

Engagement 3 Summary Report

Supported Employment PBA Milestone Structure

September 14, 2020

The **Improve** Group

Report purpose

The DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning is being conducted as iterative, ongoing, agile engagement. As a part of this approach, PIPEin and VIP members are being invited for several data collection opportunities to help improve products and services. This report summarizes findings from DHS/DEED’s third stakeholder activity, a survey to gather feedback to improve the PBA Milestone Structure, administered in September 2020.

Contents

Report purpose.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Survey Executive Summary.....	3
Reading this report.....	3
Survey Findings.....	4
Appendix A: Open-Ended Survey Responses.....	6
Appendix B: Survey Instrument.....	8

Introduction

The DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning's third engagement was a survey to gather feedback to improve the Performance-Based Agreement (PBA) Milestone Structure, the payment structure used by DEED-VRS to pay for job search services. The survey was administered in September 2020 and led by The Improve Group (IG), a research and evaluation firm based in St. Paul, Minnesota. DHS and DEED sent an invitation to 47 PIPEin members who identified as employment service providers. A total of 37 individuals participated. IG analyzed the survey data; key findings and supporting evidence from this analysis is provided below. A copy of the open-ended survey responses can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Executive Summary

Overall, respondents said that more frequent payments would be a positive change from the current structure. When asked about additional things DEED-VRS should consider, some participants mentioned they would like to receive payments earlier in the employment process. A few respondents mentioned that more work happens in the earlier stages of their work and thus would benefit from having higher compensation early on. Most respondents said they would prefer to receive milestone payments at multiple times; nearly all respondents identified the signed placement plan meeting and after completing the first shift of employment as times they would like to receive payment.

Reading this report

To gather highlights and primary findings from the report, skim the section headers, bold findings statements and brief paragraphs under each. For detailed feedback, see the bullet points.

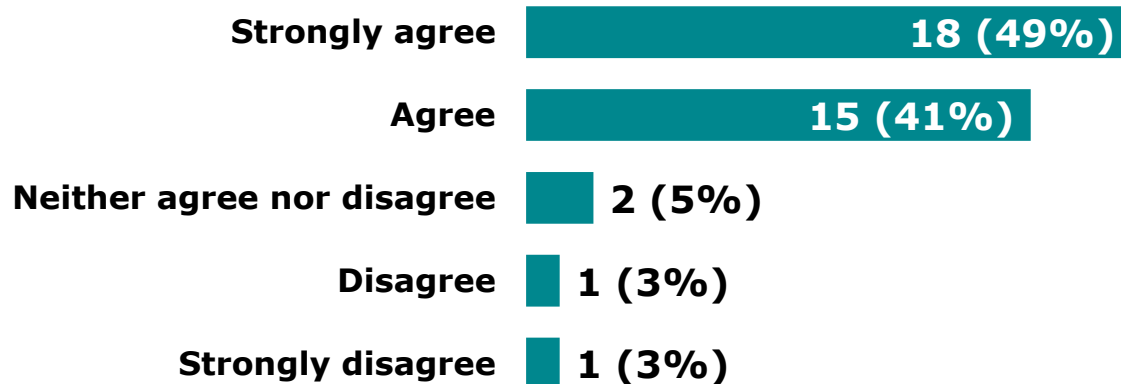
Survey Findings

Question 1: DEED-VRS will be paying a higher amount for the Supported Employment PBA and is considering a PBA milestone structure under which there could be more milestones than the existing PBA milestone structure. To what extent do you agree or disagree that more frequent milestone payments is a positive change from the current structure?

The current payment structure is:

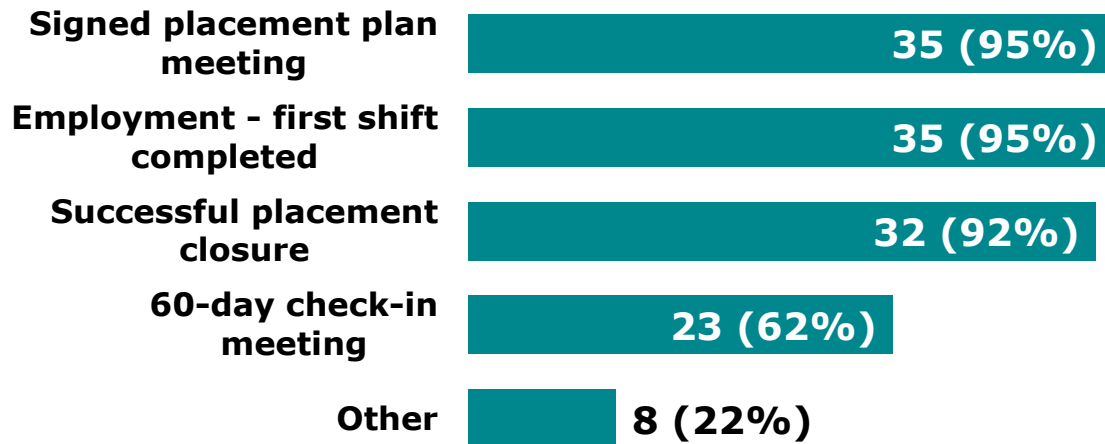
Milestone	Amount
Signed Placement Plan Meeting	\$1,330
Employment - First Shift Completed	\$1,200
Successful Placement Closure	\$1,270
Total	\$3,800

About 90 percent of respondents agreed that more frequent milestone payments would be a positive change from the current structure.



