

Supported Microenterprise Technical Assistance Guide (TAG)

Introduction:

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) recognizes supported self-employment as a potential means to reach an employment outcome. Self-employment is not an employment goal, but is the environment in which the participant carries out his or her employment goal.

VR administers supported self-employment and supported microenterprise. supported self-employment is for those who would benefit from a more detailed examination of their business planning process and are likely to need more than \$3,000 from VR to start the business. Supported microenterprise has an expedited process and is a potentially smaller business requiring \$3,000 or less from VR to start the business.

Deciding on Supported Microenterprise:

If the potential new business requires VR expenditures of no more than a total of \$3,000, the business may qualify as a VR supported microenterprise, if the VRC/client are both sure it will be run as a business, not a hobby, and at least one of these is true:

- The participant has a “team” (e.g., family, friends, referring staff, community agency staff, advocates) and team members are supportive of the business and willing to help start and/or help run the business for a specified time.
- With support, the participant can assist in creation of a Supported Microenterprise Business plan and can run the business with limited, short term or on-going long term support.
- With specialized support (coaching by someone who knows how to do the specified work) the participant can create a Supported Microenterprise Business plan and start up the business. NOTE: if the skill needed requires expertise beyond the typical job coach’s

expertise, negotiations may need to be done with the agency providing long term support.

**Supported Microenterprise Procedures:
See Self-Employment Flow Chart and Supported Microenterprise Flow Chart**

1. Intake
 - a. Determine eligibility,
 - b. Establish a support team,
 - c. Orient participant to Oregon VR,
 - d. Determine vocational goal, determine need for disability related accommodations,
 - e. Determine need for supports, Benefits planning, IPE as soon as possible.
2. When self-employment is mentioned, decide whether to explore supported self-employment or supported microenterprise.
 - a. Team meeting to discuss; if they agree to proceed,
 - b. Assess potential to own and operate a business with branch manager and program technician,
 - c. If decision is that self-employment is a do-able method to reach employment goal
 - d. Record decision and reasoning in a case note.
4. Establish that Supported Microenterprise is viable for this participant because they want to do this kind of work (and can, physically and otherwise), the potential new business requires one-time VR expenditure of \$3,000 or less, the VRC and participant agree it is not a hobby (See: Business not a Hobby TAG), and one of these is true:
 - a. They can perform many of the essential business tasks and the rest can be done with support from a regular job coach.
 - b. They need assistance with some of the essential business tasks but they can manage with assistance from a regular job coach.
 - c. They need specialized assistance where the job coach can perform specialized tasks and a specialist job coach is found to

provide long term ongoing support. This type of job coach is someone who has done similar work, ideally running their own business. This job coach will perform the essential tasks needed and over time, will train the participant to perform as many tasks as possible. They have family or others who are committed to performing some of the essential business tasks (indefinitely and as a volunteer) and, if needed, a job coach is also available for long term support.

Approval follows viability review by the Branch Manager and Program Tech. If a specialized job coach is found, VR will advise them about becoming a job coach vendor for VR, ODDS and/or Mental Health.

5. The business is feasible when the business start-up won't require more than \$3,000, and one of these is true:
 - a. The participant is currently being paid to do this kind of work, wants to increase earnings and has a plan to do that by increasing the hours they work, the number of paying clients, and/or the amount currently being paid (per hour or per job). They are eligible for long-term ongoing support or they can run the business themselves with natural supports.
 - b. The participant has done this kind of work but not in their own business. They have ideas about how to create a business and/or have natural supports (e.g., family, friends) available and willing to help. They are eligible for long-term ongoing support.
 - c. The participant has a work history but has not done this exact kind of work. They possess some necessary skills and someone skilled in this kind of work is willing to be a job coach, either on short or long term and train the participant and the regular long-term ongoing job coach how to do the tasks needed by the business.
 - d. The participant has worked for pay or as a volunteer but not doing the same kind of work. They possess some necessary skills and have strong natural supports and they are eligible for long-term ongoing support.

Supported Microenterprise PILOT – October, 2016

- e. The participant's feasibility study is completed and approved by the Business Plan Review Committee
6. Develop a Supported Microenterprise business plan
 - a. Client, with their Team and assistance as needed, prepares a business plan and includes benchmarks
 - b. VRC confers with designated Administrative staff about feasibility of the business plan
7. Revise the IPE – Self-employment
 - a. Document all services
 - b. Address accommodations (long and short term)
 - c. Establish evaluation criteria (benchmarks and timelines)
 - d. Establish measurable stabilization and closure criteria
8. Implement the IPE and begin Monitoring
 - a. Complete skill development for self-employment
 - b. Begin monthly monitoring of benchmarks and closure criteria
 - c. Establish other business related supports, if needed
 - d. Establish long term supports as needed
9. Closure
 - a. Refer for benefits planning (completion required before closure)
 - b. Document meeting IPE objectives within timelines
 - c. Document that stabilization is met and transfer support to long term, extended supports provided by other than VR

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