

Summary

The H.E.A.R.T. program will prepare VR consumers, TANF recipients, and various other return to work program recipients to become successfully certified as an Employment Specialist. Employment Specialists work in vocational based programs, such as Job Development and Job Coaching. These programs offer a variety of hours, with great flexibility. Employment Specialists typically work with the adult mental health, developmentally/intellectually disabled, and medically disabled populations.

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H.E.A.R.T.

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Employment Specialist

Job Development services are designed to match qualified individuals with prospective employers. It provides training and support to individuals and assists them in finding and retaining competitive employment in a community work site of their choice. Job Development services targets certain jobs/industries sites that match the individuals' expectations, skills, and abilities.

Job Development services prepare individuals for employment by providing job seeking skills, which include: creating a resume, filling out job applications (paper and online), developing interview skills and techniques, interpersonal communication skills, and workplace etiquette and attitude. We also attend interviews and assist individuals with pre-employment testing.

We can arrange informational interviews and job shadowing to provide hands on information pertaining to a specific job prior to the application and interviewing process.

Job Coaching, by an Employment Specialist, provides support to an individual to maintain employment in the community. An individual may need the Job Coaching only for a limited period of time, or may need support from an Employment Specialist on an ongoing basis.

Some examples of how an Employment Specialist might support an individual are: helping them learn the skills needed for the job, helping them work with supervisors and co-workers, helping them learn how to use transportation to and from work, helping them to know what is expected of them on the job, providing assistance if the work becomes too difficult for them or if other problems arise that affect their work.

Sometimes the Employment Specialist may work with employer to teach them how to provide support to the individual. An Employment Specialist will usually meet with the individual at work, but may also meet with them off the job site, if that is appropriate and more comfortable for the individual.

State Mandated Trainings

The Employment Specialist Certificate may be obtained three ways as accepted by ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) Each are offered at various times throughout the year at various locations.

- VCU-Virginia Commonwealth University—Web Based Training. 6 lessons within the program. Each lesson can take 6-8 hours each for completion for a total of 36-48 hours of online learning.
- TACE Center—6 full days plus one half day classroom sessions, totaling 40 hours.
- ACRE Presented by Syntiro—5 day classroom sessions, totaling 40 hours.

MVRA also provides training to our Employment Specialists with:

- CPR—3-hour classroom training
- First Aid—3-hour classroom training

Recommended trainings through group or individual counseling sessions will also be provided on a consumer specific basis. Group or individual sessions may include self-care, boundaries and barriers, role conflict, and other challenges providers typically face.

These sessions can be 3-5 hours.

Documentation training can be 1-3 hours.

For further information regarding the Employment Specialist certification, you may contact your local MVRA office.