

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is an LOA?

A: The Letter of Agreement is taking the place of the Letter of Understanding effective January 1, 2014.

Q: Where can I find the LOAs and other documents?

A: LOA documents are available on the DHS website link: www.tn.gov/humanserv.

Q: How do I apply for a Letter of Agreement (LOA)?

A: Complete the Community Rehabilitation Provider Vendor Application along with the Letter of Agreement, attachments and required documents as noted in the application package. These documents should all be submitted by email in a PDF format to Valerie Caldwell-Buford and all applicable Regional Supervisor(s) by November 29, 2013

Q: Why is there not a signature line on the LOA attachments?

A: The main agreement document is where vendors will sign the agreement. The services the vendor intends to provide will be indicated on the main agreement document. Vendors do not need to sign the attachments.

Q: Do I need to have three staff members to get an LOA?

Only, if you are providing services under the SE attachment. Every agency should have adequate staff to provide the services that they have agreed to provide, but SE is the only attachment with a required minimum number.

Q: Do the letters of reference required to be submitted with the LOA application apply to the individual staff members or the agency?

A: The letters of reference should cover the agency itself, not the individual staff members and should attest to your ability to provide a quality service.

Q: Does an agency have to be CARF accredited?

A: No, agencies are not required to be accredited by CARF. But any accreditation an agency has should be included in their application.

Q: How recent should the background checks for staff members be?

A: Background checks should be national (not local or statewide) and cannot be older than 12 months from the date of your LOA application.

Q: If I have an LOA for a certain service, can I add another service later in the year?

A: All services the vendor intends to provide should be included in the initial application. Vendors cannot add services during the year, unless the Division identifies at some other point a need for additional services and accepts applications.

Q: Can I still apply if I have staff members that have not completed the required 10 hours of training?

A: Yes, when you complete the application indicate with an asterisk the staff member's name, date of training and location that they will attend. You will also need to send Valerie Caldwell-Buford an email with documentation after the staff has completed the training, so your application can be updated.

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES

Q: What educational level is required for someone to conduct vocational evaluations?

A: The educational level for vocational evaluations has not changed. A Bachelor's Degree and training or related experience in vocational evaluation is the minimum requirement.

TRIAL WORK

Q: Do you have to be a Supported Employment provider in order to provide Trial Work Experience services?

A: No. Trial Work Experiences is a separate service and you do not have to have been an SE provider in order to provide Trial Work Experiences.

Q: Do you need to have an IPE before Trial Work Experience (TWE) services are provided?

A: The VR counselor must complete a Trial Work IPE before TWE is conducted. In most cases the eligibility and regular IPE will be developed after the TWE.

Q: What if the client cannot complete a second TWE, but there is some information to report, how is that handled?

A: DRS cannot pay for a partial (incomplete) TWE, however the information developed during the incomplete assessment should be included in the report to the counselor.

Q: What training is required for employees providing TWE services?

A: They must attend two provider trainings per year.

JOB READINESS/JOB PLACEMENT

Q: If a client agrees to take a job for less than minimum wage will that count as a successful placement?

A: In order to count as a successful placement, the client must earn at least minimum wage.

Q: Will there be special pay for placing individuals who have felony convictions?

A: In our current LOA, services and fees are related to the clients' disability. Their criminal background is not a factor in placement fees.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Q: What is the process for requesting a Special Services attachment?

A: Services not covered under other LOA attachments will be covered by the Special Services attachment. The vendor should use the Special Services template (available at www.tn.gov/humanserv) to provide a description of their proposed services. Services should be in keeping with the needs in the regions. The information should be discussed with Regional Supervisors.

LOA RENEWALS

Q: What will the annual renewal process be for the LOAs?

A: The renewal process has not been determined at this time and suggestions for how the process should work are being accepted. At this point, we anticipate annual renewals.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Q: A new LOA attachment for Supported Employment is not available. What do I need to do to continue to have an agreement for Supported Employment services?

A: In order to provide Supported Employment (SE) services after Dec 31st, 2013, a vendor must apply using the LOA main document available on the website. Since the LOA attachment for SE has not yet been revised, the existing SE Letter of Understanding (LOU) will be used as the SE attachment. If you do need a copy of the existing SE LOU contact ruth.brock@tn.gov or valerie.caldwell-buford@tn.gov.

Q: If I have further questions, who do I call?

A: Valerie Caldwell-Buford at 615-253-3968 or email her at valerie.caldwell-buford@tn.gov.

Proposed Implementation Timeline

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| 10/28 - 11/8 | Training sessions for vendors |
| 11/8 – 11/29 | Application submission period* |
| 11/29 – 12/20 | Review/approval of applications |
| 12/20 | Announcement of selected vendors |
| 1/1/2014 | New agreements begin |
| 1/1 – 1/15 | Intensive VR staff training on use of agreements |

* Application, review/approval, and announcement timeline for the Supported Employment attachment will be announced at a later date

