

APPENDIX A – Service Item Code A1205

August 2018

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (CSS) - A1205

I. Policy.

Deficits in non-vocational areas of life may adversely affect an individual's ability to gain and/or maintain employment. It is the policy of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to provide Community Support Services (CSS) to customers who require these services to establish eligibility, assess rehabilitation and career needs, or achieve or maintain employment. Services may be provided through Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center's programs or through community-based providers, depending upon the customer's needs and desires, as well as the availability of qualified providers in a consumer's home community. Community Support Services may also be purchased by other DARS staff through the Community Rehabilitation Case Management Services (CRCMS) Program, or through the DARS Brain Injury Direct Services (BIDS) Fund.

II. Definition.

- A. Community Support Services (CSS) involves the provision of intensive one-to-one services that assist an individual with a disability to live and participate as independently and effectively as possible in home, work, and community settings of choice. Community Support Services provided to Vocational Rehabilitation customers should be provided ideally in the environment in which the skills and abilities will be used, i.e., home and community settings. Community Support Services provided through Vocational Rehabilitation typically focuses on the development and implementation of strategies to function effectively despite impairments.
- B. Services may include education, life skills training, assessment and instruction related to the use of assistive technology, and development and implementation of strategies and techniques that allow an individual to live and participate successfully in community settings. Areas to be addressed by the provision of Community Support Services may include household and financial management, personal care/hygiene, coping and social skills, using transportation, and other similar skills and tasks.
- C. Services should include an initial comprehensive **assessment** and development of an individualized **plan of services** (*Section VI*) that includes a description of methods, strategies, and approaches to be used. Agency-funded Community Support Services are intended to be provided on a short-term basis, with frequency and intensity of services decreasing gradually as the Community Support Services provider fades his/her presence and the individual becomes more independent in carrying out the specific tasks or activities (similar to the provision of job coaching services).

III. Qualified Providers.

- A. **Supervisor.** All Community Support Services provided to DARS customers must be supervised by a qualified individual who meets the following minimum requirements: a graduate degree and/or state licensure or certification or registration in a clinical field such as rehabilitation counseling, special education, psychology, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, or other related rehabilitation or human services fields; and a minimum of two years of documented training and experience working directly with individuals with disabilities, which ideally should include training and experience in the provision of the services referred to in this document as "Community Support Services;" and two years of experience in a supervisory role. On an individual basis, extensive training and/or years of experience may be considered as partial fulfillment of these requirements.
- B. **Direct Services Provider.** All Community Support Services provided to DARS customers must be provided by a qualified individual who meets the following minimum requirements: an undergraduate degree or state licensure or certification or registration in a related clinical field such as rehabilitation counseling, special education, psychology, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, or other relevant rehabilitation or human services fields; and a minimum of two years of documented training and experience working directly with individuals with disabilities, which ideally should include training and experience in the provision of the services referred to in this document as "Community Support Services." Relevant training and/or years of experience may be considered as partial fulfillment of these requirements on a case-by-case basis.

It is recommended that vendors provide ongoing training to their Community Support Services staff on a quarterly, or at least annual, basis through attendance at workshops, conferences, in-service staff training, or on-site consultations. DARS Brain Injury Services Coordination Unit can assist in identifying training opportunities as well as qualified individuals who can provide training in specific areas (e.g., writing task analyses; pharmacology; behavioral strategies).

IV. Service Provision.

- A. **Positive Behavioral Support/Support Team Approach.** When a DARS customer receiving Community Support Services (CSS) has behaviors that affect the ability to function productively and independently in the community, the CSS provider may request that the agency approve a consultation by a DARS approved Therapeutic Behavioral Services provider (i.e., a licensed or endorsed professional with expertise in behavioral approaches/strategies for decreasing challenging behaviors and increasing positive behaviors). If a behavioral consultation is approved by the DARS counselor, he/she will authorize and reimburse the behavioral health services provider directly. Counselors should refer to the **DARS Services Reference Manual** for the maximum allowable rate reimbursement and to the **DARS AWARE System** for vendor information. Information on Therapeutic Behavioral Services is contained in the *Behavioral Health Services* section of the **DARS Services Reference Manual**.

When working with an individual with challenging behavior, the Community Support Services provider is strongly encouraged to provide leadership in developing "support teams" or to serve as an active team member when working with a Positive Behavior Support provider.

B. *Quality Characteristics.* The provision of Community Support Services should be consumer-directed and provided in community-based settings that are age-appropriate and which include a diversity of people in naturally occurring proportions, including people with and without identified disabilities. Settings should be accessible to allow for the maximum participation of the individual. Service delivery and supports should be natural, non-intrusive, and non-stigmatizing.

V. Role of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (or Purchaser of Service).

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor or Purchaser of Service should consider Community Support Services like any other service purchased for a DARS customer. In partnership with the VR customer and his/her designee or representative if appropriate, the counselor determines that the consumer has a need for, or would benefit from, Community Support Services to establish eligibility, assess rehabilitation and career needs, or achieve and maintain an employment goal. After authorizing an initial Community Support Services Assessment (*Section VI*), and based on a Community Support Service Plan (*Section VI*) developed by a qualified Community Support Services provider (see *Section III*), the VR counselor coordinates the provision of services by working with the consumer to:

- select a provider;
- specify the desired outcome;
- identify the nature of the service, including how long the service is to be provided and under what circumstances; and
- monitor the provision of services.

Consultation and assistance are available throughout the process from the DARS Brain Injury Services Coordination Unit.

