

**WATERS & SIMS**  
**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Consumer Handbook

## **Waters & Sims Contact Information**

Middlesex & Monmouth County phone number: 732-747-5544

Ocean County phone number: 848-480-2109

Email: [info@wsesinc.org.com](mailto:info@wsesinc.org.com)

Website: Watersandsims.com

## **History of Waters & Sims**

Established in July 1996, Waters & Sims specializes in developing jobs for people with little or no work history who need individual support to find, learn and keep their job. WSES was created out of a belief that there was a niche to be filled in providing quality Supported Employment services for adults with disabilities, transition students, consumers of WFNJ and at-risk youth who are no longer enrolled in public school.

We have a strong commitment to our consumers, where person centered planning guides every facet of career development and growth. The desired outcome for all consumers of WSES is an improvement in the quality of their lives, in ways both tangible and intangible through employment.

WSES is an approved SE vendor through the New Jersey division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Developmental Disabilities. We are CARF accredited and have consistently earned a three-year accreditation, CARF'S highest standard. WSES is an Approved Training Provider through the New Jersey Department of Labor. Our consumers are referred to us by NJDVRS, DDD, Ocean County PIC, and several school districts. We currently provide SE, Transition and WFNJ services throughout Monmouth, Ocean, Middlesex Counties and Somerset County's

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of WSES is To develop jobs for people with little or no work history, who need individual support to find, learn and keep jobs, giving them whatever support is necessary to enter the job market and succeed.

## Service Funding & Fee Schedule

WSES is an approved provider of Supported Employment services through NJDVRS and an approved Medicaid provider through DDD. We work with local BOE for contracted Transition services if the student is not eligible for the Pre-ETS program. All consumers who are referred for services by a partnering referral source are not responsible for payment of services. If a consumer is ineligible for services through a referral source, we will accept private payment for SE services. Currently the hourly rates for DVRS services is \$64.00 p/h and the rate for DDD SE services is \$79.12p/h.

## Services Offered

**Supported Employment:** Supported Employment is a program designed to assist consumers with a variety of special needs in finding, learning, and maintaining competitive employment with the community. Our Employment Counselors provide comprehensive employment services for our consumers, many of whom have previously had an inability to independently secure and maintain employment. A strong commitment to person-centered planning guides every facet of career development and growth. Within Supported Employment services we provide:

- **Pre-Placement:** PP services cover all aspects of securing employment. W&S staff use many different strategies to find employment opportunities. These include, but are not limited to, internet sources, community job boards, development on behalf of the consumer and exploration of existing networks with employers and family. Job development can also occur when W&S staff work with the consumer to develop their employment seeking skills. These include, but are not limited to, resume/cover letter creation, interview preparation, online application assistance and proper follow up coaching
- **Intensive Job Coaching:** This service is offered initially to assist the employee in training for the specific skills of the job. During the coaching phase, other supports are also given, such as travel training, social skills, confidence building, identifying natural supports, etc., all designed to help make the transition into the job a successful one. The eventual goal

is to fade away from job coaching to enable the consumer to perform all aspects of the job independently and up to the standards of the employer.

- **Long-Term Follow Along:** LTFA is achieved when the consumer has successfully learned the responsibilities of their position and their support team (Consumer, EC, DVRS Counselor, Employer & Parent/Guardian) feel that the intensity of coaching can be reduced to three hours per month, which is the amount of time DVRS has allotted for services. LTFA services are ongoing as needed with DVRS approval.

## Additional Programmatic Services

- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)** These services are an early start at job exploration that must be made available Statewide to all students with disabilities in need of such services, regardless of whether a student has applied for VR services; may begin once a student requests or is recommended for one or more pre-employment transition services and documentation of a disability is provided to the VR agency; assist students with identifying career interests to be further explored through additional VR services, including transition services; must be provided or arranged in collaboration with Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Pre-ETS services are available are Job Exploration, Self-Advocacy, Work-Based Learning, Workplace Readiness Training and Post-Secondary Education Counseling.
- **Benefits Counseling:** You may be wondering what will happen to your Social Security cash benefits, Medicaid and medical coverage if you get a job. A number of special rules put in place by Social Security, called work incentives, are possible for many SSI/SSDI recipients to earn more than they ever thought possible. Our trained Benefits Counselors will show you how working will affect your Social Security cash benefits, your Medicaid health benefits, and other services you might receive from your local or state government.
- **Ticket to Work:** Social Security's Ticket to Work Program supports career development for people with disabilities who want to work. Social Security disability beneficiaries age 18 through 64 qualify. The Ticket Program is free and voluntary. The TTW Program helps people with disabilities progress toward financial independence.

## Services W&S Do Not Provide

WSES does not provide non-employment related services. For non-employment related services, WSES staff will refer the consumer to their funding source counselor and will assist in connecting them with community partners who can provide the services necessary.

