



Supported Employment Fidelity Review Report

Provider: Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board

Date(s) of Review: October 23, 2014 & October 24, 2014

Reviewers: Tammatha Kinder, MSW; SE Specialist
Erica Walker, MS; SE Specialist

Purpose:

This Supported Employment Fidelity Review was requested by the DBHDD ADA Settlement Agreement (ADASA) Coordinator in order to ensure that supported employment (SE) services delivered to ADASA consumers meet fidelity to the Dartmouth Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) model of SE. 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:

The Cobb County Community Services Board and the Douglas County Community Services Board (Cobb/Douglas CSB) provide mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services to over 14,000 people annually. They provide services at 45 locations and also within the communities of Cobb, Douglas, and Cherokee Counties. Cobb/Douglas CSB has a strong history of providing Supported Employment services during the past 15 years. Cobb/Douglas CSB currently has two full-time Employment Specialists on staff; the SE Director also oversees the developmental disabilities program and community-based services. Cobb/Douglas CSB currently is contracted to serve 48 consumers in supported employment (8 MHBG consumers / 40 ADASA slots). Cobb CSB's previous Fidelity Review was conducted on December 2, 2013. The Fidelity score totaled 109, which indicated Good Fidelity.

Method:

The Fidelity Review was conducted by Pilot desk-top review and included the following activities:

1. Teleconferences with the SE Director, CFO, CEO, UM Director, 2 Employment Specialists, Director of Acute Care Services, 3 Case Manager, 3 consumers.
2. Review of consumer's charts (6), field mentoring logs, and job logs.

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
Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer.	5	ESs' current caseloads appear to be in compliance with the 20:1 or fewer ratio. Based on documentation submitted for this Fidelity review, reviewers are unclear as to how many individuals are on each caseload; the caseload list submitted showed 27 active consumers. However, one ES stated 18 consumers on her caseload; the other ES stated 19 consumers on her caseload. The SE Director stated that caseload sizes are close to the maximum, as she attempts to balance caseloads, so that ESs are in compliance with the 20:1 ratio.
2. Employment services staff	Rating	Comments
Employment specialists provide only employment services.	5	Area of strength: There is no evidence that ESs are providing services outside of SE. Consumers are encouraged to speak with case managers regarding issues that are unrelated to employment.
3. Vocational generalists	Rating	Comments
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: Based on case documentation and consumer reports, ESs are carrying out all phases of employment to include: intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports.

ORGANIZATION

1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment	Rating	Comments
<p>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.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Cobb has a decreased rating in this area since the previous Fidelity Review, FY’ 14. ESs are attending weekly ACT team meetings once per week, but the majority of ESs referrals come from MH teams at “The Circle”. ESs are no longer participating in weekly MH treatment team meetings, per case managers. Case managers suggest that they communicate with the SE team mostly via phone or email. The SE Director refutes this report; therefore, further documentation was requested at the time of review. Reviewers requested MH treatment team notes and/or agendas. The SE Director provided documentation that dated back to March, 2014. There was no recent documentation submitted to verify that ESs are currently attending MH treatment team meetings.</p>

Recommendations: The SE team should participate in MH treatment team meetings, as over half of SE referrals come from “The Circle” and other outpatient clinics. ESs should resume meeting with the MH team once per month, as previously documented in Fidelity report, FY’ 14. At each meeting, ESs can rotate who will take SE notes and maintain a copy of the meeting’s agenda and sign in sheet. The SE Director is unaware that ESs are not attending MH treatment team meetings and should play a more active role in day-to-day SE operations. The SE Director should also participate in MH treatments, in an effort to stay abreast on how well SE is entrenched with other MH services.

2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact	Rating	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ES attends weekly MH treatment team meetings. ○ ES participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making. ○ Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/profile, employment plan, progress note) is integrated into consumer’s MH treatment record. ○ ES’s office is located in close proximity to (or shared with) his/her MH treatment team members. ○ ES helps the team think about employment for people who haven’t yet been referred to supported employment services. 	<p>2</p>	<p>Cobb has a decreased rating in this area since the last Fidelity Review, FY’ 14. ESs attend and play an active role in weekly ACT treatment teams but are no longer participating in monthly MH treatment teams. Some documentation from MH team members and SE team is integrated into electronic records. However, vocational profiles are kept in separate SE files and are in the process of being scanned into the ECR. ESs are mobile and are not</p>

	<p>located in the same building as MH teams and outpatient clinics, from whom they receive referrals. However, due to Cobb's large consumer population and multiple clinics in distinguished counties, it is not possible for ESs' office to be located in close proximity to all MH teams. Because ESs are no longer attending MH team meeting, their involvement and abilities to share strategies and solutions to consumers' problems have been limited.</p>
--	--

Recommendations: ESs and SE Director should actively participate in MH treatment team meetings, and should take the opportunity to educate MH team members on the IPS model, with focus on the zero-exclusion principle. Cohesive and integrated teams share information, make decisions as a team, and provide feedback to other team members. In addition, the SE team should help mental health practitioners think about employment for everyone on their case load and begin to view employment as a part of recovery. The goal of integration is to provide seamless services, so that consumers can receive the same message from all providers. Frequent and informal communication is encouraged and should continue amongst all team members for planning and coordination of services. In addition, it is appropriate for the SE team to keep copies of vocational profiles and disclosure forms in separate SE files for easy access. However, all documentation should be immediately scanned into the electronic system, so that MH teams are aware of consumers' changes and statuses.

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>	<p>1</p>	<p>This area is a repeat deficiency and a decreased rating. The SE team does not have any shared consumers with VR, and there is no evidence of service delivery collaboration. It is noted that the SE Director and ESs met with VR staff members, and Cobb CSB is in the process of renewing their VR contract.</p>

Recommendations: Efforts to foster and maintain a relationship with VR should be continuous. It is the responsibility of the SE Director to enhance communications between both agencies, set up meetings with VR Managers, and establish a fruitful relationship between both agencies. SE Director should contact the Unit Manager of the VR office or Regional Director of the area, attend VR unit meetings regularly, and describe services that Cobb can offer to their consumers and vice versa. In addition, the IPS model should not be compromised, as consumers are shared with VR; therefore, the ES and the designated VR Counselor should communicate weekly and staff consumers regularly to determine which services will be beneficial for IPS consumers.

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>	<p>4</p>	<p>The SE Director and 2 full-time ESs comprise the SE unit. The SE Director does not carry a caseload but does have other management responsibilities within the agency.</p>

	<p>The SE Director stated that she meets with ESs on a bi-weekly basis to discuss consumers, caseload challenges, and potential referrals. Currently, ESs provide back-up services for each other, and often job develop together for added support. The SE Director suggested that she does not meet often or provide much oversight because both ESs are seasoned in their roles.</p>
--	---

Recommendations: Ideally, SE supervision should occur in person on a weekly basis to promote team work and ongoing strategic planning. However, meeting regularly as a unit is encouraged so that programmatic challenges and issues can be resolved quickly and insight, support, and guidance can be provided to the employment specialists regardless of ESs tenure in their roles. If weekly in-person SE team meetings are not possible, the SE Director should consider a weekly phone conference with ESs and continue bi-weekly meetings as scheduled.

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 improved through outcome-based supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One full-time supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. ○ 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.) ○ Supervisor conducts weekly supported employment supervision designed to review consumer situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help consumers in their work ○ 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. ○ 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. ○ Supervisor reviews current consumer outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly. 	<p>3</p>	<p>SE Director has a strong understanding of the IPS model and helps the executive team in establishing clear program goals for the SE program. The SE Director is also highly involved, to varying degrees, with consumers and their outcomes and progression. The SE Director has other managerial duties, and stated that devotion to the SE program varies from week to week. The SE Director admits to meeting with ESs bi-weekly but also admits that she does not provide regular shadowing with ESs because they are seasoned in their roles. The SE Director does not attend MH treatment team meetings, but does participate in weekly management meetings and QI Management meeting. The SE Supervisor reviews program goals and performances with Leadership on a weekly basis.</p>

Recommendations: SE Director should devote more time to SE services, providing adequate supervision is a critical component to a successful IPS program. Other responsibilities should be limited to a prorated basis so that more programmatic oversight occurs. It is recommended that the SE Director provides more oversight to the SE program, to include weekly monitoring of job development logs, as one ES's job logs does not specify consumers' name; both ESs have limited involvement with MH treatment teams. Additionally, more emphasis should be placed on fostering a relationship with VR and the benefits navigator that is assigned to the area. Further, the SE Director should ensure that the message about SE and IPS model resonates throughout the agency with all staff members. It is difficult for an SE Director to track the needs of different programs, while also monitoring and developing SE staff, tracking outcomes, monitoring benchmarks, and setting goals for the SE program.

6. Zero exclusion criteria	Rating	Comments
<p>All consumers 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. Consumers are not screened out formally or informally.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>The SE team's theoretical knowledge of zero exclusion is evident. 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 case managers decide if consumers are ready for employment is inappropriately based on stability, readiness, and compliance. Case managers that were interviewed have limited knowledge of the IPS zero-exclusion principle. Case Managers stated that they would try and determine the severity of a consumer's symptoms before making a referral to SE. Case managers also stated that they would not refer a consumer who was aggressive or unstable on medication. It appears that MH clinicians approach is to operate under the premise of consumers being stable enough for employment. One Case Manager received instruction to only refer consumers to SE that met ACT criteria.</p>

Recommendations: To avoid exclusion, it is recommended that individuals should not be excluded from SE services based upon staffs' perception of "readiness" for employment. It is urgent that the SE Director and ESs provide ongoing training to promote the principals of the IPS model throughout the agency. The culture "be ready for work" must be demolished immediately, in order to be in compliance with the IPS model in this area. The agency should understand that employment is a vital part of recovery, and not based on readiness as measured by staff perceptions of stability. The MH team does not seem to have concrete knowledge of the IPS model. If the agency utilizes case managers, therapists, and medical directors as a referral source to SE, then they must be trained immediately on the IPS model to avoid excluding consumers who have expressed a desire to work, regardless of symptoms, criminal history, and medicine compliance.

7. Agency focus on competitive employment	Rating	Comments
<p>Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. ○ Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews. ○ Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas. ○ 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. ○ Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff. 	3	<p>The agency's referral forms, career profiles, and treatment plans include questions or goals about employment. Treatment plans are updated every 6 months to include changes in SE goals. The Agency has SE brochures that focus on SE services. Currently, consumers do not have an avenue to share employment related stories. Reviewers could not calculate the agency's employment rate, as placement forms and placement list provided at the time of review did not match the SE caseload lists. Reviewers also did not have an accurate number of consumers on each caseload. It is unclear how the agency measures their employment rate. The UM director says that SE is discussed at meetings but did not know the employment rate. The SE Director says the rate is between 30-35%.</p>

Recommendations: It is recommended that the SE employment rate, outcomes, and trends are shared throughout the agency, to include executive staff. The agency should develop methods to collect data and track measurable goals. Additionally, SE should be more of a key focus in treatment team meetings and weekly management meetings, so that every staff member will have access to information regarding SE services. It is the role of the SE Director to ensure monthly program information is available and discussed with all executive and leadership staff; this will ensure that SE is at the forefront of all other programs and viewed as an important and primary service. The agency should also create avenues for consumers to share success stories with each other and staff members. For an example, the agency can modify the current newsletter to include consumer friendly information, where employment rate and success stories are shared with consumers and staff members. The agency can also hold a yearly luncheon that highlights employed consumers and employers. SE topics can also be integrated into peer group discussions; employed consumers can visit groups quarterly to discuss how employment has impacted their lives.

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"> ○ Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principals of evidence-based supported employment. ○ 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 	4	<p>Cobb executive staff demonstrated knowledge on the IPS model. The Executive staff supports the SE team and is able to communicate how employment is an intricate part of the agency's mission. The CEO meets with managers every Friday at leadership meetings, where he receives information on the SE program. The QA process</p>

<p>the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ 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. ○ The SE program leader shares information about EBP barrier 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. 		<p>includes measuring outcomes to improve the SE program and monitoring benchmarks from the QIP, to ensure that high Fidelity is achieved. Some executive leadership is unaware of the SE employment rate but understands that employment is a vital component to recovery. Cobb has not implemented a Steering Committee that is SE focused, CEO was not able to communicate clear goals for the SE program. All staff members receive a weekly newsletter, where SE topics are discussed periodically.</p>
---	--	--

Recommendations: There should be evidence of support and principles of service delivery by all Executive staff and leadership, especially with reaching high fidelity, helping to eliminate barriers, and having and understanding of SE data. For an example, increased service awareness and understanding may spur the executive team to allocate additional funding to help grow the SE program, or executives could meet with VR Directors to help facilitate a better partnership and ensure that contracts are current. Leadership meetings could possibly be held in lieu of a steering committee, as long as on a quarterly basis, the meetings are SE focused and the team discuss detailed information about data, goals, and barriers. In addition, the employment rate should also be promoted throughout the agency, and the agency’s newsletter could be a great tool to share information and to keep other staff members informed.

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, 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>2</p>	<p>The rating in this area has decreased from the previous Fidelity Review. This is due to the SE program not utilizing the Benefits Planner assigned to the area and Cobb no longer having a Benefits Planner on-sight. It was reported by consumers that they were referred to the SSA office to inquire about benefits; SE case notes also verify the reports. However, ESs report that some consumers call the SSA office for benefits planning. The Case Managers review other supplemental benefits that</p>

		consumers receive, such as food-stamp, housing, VA benefits, etc.
--	--	---

Recommendations: Since Cobb no longer has a Benefits Planner on-sight, ESs should begin to utilize State Benefits Navigators so that consumers can receive information regarding their SSA and SSDI benefits. Consumers enrolled in SE services should be offered assistance in obtaining work incentives planning, in regards to, any types of benefits the consumers are receiving. Work incentives planning should be offered before and after obtaining employment so that they are aware of how their benefits may or may not be affected once they obtain employment. Work Incentives planning should continue after a consumer becomes employed, or if their wages increases or decreases.

2. Disclosure	Rating	Comments
<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"> ○ Employment specialists do not require all consumers to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services. ○ 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. ○ 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. ○ 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). 	5	<p>Area of strength: Cobb has utilized recommendations given in this area in the FY 14 Fidelity Review. Consumers have individualized choice regarding disclosure, and the SE team does not require consumers to disclose information concerning their diagnosis. The topic of disclosure is now discussed during the initial SE intake, as well as, on an ongoing basis. ESs implemented a detailed disclosure form that encourages an in-depth conversation regarding pros and cons of disclosure. ESs stated that the topic of disclosure is revisited when and if a consumer changes his/her mind about what they want to be disclosed.</p>

3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	Rating	Comments
<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 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>	4	<p>Vocational assessments include questions which reflect consumers’ interests, employment goals, strengths, barriers, experiences, and skills. Vocational assessments are completed on each consumer, but there was no evidence that vocational assessments are systematically updated as changes occurred.</p>

Recommendations: Updating of vocational assessments should be done routinely as preferences and experiences change. It is recommended that ESs routinely meet with consumers to update vocational assessments with information obtained that includes new employment goals, job starts, and lessons learned. Completed vocational assessments ensure individualized preferences in job search. Sources of information to aid in completing career

profiles should include consumers, treatment teams, case managers, clinical records, and with client permission, family members and psychiatrists. Information gathered should help determine accommodations and job supports. Vocational assessments could be completed over multiply sessions.

4. Rapid search for competitive job	Rating	Comments
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.	3	Based on information submitted at the time of the Fidelity review, the SE team averages about 61 days until first face-to-face employer contact. This is a decreased rating in this area.

Recommendations: 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. This would include employer contacts made by ESs, consumers, or both. 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. In the event that 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 all failed attempts, consumers should be discharged from SE services.

5. Individualized job search	Rating	Comments
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.	2	Decreased rating in this area. Based on Job developing logs submitted, ESs are utilizing different logs. One ES's logs do not track consumers for whom the ES job developed. As evidenced by consumers' charts and interviews, some job searches are based on the market. It is imperative that ESs ensure that all job searches are based on consumers' preferences and not the job market, as well as, putting in place a system to track all job developing activities for each consumer.

Recommendations: It is imperative that ESs and the SE Director establish uniformity with job development logs. Logs should reflect exact dates of employer contacts, the purpose, as well as consumers for whom the ES job developed. Gathering this information would ensure that ESs are exploring jobs based on consumers' preferences, and that the majority of job developing activities are taking place in the community and face-to-face. It is noted that some consumers may not have specific job goals or preferences and may choose to work for any employer and any type of job; in these instances, ESs should assist consumers with being more specific in their employment preferences. Giving consumers the opportunity to broaden their employment preferences will ensure that job searches made by ESs are individualized, as required by the IPS model. In addition, job search plans should be developed with consumers during the initial SE intake and documented in the consumer's charts; this would be beneficial for both ESs and consumers and can aide in individualized job searches.

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>	4	<p>One ES averaged 3.25 employer contacts in August and 9.75 in Septembers. The other ES averaged 5.5 employer contacts in August and 5.75 in September. ESs should average 6 employer contacts per week or 24 contacts per month.</p>

Recommendations: The IPS SE model requires 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week; this includes first time face-to-face with an employer, as well as, reengagement with employers. Employer contacts can be done independently by the ES or with a consumer. It is recommended that both ESs develop a schedule that will ensure that 6 face-to-face employer contacts are met on a weekly basis and activities are documented in case notes. An example of this recommendation includes ESs choosing 3 days out of the week to spend job developing in the community, engaging and re-engaging employers with and without consumers.

7. Job development- quality of employer contact	Rating	Comments
<p>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.</p>	5	<p>Although ESs were not observed during this Desktop Review, ESs have demonstrated success with job development in the past and have established many employer contacts in the community, as evidenced by case notes, job logs, and consumers' reports. Both re-visit employers that they previously visited, have consumers in mind when searching, and are able to learn the needs of employers. Both ESs display confidence in describing the SE program and consumers' strengths. In addition, job logs serve as evidence that ESs make multiple visits in person to establish quality employer contacts.</p>

8. Diversity of job types	Rating	Comments
<p>Employment specialists assist consumers in obtaining different types of jobs.</p>	5	<p>Area of strength: Job types of all employed consumers are 100% diversified. This continues to be an area of strength for the SE program.</p>

9. Diversity of employers	Rating	Comments
<p>Employment specialists assist consumers in obtaining jobs with different employers.</p>	5	<p>Area of strength: Based on submitted documentation, 100% of employers in which consumers are employed, are</p>

		diversified. ESs continue to demonstrate strength in this area.
--	--	---

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: All 20 employed consumers are competitively employed. There is no evidence of consumers working set-aside/transitional jobs, or conducting work adjustment training. The SE team consistently displays an understanding of the IPS model in this area.

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: After discussions with ESs and reviewing consumers' case notes, it is evident that consumers' supports are based on their individual needs. Follow-along supports are provided by both ESs and any natural supports that consumers authorize. Further, ESs continue to work with consumers who are searching for more desirable jobs. Medical prescriber also supports working consumers and will adjust medication if current prescriptions interfere with consumers' job success.

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 within three (3) days of learning about the job loss.	4	ESs make an attempt to contact all consumers on a bi-weekly basis, whether employed or not; ESs also make certain that consumers receive excellent follow-along supports. The SE Director reported that discussions around transition plans are documented in consumers' case notes. However, ESs were unclear about transition plans, and they stated that no consumer has transitioned from SE services once employed. One consumer has been employed at the same job since 2012, and a step-down or transition plan has not

		been discussed or implemented with the consumer.
--	--	--

Recommendations: ESs should continue to have discussions with consumers regarding needed follow-along supports. In addition, conversations around creating step-down plans should begin immediately for consumers who have demonstrated success and stability on their jobs. ESs should assist consumers in identifying supports once they transition from SE services. A documented plan should be in place as to what kind of supports will phase in to assist the consumer, as the ESs phase out. Going forward, any consumer that obtains employment should receive provisions of follow-along supports and a creation of step-down plans should follow. The SE Director and ESs should review case loads, discuss consumers who have demonstrated stability in their employment roles, and staff consumers with treatment teams; step-down or transition plans should be created and implemented immediately.

