



**Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities**

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**Supported Employment Fidelity Review Report**

**Provider:** Avita Community Partners

**Date(s) of Review:** December 8 -9, 2014

**Reviewers:** Erica Walker, MS SE Monitoring Specialist  
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**Purpose:**

This Supported Employment Fidelity Review was completed as part of the requirements for monitoring performance and ensuring that supported employment (SE) services delivered to ADASA consumers meet fidelity to the Dartmouth Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) model of SE, in accordance with the DBHDD ADA Settlement Agreement (ADASA). Information gathered from the fidelity review will be used to make recommendations to individual programs for quality improvement planning and will also be used to determine the need for further Training and Technical Assistance in providing evidence-based supported employment to consumers across the state.

**Background:**

Avita Community Partners is a community service board that provides comprehensive mental health, addictive disease, and developmental disability services to consumers in a 13- county area in Northeast Georgia. The Avita Board of Directors consists of at least one resident from each of the 13 counties represented in the Northeast Georgia area, and they are involved in and committed to services and policies. Avita provides services to children, adolescents, and adults through inpatient, residential, day program, and outpatient facilities. They are currently serving approximately 12,000 consumers per year in behavioral health services. Avita's previous Fidelity review was conducted on February 4, 2014, and the agency received a score of 91, which indicated fair fidelity. On the previous fidelity report, Avita scored below a 3 in the following areas: Organization-1 (Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment); Services-4 (Rapid search for competitive jobs); & Services-6 (Job development-frequent employer contact).

**Method:**

The Fidelity review was conducted on site and included the following activities:

1. Interviews: SE Supervisor; QA & Clinical Director; CEO; Benefits Planner; 3 Consumers; 2 ESs; 2 Case Managers; VR Counselor; & Psychiatrist
2. Observations: SE team meeting, and community job development with 1 Employment Specialists
3. Review of consumer charts: 6 consumer charts

The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale was completed following the visit. This report contains the completed scale, with scores and comments for each item. The scale measures three aspects of the program: staffing, organization, and services. Each item is rated on a 5-point response format, ranging from 1 = no implementation to 5 = full implementation, with intermediate numbers representing progressively greater degrees of implementation.

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE**

**STAFFING**

1. Caseload size	Rating	Comments
<p>Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>The SE unit averages about 24 consumers per case load. The SE team has been reviewing case loads to decide which consumers will be discharged and which consumers will be enrolled into SE services from the waiting lists. This is in an effort to maintain stay in compliance with the 20:1 ratio. Also, there is a vacant ES position, and the SE Supervisor is serving a total of 29 consumers until the vacancy is filled; each ES is individually serving 22 consumers.</p>

**Recommendations:** It is noted that Avita is in the process of hiring a full-time ES in order to reduce the SE Supervisor’s load. ESs should review caseloads and determine which consumers to transition from SE services. Funded capacity is considered, as Avita is contracted to serve 67 consumers; which places the unit at a disadvantage unless adequate staffing is achieved in order to adhere to the 20:1 ratio.

2. Employment services staff	Rating	Comments
<p>Employment specialists provide only employment services.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Employment specialists’ primary focus is employment services. ESs provide an array of employment related services to consumers. However, based on case notes, one ES assists consumers with case management services. Stress management, family issues, and housing related problems are discussed and documented. One ES stated that issues such as housing and medication management arise and can affect employment opportunities. Therefore, the ES is performing duties that go beyond the scope of supported employment.</p>

**Recommendations:** ESs should focus only on SE services. The SE team should utilize case managers and practitioners that are part of ACT team and core clinic services. When individuals have counseling or case management needs, ESs should assist them in contacting the appropriate MH service provider. While the ES is willing and able to help individuals with these services, it is important for an ES to focus exclusively on SE services, and they may help by linking them to their appropriate clinical or case management service provider.

<b>3. Vocational generalists</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another MH practitioner.	5	Area of Strength. There is sufficient evidence that ESs and the SE Supervisor are providing and carrying out all phases of employment services, including, intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, and job coaching. Avita’s SE team does an exemplary job at documenting SE and follow along supports. Based on all consumers’ recounts, the SE team provides unlimited supports and carries out all phases of employment.

**ORGANIZATION**

<b>1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Employment specialists are part of up to 2 mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.	3	As stated in the previous Fidelity review, FY 14, the employment specialists and SE supervisor receive at least 90% of referrals from at least seven treatment teams combined. Because the SE supervisor and the employment specialists serve defined counties and is a large service provider, each ES is linked to specific treatment teams in their respective counties of service. The SE supervisor is a part of two treatment teams, one ES is a part of two treatment teams, and the other ES is a part of three treatment teams. The ES assigned to three teams has diminished the frequency of attendance to only once per month, instead of on a weekly basis.

**Recommendation:** As previously recommended, the agency must decrease the ESs' overload of team assignments. It is recommended that each employment specialist is part of no more than 2 treatment teams. The agency should review which teams are essential to SE services; if a team does not have shared consumers with SE or make referrals to SE, the ES should only meet with that team quarterly, attend staff meetings to discuss potential referrals to SE, or be available for conference calls. The idea is integration, while allowing time for ESs to engage consumers in the community. This may be problematic because ESs serve defined counties.

2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact	Rating	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ES attends weekly MH treatment team meetings.</li> <li>• ES participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.</li> <li>• Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/profile, employment plan, progress note) is integrated into consumer's MH treatment record.</li> <li>• ES's office is located in close proximity to (or shared with) his/her MH treatment team members.</li> <li>• ES helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.</li> </ul>	5	<p>Area of Strength.</p> <p>Referrals, consumer updates, and shared decision making is discussed amongst ESs and the MH treatment team members. Also, SE and Clinical documentation is integrated into consumers' charts. Case Managers make referrals to SE when a consumer expresses interest in employment. Integration between the MH staff and SE is ideal in providing seamless and productive services to consumers. It is impressive that the ACT Vocational Specialist participates with the SE team for unit meetings.</p>

3. Collaboration between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	Rating	Comments
<p>The employment specialist and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared consumers and identifying potential referrals.</p>	2	<p>Currently, one ES and VR have been working in partnership, but it is not productive throughout the entire SE team. The SE team understands the importance of collaborating with VR, and is in the process of reviewing caseloads, and having discussions with consumers about the benefits of working with both agencies to achieve employment goals. However, one ES has two shared consumers with VR, but consumers participated in work evaluations and work adjustment training. The SE team and VRCs have completed IPS training, but there has been no established meeting schedule to cultivate the</p>

		relationship and discuss potential referrals.
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**Recommendation:** Collaboration between SE team and VR counselors is imperative. The partnership with VR should be enhanced throughout the entire SE team, and should not be limited to one ES. Training efforts should be commended, but the SE team should take a lead role in establishing a meeting schedule and inviting the VRC to participate in MH treatment team meetings. As recommended at the last Fidelity review Fy14, the IPS model should not be compromised, as consumers are shared with VR. Consumers should not be actively participating in both Avita’s SE services and VR’s work adjustment training. Work adjustment training is not viewed as competitive employment; if it is the consumer’s choice to participate in work adjustment training vs. seeking rapid employment, the consumer should be engaged in transition and discharged from SE services until the consumer has chosen to seek employment. The SE team should immediately educate all VR Counselors, in their respective service areas, on the IPS model, and staff consumers regularly to determine which services will be beneficial for IPS consumers, while keeping competitive employment as the key focus.

4. Vocational unit	Rating	Comments
<p>At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other’s caseload when needed.</p>	4	<p>The Supported Employment unit consists of 1 SE Supervisor and 2 full-time employment specialists. An additional ES will be added to the team in the near future. Due to Avita servicing very rural areas and with each employment specialist working in defined counties, the SE team meets bi-weekly via a conference call to discuss referrals, program issues/updates, and specific consumers. The SE team also meets in person on a quarterly basis to discuss all consumers. It is evident that Employment Specialists have informal conversations with the SE supervisor on a regular basis. The SE Supervisor has not designated adequate staff coverage to provide back-up for ESs, if/when needed; the SE Supervisor and ESs are not in close proximity.</p>

**Recommendation:** Ideally, SE group supervision should occur weekly in person or as a tele-conference, and each employment specialist can serve as a back-up for another employment specialist, if needed. This presents as a challenge for Avita due a large coverage area. However, meeting regularly as a group is encouraged so that programmatic challenges and issues can be resolved quickly. Another suggestion may be to identify and include the mental health practitioners as a back-up for follow along supports, when it is challenging for the SE team to serve as a back-up for each other.

5. Role of employment supervisor	Rating	Comments
<p>Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists’ skills are developed and</p>	5	<p>Due to being short staffed, the SE Supervisor effectively balances a</p>

<p>improved through outcome-based supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One full-time supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists.</li> <li>• The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than 10 employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisor activities on a prorated basis.)</li> <li>• Supervisor conducts weekly supported employment supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients in their work</li> <li>• Supervisor communicates with mental health treatment team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem solve programmatic issues and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>• Supervisor accompanies employment specialists who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.</li> <li>• Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.</li> </ul>	<p>full caseload of 29 consumers and manages daily SE functions. Currently, the SE Supervisor manages 2 full-time ESs. The SE Supervisor is only responsible for SE duties. SE Supervisor meets weekly with MH teams to ensure that services are well integrated. The SE Supervisor monitors ESs' job logs, and has been providing field mentoring/field observations as needed, on a regular basis. With an ES who was having difficulties but is no longer with the agency. The SE Supervisor does not conduct weekly supervision with ESs to review client situations and strategies, but meet as a team with ESs via tele-conference on a bi-weekly basis and speaks informally with ESs weekly due to the vast distance between each ES's respective counties. The SE Supervisor meets with each ES, in their respective counties, on a monthly basis for individual supervision. In addition, the SE Supervisor meets monthly with the Clinical Director/COO to discuss programmatic challenges and outcomes, participates in monthly QI meetings, and gives updates yearly to board members.</p>
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<b>6. Zero exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services, too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended regardless of the reason that the job ended or the number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>The SE team's theoretical knowledge of zero exclusion is evident and most consumers who want to work are not excluded from SE services. The SE team will continue to work with consumers who have lost a job or who are not satisfied with their employment. In contrast, the manner in which the community support team decides if consumers are ready for employment is based on stability, readiness, and compliance. The CST</p>

	<p>Therapist understands how vital employment is to recovery and stated that she talks to all consumers about employment, once they are compliant and stable. The ES, in that particular county, does not attend CST treatment team meetings, but talks informally to CST team members about consumers' progression.</p>
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**Recommendation:** To avoid exclusion, it is recommended that individuals are not considered ineligible for SE services based upon staffs' perception of "readiness" for employment. The SE team seems to have knowledge of the Zero-Exclusion principle, but the CST staff appear to not fully buy into the established principle that once consumers express a desire to work, they should be referred to SE services. It is imperative that the SE team and executive staff continue to provide ongoing training to promote principles of the IPS model throughout the agency. Education on this principle should be incorporated in staff meetings and treatment team meetings. Examples should be given, so that all staff members understand that regardless of consumers' symptoms, employment is a vital component of recovery, and no one should "hold-off" on working because of staffs' perceptions of readiness. The culture "be ready for work" must be eliminated immediately by all staff members, in order to be in full compliance with the IPS model in this area.

7. Agency focus on competitive employment	Rating	Comments
<p>Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.</li> <li>• Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.</li> <li>• Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.</li> <li>• Agency supports ways for consumers to share work stories with other consumers and staff (e.g., agency wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at consumer treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.</li> <li>• Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.</li> </ul>	5	<p>Area of Strength.</p> <p>While reviewing consumers' charts, it was noted that intake forms and treatment plans include questions about employment. Job boards are displayed in the lobby of the agency where all consumers and staff can view and gather information about SE services and current employment opportunities. In addition, Avita has a monthly newsletter that is distributed to staff that discusses SE services and consumer's success stories. Consumers also share stories in peer groups and at board meetings annually. The agency rates competitive employment; the rate is shared throughout the agency's leadership and staff. The COO is heavily involved and works closely with the SE Supervisor to ensure that monthly programmatic data is correct.</p>

8. Executive team support for supported employment	Rating	Comments
<p>Agency executive team members assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principals of evidence-based supported employment.</li> <li>• Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.</li> <li>• At least one member of the executive team actively participates in SE leadership team (steering committee) meetings that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. Steering committee is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. Committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.</li> <li>• The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all staff during the first six months and at least yearly annually (i.e., SE Kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.). This item is not delegated to another administrator.</li> <li>• The SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.</li> </ul>	5	<p>Area of Strength.</p> <p>The executive team and directors should be commended on their extensive knowledge and involvement with SE services. The executive staff is very much involved in setting goals, monitoring the QIP plans, and implementing goals that help with the success of the SE team. The COO implemented an incentive based plan, for the SE team, that is based on Fidelity benchmarks; this monetary based plan is ideal, in that it creates incentives for achieving and maintaining high fidelity. Monthly, the Clinical Director/COO attends treatment team meetings, QI meetings, and management meetings. The leadership staff meet monthly on behalf of all programs, and the SE Supervisor is included in the meetings and discuss SE programmatic functions. The COO is committed to the mission of the agency and can articulate clearly every aspect of the daily functions and challenges of the SE program. The CEO is also very knowledgeable about the SE program and previous FyY14 Fidelity report.</p>

**SERVICES**

1. Work incentives planning	Rating	Comments
<p>All consumers are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives' planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits,</p>	5	<p>Area of Strength.</p> <p>Consumers have access to the state Benefits Planner, as evidenced by interviews from the Benefits Planner, ESs, and Consumers. ESs</p>

<p>medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits and any other source of income. Consumers are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.</p>	<p>stated that they refer all consumers who receive SSA benefits to the Benefits Planner. Per the Benefits Planner, the SE team has referred about 11 consumers. The Benefits Planner meets with consumers initially and on an on-going basis once they are working. Consumers are given a print-out that explains benefits. Consumers are also referred to Case Managers for other supportive services, to include medical benefits, food stamps, and housing.</p>
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<b>2. Disclosure</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>Employment specialists provide consumers with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment specialists do not require all consumers to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.</li> <li>• Employment specialists offer to discuss with consumers the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of consumers disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure relates to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.</li> <li>• Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a psychiatric disability, or difficulty with anxiety, etc.) and offer examples of what could be said to employers.</li> <li>• Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if consumers have not found employment after two months or if consumers reports difficulties on the job).</li> </ul>	<p>5</p>	<p>An area of Strength. A unique disclosure note system has been developed and implemented that tracks and updates the issue of disclosure on an on-going basis. The note system is a part of progress notes and encourages ESs to not only have an on-going conversation, but also document discussions. The SE team does not require consumers to disclose their psychiatric disability in order to receive SE services. Disclosure forms are detailed and specific, and include questions that address advantages and disadvantages of disclosing certain information to employers.</p>

<b>3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>Initial vocational profile/assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc., is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Avita utilizes a very detailed career/vocational profile which focuses on consumer's interests, employment goals, strengths, skills and barriers. Information regarding consumers' employment history, daily activities, and natural supports</p>

<p>accommodations. Sources of information include the consumer, MH treatment team, clinical records, and with the consumer's permission, from family members and previous employers.</p>		<p>are also included. However, there was no evidence that career profiles were updated as changes occur or on an on-going basis.</p>
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**Recommendation:** Avita should continue to adhere to the current plan in place of completing career profiles; this will allow ESs to gather pertinent information regarding consumers' skills, employment goals, and interests. Further recommendations include completing career profiles as changes and developments occur. Updating career profiles will allow ESs to routinely capture updated preferences and work experiences. In addition, career profiles must be updated with each new employment experience so that consumers' skills are well documented and any staff member providing consumer related services can have access to changes. ESs may add amendments to existing profiles or career plans to update employment goals and work history, as that information may change more frequently.

