

## Summer Youth Work Experience (SYWE) 2023 Training Follow-up

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) would like to thank everyone who participated in the recent on-demand Summer Youth 2023 training and subsequent live Question & Answer sessions. For your convenience, please find below training follow-up details from the provider and VR Staff Question & Answer sessions for those unable to attend and for those who might like to have a written copy.

### Service Reports

#### Can SYWE Level 1 and SYWE Level 2 be documented on the same report?

If there were two levels provided due to switching levels during the service, each level would need to be documented on a separate report.

#### How much detail is needed in SYWE experience reports?

The written VR Report shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- information on the work environment and job tasks (job task analysis) including employer or industry-accepted performance (quantity and quality) standards;
- initial assessment of the participant's functioning at the beginning of the service and final assessment to demonstrate the participant's progress;
- observation of the participant's behavioral and job task performance;
- explanation of instructional techniques and interventions that were used by provider staff or employer to facilitate learning and progress;
- observation of the participant's behavioral and job task performance for each date of service;
- input from the employer on performance and potential areas of concern;
- input from the participant on their self-evaluation of progress on work skills, behaviors, interpersonal skills, and other areas identified by the VR Staff or VR Contractor and participant at the start of the service; and
- answers questions posed by VR Staff or VR Contractor in the Referral to Community Rehabilitation Program.

The service report needs to be individualized for each participant and is a balance between not having enough information (e.g., "Student did well today") and having exhaustive levels of unnecessary detail (e.g., 6 page reports). Reports are not to be "copied and pasted" for all individuals in a group. Even in cases when students are completing the same work tasks, it is important that the report reflects their individual experiences.

### **What are the differences in base rates for Level 1 and 2?**

There is one base rate for SYWE that is a flat rate weekly fee for 20 hours of service. Any service less than 20 hours will be prorated. The service report will automatically calculate this for you. The Summer Youth Appendix (Appendix F) provides more details and examples of prorating on page 10.

### **Do participants receive holiday pay if they work on the holiday?**

The Vocational Training Stipend (VTS) will not change for the holidays, and there is no shift differential for SYWE service. ASL interpreting will receive a shift differential if the service is completed on a federal holiday. If hours will be adjusted to make up for time lost due to a holiday, please keep in mind that OOD counts the work week as Sunday through Saturday. Public transportation may be affected as well by the state and federal holidays.

Providers have three options for Summer Youth Work Experience weeks that fall over a holiday (Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day):

1. Providers may adjust the hours during that week to provide the number of scheduled hours across different days (but still during the work week of Sunday through Saturday); or
2. Providers may choose to not schedule services on the holiday and offer fewer hours while prorating the actual hours the service is conducted; or
3. Providers may schedule services over the holiday if the host site is available.

### **Will the SYWE forms prorate for any number of weekly hours (example an 11-hour week)?**

Yes, the forms are able to calculate any number of hours per week.

## **Referrals/Marketing**

### **SYWE referrals are to start as of March 1, 2023. We have already received one. Are we able to complete the intake this early?**

SYWE referrals ARE NOT to be made or accepted prior to March 1. Worksites are not yet approved. Providers must watch the training videos and complete the attestation before they can be approved. The training highlights that there is going to be one starting point for everyone. VRCs should not request an informal hold on a work site and providers should not accept them.

### **Why are providers not permitted to put on the flyers that transportation can be provided?**

Transportation should be a conversation between the VRC and participants as well as their families. If the flyers note that transportation is available, it could derail other plans that the VRC may have in place. The default should not be provider transportation. Additionally, some providers have limited transportation, and it would be unfair to give participants and families a promise of transportation if it may ultimately not be available.

**Can providers market SYWE directly to schools?**

Providers with an existing working relationship with a school in the provision of VR services for mutual participants of OOD may “market” SYWE appropriately. Be careful not to make promises of any particular site or availability, and make it clear that any participant would need to qualify for services with OOD, and that participants and families should work with OOD for more information regarding eligibility, service planning, and service options.

Refer to Appendix F, page 4, for OOD guidelines on Summer Youth Open Houses which would also apply to marketing directly to schools.

