

Job Title: Employment Specialist

Job Status: Full-time/Part-time hourly, non-exempt

Based @ Branches of Life - Chester, Virginia

Position Reports To: Employment Supervisor / Directors

Compensation: \$13-\$17/hour



Job Purpose Summary: An employment specialist is a person who assists people who experience disabilities to obtain and maintain employment that is consistent with their vocational goals. They act as links between the individuals and the employment setting to help their clients to have fulfilling and satisfying work lives.

Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities: An employment specialist at Branches of Life will be responsible to:

Act as Communication Partner

- Identify, incorporate and implement strategies to enhance integration in the workplace
- Communicate via words, sign language and/or pictures
- Program assistive technology devices and manipulate adaptive equipment
- Provide feedback and input to the support team
- Collect proper documentation. Performance data is collected and analyzed to assist the job specialist with making decisions about the effectiveness of work place supports. Maintain a variety of confidential and non-confidential records for the purpose of documenting activities and/or providing reliable information.

Provide Direct Client Engagement

- Engage clients and establish trusting, collaborative relationships directed toward the goal of competitive employment in integrated community job settings.
- Identify and assess job seekers individual interests and skills to formulate employment choice.
- Assess clients' vocational functioning on an ongoing basis utilizing background information and work experiences and assessment results and recommendations.
- Utilize functional community-based assessments, to determine the job seeker's skills, interests, learning style, social skills, and support needs.
- Address barriers and concerns
- Provide direct behavioral and employment services to clients at job sites
- Assistance with orientation and new hire activities
 - o On-site job coaching
 - o Direct training on job duties/tasks
 - o Developing strategies, interventions, jigs, accommodations, and natural supports
 - o Travel training
 - o Supporting the employee in communicating with the employer

Provide Customized Employment Services

- Provide or facilitate both on and off the job supports to help increase the odds that the individual with a disability becomes successful at work.
- Develop vocational profile – detail areas of career interest; identifies strengths, skills, preferences, support needs; and develop a plan for finding employment
- Conduct job development and job search activities directed toward positions that are individualized to the interests and uniqueness of the clients served.
- Job site/job task analysis – observe job and make note of the tasks and duties performed by the worker as well as determine the skill, education, and experience requirements necessary for the job and the safety and work culture of the environment in which this job is performed.
- Utilize assessment information to target jobs available in the local labor market and link the job seeker with job opportunities consistent with his/her interests, abilities, and identified work goals.
- Outreach to businesses – setting up interviews (and/or trial work periods for individuals with limited interview skills), explaining the benefits of hiring the job seeker, arranging customized employment opportunities, identifying and proposing support needs as applicable, job carving, job restructuring, etc.

- Provide individualized follow-along supports to assist clients in maintaining employment.
 - o Ongoing and regular on or off site support to ensure job stabilization continues
 - o Address changes to job duties/tasks
 - o Meet standards of a new supervisor
 - o Address issues/concerns that come up

Partner with the Business Community

- Locate, develop and negotiate employment opportunities with businesses
- Identify opportunities for customized employment/job carving for individuals with disabilities
- Analyze job tasks
- Identify and implement workplace supports
- Supervise clients for safety and engagement
- Address employer concerns
- Be a liaison to community businesses and organizations
- Understand and explain how the service benefits business and be prepared to share this when meeting with employers to discuss job opportunities.
- Encourage businesses to consider customizing existing job descriptions specifically for a job seeker with disabilities.

Other Duties

- Provides timely interventions. Return phone calls and react to situations in a timely manner.
- Knowledge of ADA and other laws that impact disabilities in the workplace
- Perform general clerical duties including maintain accurate client records and preparing clear and concise reports
- Communicate effectively in both oral and written form with a diverse group of clients, parents/caregivers, support personnel, and involved parties
- Other duties as assigned

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: An employment specialist at Branches of Life will be required to:

- Multi-task with a high level of alertness and ability to anticipate opportunities for problem-solving
- Be able to learn a variety of tasks and be able to teach clients new skills and tasks needed for successful placement
- Be able to work independently (with limited supervision)and as a member of a team
- Communicate clearly: Recognize and respond to verbal and auditory input while expressing concepts, thoughts and ideas clearly, including rephrasing, repeating or simplifying when necessary
- Learn alternate communication methods, including some sign-language and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)
- Address difficulties and questions that our clients may have and be able to offer practical, creative ideas that are respectful and aligned with our guiding principles
- Speak to/about/with people with disabilities and the individuals who support them about personal issues with positivity, kindness and respect for privacy
- Interpersonal skills needed to manage crisis situations
- Create and reliably follow a schedule, while remaining flexible within that schedule as determined by the needs of the clientele and the program
- Self-initiate; be able to make decisions on the spot and follow through with the safety needs of the clients foremost
- Be thorough and detail oriented
- Be able to use a computer effectively, create word documents, email, use and create power points and other programs used to serve our clientele
- Be willing to incorporate information received through continuous training and hands-on supervision with a positive attitude and willingness to continue to learn

Required Education and Experience: All employment specialists must meet the following requirements:

Have a Bachelor's degree or higher in a related field from an accredited college or university and have at least one year of experience working with individuals with significant disabilities. Be familiar with the demands and expectations of business and industry.

Special Position Requirements: All applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for position:

- Have active certification or successfully complete CPR and First Aid certification requirements
- Test and present a negative 2-step tuberculosis (TB) test
- Have an acceptable criminal background check
- Not included on the Virginia Abuser Registry or the List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE)
- Must provide client transportation
 - o Must have reliable vehicle
 - o Vehicle must be insured in applicant's name
- Must have at least 3 years driving experience
- Have a valid Virginia Driver's License and acceptable DMV issued driving record
 - o An applicant for employment will not be hired if their driving record reflects:
 - Suspended or revoked license
 - Three or more moving violations in the past 36 months
 - One or more instances of driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while intoxicated (DWI) within the past 24 months
 - At fault in a fatal accident within the past 5 years
 - Leaving the scene of an accident within the past 36 months
 - Reckless driving within the past 12 months
- Must be able to work flexible hours as needed – may include nights and/or weekends

Physical Demands: The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. An employment specialist must be able to:

- Perform First Aid and CPR
- Bend, squat, kneel, use hands, reach, stoop, crawl, hold and carry
- Lift and/or move up to 60 pounds multiple times daily
- Safely load and unload handicapped accessible vehicles, including wheelchair securing systems

Description of the Work Environment: Employment specialists work in diverse employment settings or may work on-site at the Branches of Life building. This job involves frequent outings into the community. The job is may be performed under some temperature extremes and in a generally hazard free environment.

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee.