



Participant Services – Job Coaching

Job coaching is a “work-first” strategy which we have found to be successful for many individuals with disabilities. “Work-first” emphasizes prompt and effective job matching (between the applicant and the job), with the majority of support directed after the person starts work. We describe job coaching as a service which teaches, prepares, instructs, tutors and/or assists individuals with disabilities to perform work-related activities so he/she can be successful on their job. It should include on-site intervention and subsequent coordination of activities which contribute to job retention.

At AHEDD, we understand that job coaching services are not necessary for all people with disabilities. Such services, however, are often sought by both employers and job seekers for a number of reasons. Many people with disabilities may experience such things as: challenges involving transportation; limitations or difficulties with interpersonal and communication skills; performance/ production issues; and/or trouble with learning new duties.

Staff in our organization are called Job Coaches/Employment Specialists and customize job coaching according to the needs and expectations of the participant and the employer, as well as workplace dynamics. We want these Job Coaches to complement, not replace, existing orientation, training, and supervision from the employer.

AHEDD’s Job Coaches are not intended to be a permanent part of an employee’s workplace, so each will have a plan that guides the employee and employer toward eventual independence. Ideally, our staff are also expected to be unobtrusive and to facilitate the development of supports that are naturally found in the workplace.

In our experience since 1977, we have found that clear communication between the employer and Job Coach is essential for success. Our agency believes that a Job Coach should initially quantify the employer’s performance expectations to ensure that everyone involved is working toward the same objectives during the training/support process. Given that our staff are aware of/learn about the employee’s skills, behaviors, and/or needed accommodations, we also want our Job Coaches to give the employer an idea of the length and intensity of the support they will provide. Both the employer and Job Coach should agree upon the schedule for when the Job Coach plans to be on-site for support and should determine when and how often they will talk about progress of the employee.

When selecting an agency to provide job coaching, we at AHEDD recommend that you: check with the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency in your state for ideas on the experts in your area; meet the agency and ask for success data and references; and ask about the cost and how the agency gets paid for their work.

For further information about AHEDD’s Job Coaching service or tips on picking the right agency, contact AHEDD at 1-866-902-4333 or inforequest@ahedd.org .