employer expectations and interpersonal skills. This phase begins on the first day the individual is on the employer's payroll and is in training with the job coach.

II. CE Reporting and Billing Requirements

1. Timely provision and payment of CE services requires collaboration between DARS and the Provider. Written authorization for Services is required prior to service delivery.
2. DARS shall provide timely authorization for services, as well as expedient processing of bills and reports received.
3. Authorizations for Customized Employment Services will be done through the local DARS field office. When a participant has been identified and the Counselor and ACRE Certified staff have agreed that Customized Employment is required- an RFA for CE Launch and Discovery stage 1 should be created and sent to the DARS staff member responsible for ESO Service Authorization & Billing. The RFA e-mail request must be cc'd to the VR counselor for approval. RFA email requests for Customized Employment must include the following information:
 - a. Individual's First and Last Name
 - b. Participant ID number
 - c. Requested Service Item code and description (S/I Codes pg. 3)
 - d. DARS Provider (vendor) Number
 - e. Name of Employment Staff conducting CE services

When the RFA is received and approved by the VR counselor, the authorization will be created and sent to the ESO within 3 business days.

- A. Invoicing for services: All invoices should be submitted directly to the local office for payment. Invoices should not be submitted to the DARS Central Office ESSP unit. The VR counselor must review and approve all reports and invoices for payment.

Invoices must contain the following information:

Provider Name	Participant Name
Provider Number	Authorization Number
Provider Address	Date Service Completed
Provider Invoice Number	Procedure Code and Description
Date of invoice	Name of Staff Providing Service

- B. Reports and activities that must be received and approved by the DRS VR Counselor by Phase/ Stage of Customized Employment.
- a. CE Referral and Launch - Roles and Responsibilities agreement, and Initial CE Implementation Plan
 - b. CE Phase 1-Discovery Stage 1-**Completed Discovery Staging Record- Stage 1** which serves as evidence of the process. Must use a narrative format and may be augmented by digital photos.
 - c. CE Phase 1-Discovery Stage 2. -**Completed Discovery Staging Record- Stage 2**, which serves as evidence of the process. Must use narrative format and may be augmented by digital photos.
 - d. CE Phase 1-Discovery Stage 3. -**Completed Discovery Staging Record- Stage 3**, which serves as evidence of the process. Must use narrative format and may be augmented by digital photos.
 - e. CE Phase 2-Customized Job Development Stage 1. -**Completed Customized Job Development Staging Record, Stage 1.**
 - f. CE Phase 2 Customized Job Development Stage 2. -**Completed Customized Job Development Staging Record, Stage 2.** , Customized Job Proposal/Description documenting Competitive Integrated Employment placement consistent with the participant's ideal conditions for employment (including pay, hours, benefits, etc.), Documentation of Identified On-going Support Needs to be explored or addressed upon employment
 - g. CE Phase 3 Consultive Employment Training & Supports Stage 1- **Completed CETS Staging Record, Stage 1.**
 - h. Please check this site before starting any new Staging Records to ensure you are using the most current version.
 - i. Links to the most current versions of GHA's CE Staging Records and Forms are available at the following site: [CE Mentoring Resources - Griffin-Hammis Associates \(griffinhammis.com\)](https://griffinhammis.com)

III. Staffing Requirements

Only staff who have a Virginia CE Endorsement, or who are actively enrolled in proficiency mentoring to achieve a Virginia CE provider endorsement, may provide Customized Employment Services. Endorsed CE providers must first complete GHA's ACRE-approved Community Employment Services credential with an emphasis in Customized Employment training and subsequently complete GHA's CE proficiency mentoring to demonstrate competence in delivering high-fidelity CE services