

Individual Placement & Support (IPS) Team Members

Pursuant to IAC 441–77.25(1), an “IPS Team” means, at a minimum, an IPS employment specialist, a behavioral health specialist, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) counselor, and a case manager or care coordinator.



IPS Specialists & IPS Supervisors

IPS Specialists and Supervisors provide direct, individualized employment support to help clients find, obtain, and maintain competitive employment. They build and maintain relationships with employers and work closely with other IPS team members to ensure coordinated, wraparound support that aligns with each person’s employment and recovery goals.



Case Managers and/or Care Coordinators

Case Managers and Care Coordinators serve as a vital bridge between clients, IPS services, and other supports. They assist with identifying and referring individuals to IPS, collaborate closely with other IPS team members to address employment-related barriers, and help ensure coordinated access to resources that support successful employment outcomes.



Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors

VR Counselors are valued partners on the IPS team, contributing specialized expertise, resources, and employer connections to support individuals in achieving their employment goals. They collaborate closely with IPS Specialists and Supervisors to align services, share information, and enhance employment opportunities for shared clients.



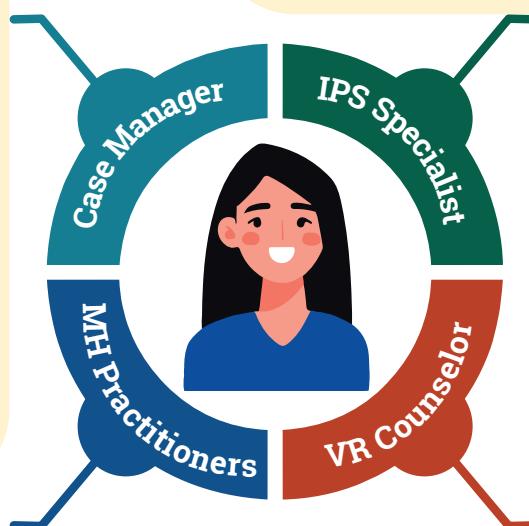
Mental Health Partner(s)

Mental Health Practitioners and Partners support employment as an essential part of recovery by routinely discussing work goals and connecting interested clients to IPS. Through active collaboration and communication with the IPS team, including during routine staffing meetings with IPS Specialists in attendance, they help ensure employment services are integrated into overall treatment and recovery planning.

IPS Team Roles & Responsibilities

In Iowa's Behavioral Health and Disability Services system, Case Managers (CMs) and Care Coordinators (CCs) support employment as part of whole-person care by facilitating timely referrals and authorizing funding for IPS (T2018 U3, U4, U5, and U6). They collaborate with IPS Specialists and other treatment team members to identify and address employment related barriers, such as transportation, benefits coordination, housing, or access to community resources. They ensure services are aligned across providers, support information sharing as appropriate, and help integrate employment goals into broader service plans. CMs and CCs reinforce client engagement by encouraging participation in IPS, helping clients navigate systems and appointments, and supporting continuity of services as employment status changes.

IPS Specialists and Supervisors communicate client needs, strengths, barriers, progress, and successes with integrated team members, including VR Counselors, Case Managers, and Mental Health Practitioners. They actively gather and utilize feedback from the IPS team to strengthen job development efforts and support long-term employment success for clients. IPS Specialists document relevant employment-related information in client records, participate in recurring staffing meetings with mental health practitioners, collaborate on shared cases, and support practitioners in identifying and exploring employment opportunities for people who have not yet been referred to IPS.



Mental Health Practitioners and Partners promote employment as a component of recovery by routinely discussing work interests and barriers during intakes and annual assessments, and referring interested clients to IPS—accordingly, they frequently serve as the initial access point for clients to engage with IPS services. They intentionally include IPS Specialists as active members in treatment team meetings, ensuring employment goals are discussed alongside behavioral health services. Ongoing collaboration occurs through regular case consultation, shared planning, and integration of IPS documentation into the mental health record. When possible, teams share workspace to support coordination. Mental health partners support anyone interested in employment—regardless of perceived readiness or barriers—by working with the IPS team to develop employment plans, provide ongoing support, and assist with outreach and engagement efforts.

At a minimum, VR Counselors will have monthly face-to-face meetings with IPS Specialists to review shared caseloads, and weekly communication by phone, email, text, or in person regarding specific clients. In some cases they may also attend treatment team meetings with IPS Specialists mental health practitioners. VR Counselors provide input for IPS employment plans and assist the IPS team with outreach and engagement for clients who have disengaged from services. VR may also provide authorization for IPS funding.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Referral Process



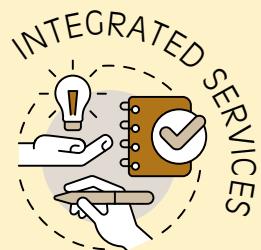
A person living with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders expresses interest in working. Their mental health practitioners, case manager, or other team members can refer him to a local IPS program- This can and should happen regardless of mental health symptoms, hospitalizations, substance 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.