**Medication:** WSES staff does not prescribe, dispense, administer, or physically control any medication for persons served. It is the sole responsibility of the consumer to monitor and administer his or her own medications.

**Ambulation and Personal Care:** WSES staff do not provide any personal care assistance. WSES staff are not certified to complete duties traditionally performed by a personal aide including, but not limited to ambulation, safety monitoring, bathroom assistance and entering or exiting transportation.

**Transportation:** WSES is not responsible for transportation to and from employment-related activities, as per NJDVRS. It is the responsibility of parties served to seek and employ acceptable transportation for work and career related travel. However, WSES is available to provide Travel Training using available transportation.

**Legal Advice:** WSES staff members do not provide legal advice to consumers, families or employers or pursue legal actions against employers on behalf of the consumer. If you or your dependent feel appropriate, it is the responsibility of the consumer and/or his/her guardian to obtain appropriate legal representation from a qualified legal professional.

## How We Provide Services

**Location:** Job Coaching and LTFA are provided on the job site. Pre-Placement services are delivered at a location that is convenient for the consumer to reach, W&S staff utilize local libraries, County One Stop. Community locations with free access to Wi-Fi and WSES offices.

**Operational Hours:** WSES office hours are Monday - Friday 8:30 to 4:30 however our Employment Counselors are available outside of traditional business hours to provide job coaching, attending interviews and LTFA when required. Consumers may leave a message for their Employment Counselor via voicemail/text messages outside of regular business hours and their call will be returned on the next business day. If there is an employment emergency such

as a termination or last-minute interview, please relay that information in your message. Please be considerate of your EC's availability outside of business hours, we will do our best to return all calls asap, but your patience is appreciated.

**Frequency of Services:** Supported Employment is driven by the needs of the consumer and therefore may look different for each consumer who works with our agency. We work with the consumer to meet weekly or bi-weekly during the Pre-Placement phase and will provide intensive Job Coaching as needed once employment has been obtained. LTFA services average 3 hours of service per month as established by NJDVRs. If additional hours are needed WSES will work with the funding source to secure approval for additional hours is approved.

## Criteria for Acceptance

- The consumer must be eligible for funding for services from NJ DVRs, NJ DDD or a school district willing to contract for services. If no funding is available, the consumer may choose to pay privately, and a contract will be created by the Owners of WSES
- Although NJ is an Employment First State and this philosophy supports our mission statement, the consumer must demonstrate a willingness to participate, to whatever extent feasible, in the job development process, as well as a willingness to seek and accept employment consistent with his/her education, training, experience & employment goal.
- The consumer and his/her family (when appropriate) should acknowledge the critical role of transportation in the job development process and be willing to make employment decisions based on availability of transportation and/or travel training. WSES will assist the consumer in contacting NJ Transit's Access Link program for determination of eligibility.
- The consumer should understand the individual, supported approach to job development and training offered through WSES to the best of their ability and be in agreement with our internal policies and procedures of service.
- Consumers must not have current evidence of aggressive or violent behavior that would be harmful to themselves or others or have a conviction of sexual assault.

## Criteria for Discharge and Re-referral for Services

Discharge from program services may occur when any of several conditions occur. In each case, the discharge will be accompanied by a completed Exit/Discontinuation Form. Upon exit consumers will receive information regarding additional support services available to them and contact information for these resources. Services may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- At the request of the consumer if the program no longer meets his/her needs.
- At the request of the consumer should they secure employment but refuse LTFA services.
- When the funding source determines that participation is terminated from services and their case is to be returned to the local office.
- When the consumer relocates out of the program's service area.
- When the consumer or family/guardian determine that competitive employment is not an appropriate vocational direction.
- When a consumer no longer meets the Criteria for Acceptance or does not adhere to the WSES Consumer Rights & Responsibilities agreed upon during intake.

Consumers may be referred back for services after an exit from program at the discretion of the referral source. Before WSES will accept the consumer back into our program a mandatory team meeting will occur to evaluate the reason for the original exit from program and to determine if the factors/actions that resulted in the exit have been addressed/ remedied. WSES has the final determination if we will accept a consumer for services.