**May providers join together and have one large open house so that participants and their families can interview each summer youth provider for information about worksites, transportation, and any other questions they may have?**

Providers are welcome to coordinate this type of Summer Youth Open House amongst themselves. OOD is allowing provider Summer Youth Open Houses, though OOD will not be organizing or facilitating Summer Youth Open Houses. Providers should share information regarding any Summer Youth Open Houses on the Summer Youth Site Collection Tool so that VR Staff may share this information with participants, schools, and families. Please refer to Appendix F, page 4, for OOD guidelines.

**Where can Appendix F be found?**

On OOD’s website under “Information for Providers” and “Provider Manual”:  
<https://ood.ohio.gov/information-for-providers/provider-resources/provider-manual-new>

**Level 1 and Level 2**

**Please provide an example of when a participant might need to switch levels after the service has started.**

If the participant was referred for SYWE Level 2 but then showed signs during the first week of the experience that a shorter workday might be more appropriate due to disability-related symptoms such as fatigue, inability to sustain concentration for long periods of time, migraines due to prolonged exposure to fluorescent lights, etc. then the provider should bring these concerns to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or Coordinator (VRC) and discuss whether a Level 1 is more appropriate. If the VRC agrees, the authorization can be amended to add a new line item for SYWE Level 1.

**Can providers have both Level 1 and Level 2 participants at the same worksite and how would that impact staffing ratios?**

Yes. Ratios would need to be maintained at 4:1, regardless. The participants authorized at different levels would not need to work the same number of hours or the same schedule. VR Staff still have the option to authorize for an individual SYWE based on the participant’s disability-related needs, so if that is required, please consider that.

If a participant requires more attention than another participant within a group, it would be no different than if they were all authorized at the same level. Providers follow the required ratio of 4:1, and balance their attention based on the needs of the participants in the group.

**Should providers only make a recommendation about a different level of service during intake or the first week of service? Is there a cutoff?**

We expect that in most cases participants will participate for the level they are referred for. Abundant “level switching” could be disruptive to service planning for providers and participants. However, a provider can make a recommendation to change levels at any point where they notice it could be of benefit to the participant, whether that is at intake or during the first week of service. OOD has not specified a cutoff date for conversations about appropriate services. VRCs should use their best judgement and staff with their supervisor, if necessary, when deciding if they should follow the recommendations. In any service, a provider can make any recommendation, and the VRC will determine if it is necessary and appropriate.

Even if there is a transition between levels, there should still be a maximum of 5 weeks for SYWE for any individual.

**Do the five weeks of Level 2 SYWE need to be consecutive?**

Yes, SYWE service, no matter the level, must be scheduled for consecutive weeks.

**For OOD staff: if changing from Level 1 to Level 2, would the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) need to be amended?**

No, an amendment is not needed if Summer Youth is on the IPE. Summer Youth Work Experience needs to be on the IPE but there is no need to specify Level 1 or Level 2.

**Is there a limit to the number of times a participant can participate in SYWE Level 1 and 2?**

We want to see how this first year goes for trying out Level 1. There may be additional guidance in the future after we have collected more information and developed best practices for this new approach to SYWE.

**Is there an exception to having Level 2 be five weeks if a participant cannot complete all 5 weeks, i.e., family vacation scheduled during services?**

It would likely be a Level 1, whether it’s availability or disability-related need. Please staff with your supervisor if you are unsure of how to authorize the service. OOD wants to be inclusive as possible for SYWE services, and Level 1 and Level 2 were developed to that end.

**Has there been any discussion about what we will do if there are not enough Level 1 sites to meet the need?**

Because this is a new service this year, we are not sure of what the availability of the service will be. We will know more after this year as to how many providers can provide Level 1. We

encourage the field to give providers an update as to the need for Level 1 to help them better plan and develop these sites.

**Can there be two different locations for SYWE?**

SYWE Level 1 shall not have any site changes at any point in the service. SYWE Level 2 may have participants scheduled up to a maximum of two work sites during the five-week period. Site changes shall only occur at the end of the scheduled week. A participant may not work at one location in the morning and another location in the afternoon.

## **Schedules**

**If the work schedule is 8:00am - 1:00pm should the participants be given a 30-minute unpaid meal break, or will a 15-minute paid break suffice?**

Be sure to refer to Ohio Labor Laws in addition to OOD requirements for these types of questions. As per the Ohio Labor laws regarding a rest period: No employer shall employ a minor for more than five (5) consecutive hours without a rest period of at least 30 minutes.