VI. Community Support Assessment / Services Plan.

A. *Authorization of Assessment / Plan.* It is recommended that the VR counselor initially authorize up to eight (8) hours for the service provider to conduct a comprehensive Community Support Assessment and to prepare a written Community Support Services Plan. (The initial authorization for assessment and development of a written plan is considered a direct service and is authorized and billed under *DARS Service Item Code A1205 - Community Support Services.*) All Community Support Services Plans must be developed by a qualified Community Support Services Provider (*Section III*) or reviewed by a qualified Community Support Services Supervisor (*Section III*).

B. *Authorization of Services.* Once the VR counselor, the provider, and the consumer have approved the Community Support Services Plan, additional Community Support Services hours can be authorized based on the Plan. While Community Support Services are individualized to each customer's needs, duration of services generally should not exceed four (4) to six (6) months. Service providers who propose a plan exceeding six months, or who request an authorization for additional hours after the end of a six-month period, should include written justification for the continued need for service provision.

C. The *Community Support Services (CSS) Plan* should include the following:

1. Identification of functional and measurable goals, including timelines for achieving;
2. A description of the CSS Plan of services to include:
 - the staff responsible for the provision of Community Support Services (i.e., the Community Support Services Provider) and the staff responsible for supervision of Community Support Services (i.e., the Community Support Services Supervisor);
 - the method(s) of instruction/intervention used in the provision of specific skills training (*Note: Please refer to Section IV, A. and B., and Section V., D. for the recommended quality characteristics of service provision. In addition, a task analytic instructional approach, along with development and implementation of compensatory strategies, is strongly recommended for training of specific skills.*); and
 - the proposed number of hours of service per day or week, and the specific environment(s) in which services will be provided (to ensure maximum application of skills to “real life” environments). As an individual becomes proficient in the skill areas being addressed, the number of hours provided per week should be gradually decreased - this should be reflected in the CSS Plan with a schedule for gradually reducing service hours over a specified period;
3. An estimate of the duration and cost (including the approved hourly rate) for the entire CSS Plan; and
4. Methods of measuring progress, including guidelines for adjustment and revision of an individual’s CSS Plan, and criteria for ending services.

D. **Quality Characteristics.** The Community Support Services Plan should be consumer-directed (i.e., the goals and objectives in the plan are identified and/or agreed upon by the individual receiving services). The Plan should entail the provision of supports and services in community-based settings that are age-appropriate and which include a diversity of people in naturally occurring proportions, including people with and without identified disabilities. Settings should be accessible to allow for the maximum participation of the individual. Service delivery and supports should be natural, non-intrusive, and non-stigmatizing.

VII. **Modifying / Terminating Services.**

- A. DARS staff should monitor services through ongoing communication and reports from the service provider to determine if an individual’s functional skills and abilities are improving measurably as the result of services. If an individual’s ability to function successfully does not appear to be improving, services may be modified or terminated (*per #2 below*). The DARS counselor, along with the consumer and a designee / representative as appropriate, shall make this decision in conjunction with the recommendations of the service provider and/or consultant.
- B. Community Support Services should be terminated when:

1. the individual has met the goals established in the Plan of Services (e.g., the individual has learned or implemented skills or strategies to achieve or maintain employment or to enter vocational training); or
2. after a specified period of time, and following appropriate modifications to the Plan of Services, it is clear that the individual is unable to meet the intermediate and/or long-term objectives in the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) for VR services or extended evaluation; or
3. the results of an extended evaluation provide clear and convincing evidence that an individual would not benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome; or
4. the individual does not comply with the basic requirements of the Plan of Services and appropriate counseling / guidance from the counselor, other agency staff, or the provider do not improve compliance; or
5. medical issues contraindicate the individual's participation in the program.

VIII. Program Approval.

Vendors may apply for approval in three ways: GENERAL APPROVAL to work with any disability group with no specialty designation assigned; one or more SPECIALTY DESIGNATIONS (to work only with specific populations); or GENERAL APPROVAL WITH SPECIALTY DESIGNATION. Vendors seeking approval for a specialty designation must provide written documentation of specialized education, background / training, licensure / certifications, etc. to support the request to be recognized as having a specialty designation.

GENERAL APPROVAL (*check this box if you want approval to work with all disability groups; a GENERAL APPROVAL vendor will not be listed as having a specialty designation*);

and / or

SPECIALTY DESIGNATIONS (*check this box if you want approval of one or more SPECIALTY DESIGNATIONS to serve only specific populations, OR to request one or more SPECIALTY DESIGNATIONS in addition to the vendor's general approval*).

- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Brain Injury (BI)
- Severe Mental Illness (SMI)
- Other (*specify and attach relevant back-up documentation of education, qualifications, credentials*): _____

VIII. Reimbursement Rates.

DARS will reimburse vendors of Community Support Services (A1205) as follows:

- (1) Vendors that are Employment Service Organizations (ESOs) with a Purchase of Services agreement with DARS for Supported Employment Services / Job Coach Training Services will be reimbursed for Community Support Services at their hourly SE / Job Coach rate.
- (2) Vendors that are not Employment Services Organizations (ESOs) with DARS will be reimbursed for Community Support Services (A1205) at an average hourly rate calculated by the agency and assigned to the vendor based on the primary service location or main office address. The rate for “Northern Virginia” non ESO vendors is established at **\$69 per hour** and at **\$55 per hour** for “rest of Virginia” nonESO vendors.



*For additional information or assistance contact Patricia Goodall at Patti.Goodall@dars.virginia.gov
(Brain Injury Services Coordination Unit) or 804/662-7615 or 800/552-5019.*