Question 2: As an employment service provider, when would you prefer to receive milestone payments, knowing that more payments will not change the total PBA reimbursement amount? (select all that apply)

More than 90 percent of respondents said they wanted to receive payments at the meeting where the placement plan is signed, after the first shift of employment is completed, and/or a successful placement closure.



Among respondents who said “Other,” four said they would prefer to receive milestone payments at 30 days post-employment. Two respondents said they’d like to see additional payments past 90 days.

Question 3: What else, if anything, would you like DEED-VRS to consider when determining the frequency of milestone payments in the new Supported Employment PBA Milestone Structure?

Respondents most frequently said they would like DEED-VRS to consider providing more payments earlier in the process.

Eight respondents said they wanted DEED-VRS to consider delivering payments earlier on in the process. Many of these respondents said that much of the work associated with finding employment, including going to job interviews, getting physicals and drug screens, and job coaching occurs at the beginning of the process. Respondents said this work requires more time spent on tasks prior to employment. Six respondents mentioned that the payments should reflect the work and time spent on tasks. A few participants also mentioned that they believe providers are being asked to do more work, such as additional reporting and job-seeking tasks, for the same amount of pay. Other topics respondents want DEED-VRS to consider include increasing the overall pay, addressing subjectivity with the end of milestones, and making additional considerations for those living in rural areas such as taking into consideration costs associated with traveling long distances.

Appendix A: Open-Ended Survey Responses

Note: The responses in the appendix are copied verbatim from raw survey data and may contain spelling and/or grammatical errors.

Question 2: As an employment service provider, when would you prefer to receive milestone payments, knowing that more payments will not change the total PBA reimbursement amount? (Other responses)

- Sometimes it may take longer than 60 days for placement. It would be great for other milestones before actual placement and first shift, maybe for applications or interviews completed?
- Tiered milestones for hours pre-search; First job interview completed
- at the 120 day mark
- 30 days on job & Closure payment split.
- Adding a large longevity milestone at 180 or 360
- 30-45 days after "first shift completed" - pre 90 day mark/successful placement closure"
- Add in payment once offer is received to pay for 1:1 time for preparing for first day. Also recommend a payment, or incentive payment structure for higher hourly wage and for higher hours per week worked.
- 30 day after employment
- 30 day employment success
- 60 or 90 days from placement plan being signed

Question 3: What else, if anything, would you like DEED-VRS to consider when determining the frequency of milestone payments in the new Supported Employment PBA Milestone Structure?

- In Greater MN travel is a huge topic to consider. For one client to travel to their location of choice for employment opportunity, it can be a huge expense for our non-profit. Our county alone is 2,225 sq miles. St. Louis County is 6,860 sq miles. Rural and frontier clients already have limited resources.
- To ensure that the vendor can receive the payments. Minimize any obstacles that could prevent the vendor receiving payment for the work they performed.
- I'd recommend that a milestone payment be made sometime before the case is closed. There have been times that an employer has terminated employment right before the 90 days. A lot of time has gone into maintaining the job without getting the reimbursement.
- If a person is hired shortly after the signed Placement Agreement, the 60 day milestone should still be a paid milestone.
- maintain the same 20 hours job coaching then additional funds are authorized
- To guarantee a new PBA if the job seeker has been in services for 1 year and has not found a job (even if the job goal is the same).

- It may take longer than the typical 20 hours of job coaching when working with individuals with higher/complex needs

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Thank you for your input about the new Supported Employment Performance Based Agreement (PBA)! DEED-VRS will use your input as they develop the milestone payment structure.

Recognizing that the current PBA Milestone Structure will not be viable for providers serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under the MOU agreement, DEED-VRS is in the process of creating a new Supported Employment PBA Milestone Structure that will be ready next July 2021. DEED-VRS has been reviewing supported employment performance-based placement and retention structures and anticipates developing a funding structure that supports quality services and incentivizes results. DEED-VRS will be paying a higher amount under the new Supported Employment PBA and **is now in the process of determining the structure and frequency of milestone payments.**

As a reminder, the current PBA milestone structure is provided below.

Milestone	Amount
Signed Placement Plan Meeting	\$1,330
Employment - First Shift Completed	\$1,200
Successful Placement Closure	\$1,270
Total	\$3,800

This survey is confidential; your name will not be connected with your responses.

1. DEED-VRS will be paying a higher amount for the Supported Employment PBA and is considering a PBA milestone structure under which there could be more milestones than the existing PBA milestone structure. To what extent do you agree or disagree that more frequent milestone payments is a **positive change** from the current structure?
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - I don't know

2. As an employment service provider, when would you prefer to receive milestone payments, knowing that the more payments will not change the total PBA reimbursement amount?
(select all that apply)
- Signed placement plan meeting
 - Employment – first shift completed
 - 60-day check-in meeting
 - Successful placement closure
 - Other: _____
3. What else, if anything, would you like DEED-VRS to consider when determining the frequency of milestone payments in the new Supported Employment PBA Milestone Structure? *(open-ended)*