The 8:00am – 1:00pm timeframe does not meet the requirements of OOD's meal period. However, please take into consideration the needs of the participants when developing this type of schedule. In addition to Ohio Labor Laws, OOD feels that it is important to give youth with disabilities ample rest, based on the needs of participants to rest, eat, check their phones, etc., as well as to model expectations for the real world of work.

**Can a participant have both a SYWE and a Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) experience in the same summer?**

Yes. YLF will be in June this year.

**Are multiple SYWEs allowed in the same summer?**

Only one SYWE is allowed per summer, regardless of the level authorized.

## **Site Collection Tool**

**How will AE2s be handling the SYWE site lists?**

The OOD AE2s will mark referrals on the Site Collection Tool as they send referrals to providers. The list will be available to OOD staff and contractors via SharePoint. Providers can check in at any time with the local office to compare their numbers with the OOD local office. This new approach is designed to offer a more accurate “forecast” of SYWE site availability, with the additional goal of reducing referral “fallout.”

**When will the Site Collection Tool be made available to OOD staff and contractors?**

Providers can start submitting them on Monday, January 30, 2023. The initial list will be posted to SharePoint on Monday, February 13, 2023, with the field having access.

**Will providers be able to turn in sites in February, March, and April?**

As providers add and make changes to their sites, they may submit the list for approval. It is best to submit them as early as possible to allow for more choices for the individuals we serve.

## **Miscellaneous**

**If a participant has received services from a provider within the last 12 months, is an Intake needed?**

An Intake would likely not be necessary (check the service definition to see if the participant is within the timeframes), but the referral can still be sent as early as March 1, 2023. If an Intake authorization is not needed, VR Staff should create the referral and task the AE2 to send it to the provider to ensure that the referral is counted on the Site Collection Tool. SYWE service authorizations may start to be issued as of April 3, 2023.

**Is it possible to develop a SYWE site for an individual experience?**

Yes, you can reach out to a provider for this and use the SYWE Site Development service. This can be for a specialty field and/or if an individual has unique needs that would not be compatible with existing sites or a group service setting.

**If SYWE Site Development is needed, would we need to wait until March to refer for that?**

No, you would not need to wait to authorize Summer Youth Site Development. We would just need to make sure that the provider did the training and attestation first in Ohio Learn. If the provider is not listed on the Site Collection Tool with other approved worksites, please email [pcmu@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:pcmu@ood.ohio.gov) to ensure that the provider has completed the training and attestation.

**Under what instances would a Work Incentives Plan (WIP) be necessary for SYWE? Is it just for participants that are over the age of 18 and when their parents also receive benefits via SNAP or HUD?**

VR Staff may determine a WIP is necessary if the participant and/or their parent/legal guardian receives benefits and they are unsure if the benefits could be impacted by the participant earning wages during the Summer Youth Work Experience.

**Will OOD put out a flyer for SYWE like Pre-ETS?**

We will put that on our list to think about in the future. There are currently transition materials on OOD's website that may be utilized: <https://ood.ohio.gov/individuals-with-disabilities/services/students-14-plus>

**What are the requirements for soft skills training on Orientation Day?**

The first day of the SYWE will be a day of orientation (i.e., onboarding) which replicates the first day of competitive employment and should include employee responsibilities, worksite safety guidelines, work tasks, key contacts, call-off procedures, and other essential information necessary for the duration of the work experience. Participants shall be paid for the orientation day. During this day of onboarding, provider may utilize the “Skills to Pay the Bills” curriculum or other OOD-approved curriculum to address soft skills. The onboarding can occur at the employment site if space allows, or at another location in the community (e.g., provider’s office, library). The link to the curriculum is in Appendix F, page 13.

**If taking participants from outside of a county to another county to work, does the county need to be listed in the Provider Management Program (PMP) as a county of service?**

You would not need to add the county in the PMP. This is also true if you are picking up a participant in another county that is just over the county line. However, if you plan on serving this new county in the future, and it’s not listed in the PMP, you can submit a service change request in the PMP, to add this county.

**What would we do if a Significant Incident Report Form (SIRF) is required on a holiday such as Juneteenth, and the provider is unable to contact the VR Staff as required due to the OOD office being closed?**

If the police, an ambulance, and/or a MUI needs to be filed with the County Board of Developmental Disabilities, please follow after-hours reporting for SIRFs on this webpage: <https://ood.ohio.gov/information-for-providers/provider-resources/significant-incident-reporting> .