

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Referral Process



A person living with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders expresses interest in working. Their mental health practitioners, case manager, or other team members can refer him to a local IPS program- This can and should happen regardless of mental health symptoms, hospitalizations, substance use history, level of disability, homelessness, or legal system involvement. There is no prerequisite for IPS besides having a mental illness and desire to work.

In Iowa, IPS can be funded by three entities; Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), Medicaid Habilitation, or the Safety Net Management Information System (SNMIS). If the person is already connected to IVRS or case management through Iowa Medicaid, their VR Counselor or Case Manager can authorize funding for IPS (T2018 U3 through U6). A Disability Access Point (DAP) can also assist people in getting connected to other entities to support the IPS program.



IPS services are authorized in four “Milestones.” Unlike other processes, all milestones are approved simultaneously for the IPS agency before services begin. This allows services to be delivered quickly and smoothly, without the need to schedule meetings or coordinate each stage separately. Once milestones are approved, services can begin immediately.

IPS Specialists will work directly with IPS participants and with team members to complete comprehensive Career Profiles, Job Search Plans, and Job Support Plans. They will collaborate closely with team members, including Case Managers, Therapists, Psychiatrists, Peer Support Specialists, IVRS Counselors, family members and other natural supports. IPS Specialists communicate regularly with team members to ensure that quality wrap-around supports are provided to participants.



Each team member plays a vital role in helping IPS participants achieve their mental health and employment goals. Case Managers, IVRS Counselors, and Mental Health Practitioners are often asked to share their valuable insights about a job seeker’s strengths and support needs, and to collaborate with IPS teams to provide the best person-centered care possible. Whenever feasible, attending treatment team meetings to collaborate and brainstorm solutions is highly encouraged.