## Consumers Rights & Responsibilities

### **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- Be treated with respect
- Have information about you and your job kept confidential and choose when to release your information
- Expect regular and timely communication with your Employment Counselor

- Participate in the development, creation, and implementation of your Employment Plan
- Create your own Employment Team and discuss employment-related decisions at your discretion
- Give or refuse consent and/or express a choice regarding: service delivery, release of information, members of your service delivery team
- Expect your Employment Counselor to provide you with respect and understanding regarding your race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Expect the support of your Employment Counselor as you learn your job duties, if specified in your plan
- Review any WSES generated material in your file
- Have your privacy protected and have freedom from abuse, exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, or neglect
- Have your *Rights and Responsibilities* and *Employment Plan* reviewed annually (January) or as you request
- Expect WSES to investigate and take appropriate action regarding any infringement of your rights
- Have access or be referred to legal entities, self-help and/or advocacy support services as necessary

**YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:**

- Keep scheduled appointments with your Employment Counselor
- Keep in contact with your Employment Counselor and return calls/emails on a regular basis
- Develop realistic employment goals based on your *true abilities, past work history or education* in coordination with your referring counselor
- Be an active participant in the implementation of your Employment Plan
- Complete all assigned responsibilities as required for job development
- Follow the recommendations of your Employment Counselor during job development and job coaching
- Fairly and objectively evaluate any employment opportunity presented to you



- Remember that the goal is to secure employment that will provide you with the opportunity to develop transferable skills, therefore allowing you to advance to different jobs or responsibilities
- Do your job to the best of your ability
- Use discretion when contacting your Employment Counselor on their work cell phone. Please respect their personal time and limit contact on nights or weekends and outside of regular business hours (M-F 8:30 am to 4:30pm). Text messaging is acceptable.

While we hope for the long-term success of all consumers we work with, we cannot guarantee placement success, no matter how much support or guidance is given. WSES reserves the right to terminate supported employment services at any time if the recommendations of the Employment Counselor are not consistently followed by the consumer and/or family member. As a consumer of WSES, you can expect to be treated with respect by your Employment Counselor. In return, we ask that all consumers and/or family members treat the Employment Counselor with the same respect and courtesy. Any verbal disrespect will not be tolerated, and services will be terminated immediately. If services are terminated, either by Waters and Sims or by consumer choice, a post-service survey will be mailed to you for completion and a Discontinuation/Exit Form will be completed as well.

## **W&S Employment Counselor Responsibilities**

**Returning Correspondence in a Reasonable Time Frame:** Due to the nature of the work of WSES, it can be difficult to return correspondence immediately after it is received. Our staff are committed to returning correspondence within two business days of receipt unless it is an employment emergency.

**W&S Will Treat All Consumers with Dignity and Respect:** Staff will interact with consumers, families, and employers in a professional manner. We will respect Privacy and Follow HIPAA Guidelines. WSES staff will not discuss or disclose any confidential information without the signed consent of the guardian or individual served. All staff will adhere to HIPAA guidelines.

**Out of Office Notification:** Should a W&S staff member be out of the office for an extended period of time, they will engage an out of office response that gives instructions on how to reach the immediate supervisor in cases requiring immediate attention.

## Behavior Management Policy

It is the policy of W&S that staff will use positive behavioral interventions to assist consumers in crisis free of restraint and seclusion. Situations requiring restrictive behavior modification techniques will be dealt with on a case by case basis. In cases where an individual meets the “Criteria of Acceptance” for W&S and are in need of restrictions on their individual rights, staff will access expertise available through DDD or through an appropriate training source, prior to implementation of the plan or service. In an event where restrictive procedures are required; prior authorization and consent will be obtained from the consumer and/or guardian. Prior to implementation, staff will receive proper training on the use of restrictive methods

## Referral Procedure

If you are interested in working with WSES and you are already approved for services through DDD or DVRS you can request a referral be sent to us from your Counselor or your Support Coordinator. If you have yet been approved for services, our Program Coordinators can assist you with contacting the appropriate referral source and facilitate an appointment to determine eligibility.

When a consumer is referred for services with WSES, we will require the appropriate referral documents that each funder provides according to their individual referral process.

**Step 1:** The consumer will be contacted within 7 business day of referral receipt to schedule their initial intake. Should there be a waiting list, consumers will be assigned an Employment Counselor in chronological order of received referrals and the consumer/guardian will be notified of the waiting list.

**Step 2:** You will meet your Employment Counselor for your intake where all required documentation will be reviewed and explained. As a DVR consumer you will have an established employment goal agreed upon by you and your counselor. Should you wish to change your employment goal WSES will need the new goal in writing from your counselor.

**Step 3:** Pre-Placement services. You will begin working with your EC to secure employment as established in your Employment Plan. You can expect to meet weekly or bi-weekly with your EC throughout this phase of service.

**Step 4:** Once you have secured employment Intensive Job Coaching will begin. It is advised that all consumers receive on-site intensive JC until they have successfully learned their tasks and are able to independently perform their job duties. If a consumer refuses on-site coaching WSES will require confirmation from their counselor that they agree to off-site coaching.

**Step 5:** If a consumer is eligible for LTFA services and they have learned to job duties to the satisfaction of the employer the consumer can begin receiving monthly LTFA services. Currently NJDVRS allows 3 hours per month of LTFA and if additional hours are needed WSES can request approval for more intensive services.