13. Community-based services	Rating	Comments
Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists.	5	Area of Strength. 65% or more of ESs time is spent in the community engaging consumers, job developing, and providing follow along supports. This information is evidenced-by case notes, ESs, and consumers' interviews.

14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	Rating	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. ○ Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. ○ Engagement and outreach attempts are made by integrated team members. ○ Multiple home/community visits. ○ Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team members. ○ Connect with family, when applicable. ○ Once it is clear that the consumer no longer wants to work or continue SE services, the team stops outreach. 	4	ESs visit consumers' homes and connect with family members, when necessary. ESs make numerous attempts to re-engage consumers before terminating services. ESs reported that consumers are discharged from SE services once they communicate a desire to end SE services. There was no systematic documentation of integrated outreach attempts by integrated team members, to re-engage consumers. One of the Case Managers stated that they receive information on SE consumers by reading case notes or from a supervisor.

Recommendations: It needs to be made clear that assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team members should take place. If a consumer is non-engaging or missing scheduled appointments, outreach attempts should be made, either by the SE team, case managers, or both. When a consumer is discharged from the agency, due to non-engaging or non-compliance with services, the consumer and viable solutions should be discussed during treatment team meetings.

Summary:

Based on documentation submitted, Cobb’s SE program has 27 consumers enrolled in SE services (which is not an accurate count), with 20 consumers competitively employed. Since previous FY’ 14 Fidelity Review, Cobb no longer has an SE Supervisor but is in the process of promoting a DD specialist to a lead ES. Several concerns are noted and need immediate attention, in order for Cobb to continue to meet expectations of the IPS SE model. Communication about the IPS model and principles and the SE program should be enhanced with all of the agency’s integrated staff, as well as, executive leadership; with a focus on the “zero-exclusion” principal. The SE Director should pay close attention to ESS’ integration with MH team members, especially if the MH team is a referral source. In addition, frequent monitoring and shadowing should immediately occur to ensure consumers choices are respected while job searching and individualized efforts are documented in case-notes. An immediate and uniform tracking system should be developed in order to track and monitor all face-to-face employer contacts, to include consumers name for which ESs are job searching. The SE Director and ESs should immediately review caseloads to determine which consumers to step-down to other support services following demonstrated maintenance of successful employment, in an effort to enroll individuals on the waiting list. Further, the relationship with VR and the designated state Benefits Planner should be a continuous work in progress and efforts should be increased to establish a more productive partnership.

The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale score is 95, 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-2	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact.
Organization-3	Collaboration between Employment Specialist and VR Counselor.
Organization-6	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Services-1	Work Incentive Planning
Services-5	Individualized Job Search

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE SCORE SHEET

Staffing	Score
1. Caseload size	5
2. Employment services staff	5
3. Vocational generalists	5
Organization	
1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment	3
2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact	2
3. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	1
4. Vocational unit	4
5. Role of employment supervisor	3
6. Zero exclusion criteria	2
7. Agency focus on competitive employment	3
8. Executive team support for SE	4
Services	
1. Work incentives planning	2
2. Disclosure	5
3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	4
4. Rapid search for competitive job	3
5. Individualized job search	2
6. Job development- Frequent employer contact	4
7. Job development- Quality of employer contact	5
8. Diversity of job types	5
9. Diversity of employers	5
10. Competitive jobs	5
11. Individualized follow-along supports	5
12. Time-unlimited follow-along supports	4
13. Community-based services	5
14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	4
Total:	95

Total Score Key	
115-125	Exemplary Fidelity
100-114	Good Fidelity
74-99	Fair Fidelity
73 and below	Not Supported Employment