4. Rapid search for competitive job	Rating	Comments
<p>Initial employment assessment and face-to-face employer contact by the consumer or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days after program entry.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>A repeat area of deficiency. Avita has developed a tracking system since previous Fidelity review, FY14. Based on calculations of information submitted for this area, ESs averaged about 33 days until first face-to-face contact with employers for some consumers. However, submitted documents also showed inaccuracies regarding the number of days to employer contacts, as eight consumers' face-to-face employer engagements were coded n/a and were not tracked at all. One consumer's enrollment date is noted and occurred within 2 weeks of this Fidelity review. Further, case notes verified that some consumers completed on-line applications in lieu of face-to-face contact with employers.</p>

**Recommendation:** Recommendations given in this area for the FY14 Fidelity Review must be implemented in order to meet fidelity in this area. Rapid job search is an essential component of the IPS model. Therefore, it is imperative that ESs ensure that the first employer face-to-face contact is tracked and occurs within 30 days after enrollment into the SE program for all consumers. This would include employer contacts made by ESs, consumers, or both. Some employers may require on-line applications; however, on-line job searches cannot substitute for

face-to-face employer engagements. In addition, ESs should make numerous attempts to contact consumers that are not engaging in services. However, ESs can continue to make face-to-face employer contact within 30 days on behalf of consumers, contact consumers, and inform them of job leads. Efforts may motivate consumers to meet with ESs or follow up on potential job leads. Information and dates of first face-to-face employer contact should be documented in consumers' progress notes. In the event ESs are unable to engage consumers after numerous attempts, consumers should be staffed with treatment teams and collaborative efforts should occur to engage consumers. After failed attempts, the team should decide whether to discharge non-engaged consumers from SE services; this will also allow individuals that are currently on the SE waitlist, to access SE services.

5. Individualized job search	Rating	Comments
<p>Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on consumers' preferences and needs rather than the job market (i.e. those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.</p>	2	<p>A decreased rating in this area. In reviewing vocational assessments and case notes, some consumers' goals were not specific. For an example, goals stated "consumer wants to work full-time". In addition, job development logs did not include consumers' names; therefore, reviewers were unable to determine whether job searches were based on the job market, as opposed to consumers' preferences.</p>

**Recommendations:** The SE team will need to ensure that consumers' job search plans highlight consumers' job preferences. Individualized job search plans, should be updated with specific and individualized job interests. It is noted that some consumers may have the same job interests or may prefer to do "anything"; however, ESs should help consumers link their strengths and preferences to specific jobs and work settings, and document specific reasons why consumers chose specific goals. Avita has an elaborate job tracking system, but it appears to track employers instead of consumers; each potential employer is tracked separately, and as ESs conduct job development, the employer is added to the tracking log. Eventually, the current logs could become massive and complicated as ESs continue to add new employers. Logs should specify names of consumers for whom ESs provided job development.

6. Job development- frequent employer contact	Rating	Comments
<p>Each employment specialist makes at least six (6) face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of consumers looking for work. An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets with the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the consumer is present or not. Consumer-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.</p>	3	<p>According to submitted job developing logs, in the month of October, the SE team averaged 4.75 employer contacts. Per the SE Supervisor, the SE team has increased community engagement. However, community engagement cannot be done in lieu of job development. Job development should be consumer specific.</p>

**Recommendations:** All ESs must make six face-to-face employer contacts per week, in order to be in compliance with the IPS model. Because the SE Supervisor carries a caseload, he is also expected to make six face-to-face

employer contacts per week, and the COO/Clinical Director should closely monitor this area for compliance. The team should establish an immediate goal of making the required six face-to-face employer contacts per week, in order to increase relationships with employers. If an ES is going to be out of work for any particular reason, it is recommended that the ES makes up for any job development time lost due to time out of the office, for example if the ES is going to be out for a week on vacation, 12 face-to-face employer contacts should occur before or after the ESs vacation to make up for the missed week.

