

Employment Services
Admission Criteria and Process

Vista's adult employment services holds paramount meeting the needs of our enrolled population. To continually realize this objective, Vista enrolls customers fitting certain clinical profiles who possess an interest in becoming competitively employed.

Program Description:

Vista's employment services are designed for customers living with autism, including those also diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability, who require individually arranged and negotiated employment opportunities with structured supports. Individuals that benefit most from Vista's employment services are those that require the development of socially relevant skills, minimization of interfering behaviors, increased independence of functional routines, and planned generalization from the onset of treatment. Vista's employment services braid empirically validated approaches, such as Customized Employment, with Applied Behavior Analysis to deliver effective treatment in order for customers to achieve their employment goals.

Admissions Criteria:

Referral for employment services, received by The Vista Adult Services Organization (VASO), must meet the following basic criteria:

- (Primary) Axis I diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Be over the age of 13, and legally allowed to work within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Show current in-place supports to meet needs not directly related to achieving employment (e.g., medical, behavioral, transportation)
- Customer/legal guardian(s) are available for team meetings regarding employment planning and support (Individualized Service Plan, or Individualized Education Plan)
- Participates in a funding stream of which Vista is enrolled or is eligible to accept
- Demonstrates or expresses an interest in competitive employment
- Place of residence is within 30-minutes of Hershey (individual exceptions will be considered)

Referral submissions meeting the above criteria are pre-screened based on the following criteria:

- Customers who receive services at Vista typically present with moderate-to-severe symptoms of ASD. They may display a combination of the following:
 - Significant and severe delays and deficits in communication, speech, and/or language abilities
 - Challenging behaviors (aggression, self-injurious behaviors, property destruction, etc.)
 - Problematic behaviors (self-stimulatory behaviors, high levels of distractibility, difficulty with changes and novelty, etc.) or behavior that otherwise results in the individual being unavailable for learning
 - Dependence upon supervisors or coworkers to complete activities of daily living (e.g., nourishment, monitoring time/taking breaks, self-care and hygiene)

- Inability to independently structure free time during scheduled breaks or independently complete simple assigned job responsibilities consistently
- Difficulty participating and/or learning new job-related skills in a group setting
- Customers further display needs in developing the following repertoires:
 - Completing of assigned job responsibilities in varying instructional conditions
 - Appropriately responding to environmental demands and stimuli
 - Controlling of aggressive/self-injurious behaviors that disrupt the environment
 - Controlling of problematic behaviors (self-stimulatory or off-task) that disrupt the environment
 - Communication skills that are used to access/accept/reject and escape items in the environment
 - Communication skills that are used to request help/answer questions/solve problems
 - Ability to focus on independent activities without close supervision and in absence of interfering behaviors
 - Ability to react in socially acceptable ways to coworkers or other peers within differing environments
 - Ability to safely navigate community environments
 - Interacting with supervisors, coworkers and others on the job site (giving/accepting of items, simple social exchanges, turn-taking, personal space, etc.)

During the pre-screening review, referral packets that include the following may not be appropriate:

- Customers who have a documented disability linked with emotional disturbances whose manifested symptoms of the emotional disturbance overshadow autism related needs/symptoms
- Customers/legal guardian(s) who are unwilling to fulfill obligations related to employment planning and support
- Customers who frequently or routinely require segregated instructional environments

Screening Procedures:

Referrals to VASO's employment services are received either directly from the customer or legal guardian(s), from county supports coordination, from school districts, or in some cases from other involved providers. Referral forms can be found on the website and should be completed in entirety and submitted to Vista, ATTN: Adult Employment Services. Referrals are pre-screened against admission criteria, generally within 14 days. Following pre-screening Vista employment staff will conduct a phone and in-person interview of the customer/legal guardian or referral source to obtain more information and to assess the ISP team's consideration of Vista services. Information gathered from the referral forms and interviews are used to evaluate each prospective customer. If it is deemed that Vista's services are a match for the customer and Vista has capacity to support, funding will be secured followed by the scheduling of an intake meeting to initiate services.