7. Job development- quality of employer contact	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe consumer strengths that are a good match for the employer.	4	ESs seek to build relationships with employers, as evidenced by consumers' statements, ESs, and job logs. One ES was observed while conducting job development; the ES is comfortable learning the needs of employers, conveys what the SE program has to offer, and describe consumers' that are a good match for the employer. Also, job logs should be specific, and searches should reflect consumers' chosen goals. If consumers are not listed on job logs, it is difficult to determine whether employers are a good match for consumers.

**Recommendation:** ESs should have a particular consumer in mind while conducting job development and engaging employers in the community. The SE team does visit with employers on more than one occasion in an effort to build relationships; however, the SE team should increase job development efforts and complete job logs entirely to ensure that employers are a good match for consumers.

8. Diversity of job types	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists assist consumers in obtaining different types of jobs.	3	ESs assist consumers with different types of jobs about 69% of the time. Avita has 32 employed consumers. There are four stocker/stackers, four crew members, and two dishwashers.

**Recommendations:** ESs should document discussions on diverse job types and research alternative employment options with consumers. It is noted that consumers may have similar interests, but should be given options to discuss and explore other opportunities that may be a good match. The ES should help consumers consider employment options that go beyond job titles, but rather how and why the job will be a good fit for the consumer, based on information such as strengths, interests, goals, lessons learned from previous jobs, environments, symptoms, etc.

9. Diversity of employers	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists assist consumers in obtaining jobs with	4	ESs assist consumers with obtaining

different employers.		jobs with different employers about 82% of the time. Out of 32 employed consumers, four are employed with McDonalds and two at Wal-Mart.
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**Recommendations:** ESs should continue to build employer relationships in the community. ESs should assist consumers in applying to companies that are diversified. For example, three consumers may have listed McDonalds as a job goal, but ESs should research other companies with consumers and help consumer explore why the companies will be a good fit, while considering consumers’ strengths and needs.

10. Competitive jobs	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status (e.g. transitional employment slots). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for, and are not set aside for people with disabilities.	5	Area of Strength. The number of Avita’s consumers that are employed is substantial (32 out 70), which is about 45%. It is clear that ESs utilize a wide range of avenues and resources in assisting consumers with obtaining employment. All consumers are employed in competitive jobs and receive pay that is at least minimum wage.

11. Individualized follow along supports	Rating	Comments
Consumers receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, consumer preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g. medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e. natural supports) and employment specialists. Employment specialist also provides employer supports (e.g. educational information, job accommodations) at consumer’s request. Employment specialist offers help with career development (i.e. assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties).	5	Area of Strength. Based on reviews from ESs, Case Managers, and consumers, Avita provides good follow-along supports. Supports are coordinated between Case Managers and ESs. Efforts are documented in case notes. ESs make attempts to provide supports according to the IPS model, when feasible. Consumers’ preferences are honored when deciding different types of supports.

12. Time unlimited follow along supports	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists have face-to-face contact within one (1) week before starting a job, within three (3) days after starting a job, weekly for the first month and at least monthly for a year or more on average, after working steadily and desired by consumers. Consumers are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health treatment team member following steady employment. Employment specialists contact consumers	4	It is evident that ESs provide follow-along supports. ESs are providing supports for as long as consumers need to achieve stability on the job, and consumers are not discharged at a set time frame. However, clear plans are not developed with

within three (3) days of learning about the job loss.		consumers for transition or step-down from SE services. Step-down plans ensure that MH teams, and/or individuals specified by consumers will continue supports for consumers; if/when consumers are discharged from SE services.
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**Recommendations:** ESs should continue to have discussions with consumers regarding needed follow-along supports. In addition, conversations around creating step-down plans and documentation of these plans should begin immediately. ESs should assist consumers in identifying supports once they are stepped down from SE services; a plan should be in place as to what kind of support will phase in to assist the consumer, as the ES phases out. Going forward, any consumer that obtains employment should receive provision of follow-along supports and participate in creation of a step-down plan. The SE Supervisor and ESs should review case loads, determine consumers that are stable in their employment roles, staff consumers with the treatment teams, and step-down support plans need to be implemented immediately. Step-down plans can be added to Avita’s current job support plans, but plans should be specific to each consumer and serve as an outline for services once consumers discharge from SE.

<b>13. Community-based services</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists.	4	It is evident that the SE team spends a great deal of time engaging consumers in the community. The SE team has also increased community engagement, as all ESs participate in a monthly chamber meeting, an employment committee thru DOL, and a community family connections committee. However, community connections should not replace job development in the community.

**Recommendation:** Supported Employment is a community-based service, which means that the majority of the ESs’ day should be in the community developing employer contacts and meeting with consumers. The SE team should be spending 65% of time in the community conducting employment related activities a week; such as meeting with consumers to conduct job development, or to meet with employers. All ESs should increase job development time to ensure that the required six face-to-face contacts are consistently met.

<b>14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits.</li> <li>• Systematic documentation of outreach attempts.</li> <li>• Engagement and outreach attempts are made by integrated team members.</li> <li>• Multiple home/community visits.</li> <li>• Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team members.</li> <li>• Connect with family, when applicable.</li> </ul>	5	Area of Strength: The ES has a clear understanding of the importance of assertive engagement and outreach attempts by MH team members. There was no evidence that SE services are terminated based on consumers not engaging in services. ESs and MH treatment team members share

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once it is clear that the consumer no longer wants to work or continue SE services, the team stops outreach.</li> </ul>	<p>information and provide updates regarding consumers who have not been engaging in services. Avita ensures that an integrated approach is taken when providing services to consumers.</p>
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**SUMMARY**

Avita has a well-established Supported Employment program. It is impressive how the SE team is knowledgeable about all consumers and includes the ACT Vocational Specialist in every SE unit meeting. Competitive employment is a key focus, and consumers speak highly of ESs and the services that they receive. Efforts to partner with VR should not go without mention, and continued efforts are encouraged. In addition, Avita’s executive leadership demonstrates an exceptional amount of support for SE services, and the COO/Clinical Director is highly involved in the SE program as a whole. Leadership understands how vital employment is to a consumer’s recovery. However, there are some areas of concern and some areas that need immediate attention. The agency should ensure that all staff members are trained on the IPS model to promote a more integrative mindset and a clearer understanding of the “zero-exclusion” principle. In addition, The SE team should keep precise job logs, which reflect consumers’ names, date of contact, employer contact information, and outcomes of visits. The SE Supervisor should closely monitor the required six face-to-face employer contacts on a weekly basis and ensure that all consumers have face-to-face contact with an employer within the 30 day time frame. Also, the Clinical Director should monitor the SE Supervisor’s weekly contacts, since the SE Supervisor is responsible for case load. Further, ESs should only provide services that are within the scope Supported Employment, and if a consumer requires services that go beyond SE, the consumer should be immediately referred to Case Managers.

**The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale score is 99, which indicates Fair Fidelity.**

All programs receiving a review will be required to address any item that scores below a 3 with a quality improvement plan. Each provider is strongly encouraged to address any additional areas/items as they see important in their overall program’s quality improvement. The following fidelity items will need to be addressed with a Quality Improvement Plan:

Organization- 3	Collaboration between employment specialist and VR
Services-4	Rapid Search for competitive jobs
Services- 5	Individualized job search

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE SCORE SHEET**

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Caseload size	4
2. Employment services staff	3
3. Vocational generalists	5
<b>Organization</b>	
1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment	3
2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact	5
3. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	2
4. Vocational unit	4
5. Role of employment supervisor	5
6. Zero exclusion criteria	3
7. Agency focus on competitive employment	5
8. Executive team support for SE	5
<b>Services</b>	
1. Work incentives planning	5
2. Disclosure	5
3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	4
4. Rapid search for competitive job	2
5. Individualized job search	2
6. Job development- Frequent employer contact	3
7. Job development- Quality of employer contact	4
8. Diversity of job types	3
9. Diversity of employers	4
10. Competitive jobs	5
11. Individualized follow-along supports	5
12. Time-unlimited follow-along supports	4
13. Community-based services	4
14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>99</b>

<b>Score Key</b>	
115-125	Exemplary Fidelity
100-114	Good Fidelity
74-99	Fair Fidelity
73 and below	Not Supported Employment