



LIGHTHOUSE
LOUISIANA

Pathways to Success Project Manual

LIGHTHOUSE LOUISIANA

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Program Overview

Pathways to Success (PTS) is a demonstration project focused on expanding Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) opportunities through innovative applications of advanced technologies. The project is funded by a \$10 million, five-year grant awarded to Lighthouse Louisiana by the U.S. Department of Education's Disability Innovation Fund (DIF).

PTS will serve 30 parishes across Louisiana, assisting youth and adults with disabilities in preparing for careers in telecommunications, customer service, and other technology-driven fields. By leveraging technology to increase accessibility and enhance workforce readiness, stability, and self-sufficiency, PTS aims to remove barriers and create new pathways to meaningful employment opportunities.

Key objectives of PTS include:

- **Establishing a Training Center:** Designed to prepare individuals with disabilities, employers, and support professionals to use cutting-edge technology that fosters CIE opportunities.
- **Developing Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE):** Creating opportunities for career exploration and skill development to prepare participants for long-term employment.
- **Creating an Accessible Contact Center:** Using AI and other advanced technologies to enable meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities in customer service roles.
- **Training Support Professionals:** Ensuring professionals can effectively support workforce development by utilizing technology to remove employment barriers.

This grant supports Lighthouse Louisiana's mission of fostering an inclusive workforce where individuals with disabilities earn competitive wages for meaningful employment in competitive environments. By promoting financial independence, self-sufficiency, and sustainable careers, PTS aims to transform workforce mobility for youth and adults with disabilities.

Lighthouse Louisiana will provide services to Pathways to Success participants at no cost from January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029.



Eligibility Criteria

To participate in the project, participants must meet the following criteria:

- **Documented Disability:** Must have a documented disability verified by the Social Security Administration or a physician's diagnosis on official letterhead.
- **Age Requirement:** Must be between the ages of 16 years old and full retirement age, as defined by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, based on their date of birth at the time of application.
- **Identification:** Must present a valid Louisiana state ID or driver's license and a Social Security Card.
- **Residency:** Must reside within the designated 30-parish service area in Louisiana.
- **Referral Form Submission:** Must complete and submit the Pathways to Success Referral Form through the official program website.
- **Employment Goal:** Must be seeking support to locate competitive integrated employment leading to workplace independence.
- **Background Check and Drug Screening:** Must be able to pass a background check and drug screening as required during the onboarding process for job placement.

Service Area

The Pathways to Success project will serve participants residing in the following 30-parish area:

- Acadia
- Ascension
- Assumption
- Calcasieu
- Cameron
- East Baton Rouge
- East Feliciana
- Iberia
- Iberville
- Jefferson
- Jefferson Davis
- Lafayette
- Lafourche
- Livingston
- Orleans
- Plaquemines
- St. Bernard
- St. Charles
- St. Helena
- St. James
- St. John the Baptist
- St. Martin
- St. Mary
- St. Tammany
- Tangipahoa
- Terrebonne
- Vermillion
- Washington
- West Baton Rouge
- West Feliciana



Important Note

To confirm eligibility, participants must present a valid Louisiana State ID or Driver's License with an address located within the PTS service area.

Services Provided

Vocational Assessments

Assessments are services provided, and activities performed, to determine an individual's eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, to assign an individual to a priority category of a VR program that operates under an order of selection, and/or to determine the nature and scope of VR services to be included in the Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE). It also includes Trial Work Experience.

Community Based Assessment: The Community Based Assessment will assist the individual in determining employment options that will identify a “good job match,” the types of support needed to obtain and maintain employment, and other appropriate services that may be required to aid the individual in maintaining and retaining CIE outcomes.

Trial Work Experience: A Trial Work Experience is used to obtain clear and convincing evidence regarding the most significantly disabled client's eligibility/ineligibility for VR services (prior to closing a case as too severely disabled). The Trial Work Experience component occurs at job sites in the community or within the Lighthouse. The assessments include observations of the applicant's work performance in a competitive integrated environment.

Job Readiness Services

Job Readiness (JR) Services provide comprehensive training for people with disabilities (PWD) that addresses work habits, soft skills, and values that lead to successful employment. This program is designed to assist PWD in developing the skills necessary to obtain and maintain CIE. Participant attendance and progress are documented and submitted monthly on the Job Readiness and Work Ethics Training form. JR services include:

- Individualized curriculum
- Punctuality and time management
- Increasing productivity
- Dressing for success
- Remediation and/or strengthening of work habits
- Skill development (both in-person and virtual paths)
- Youth and adult career exploration (career guidance and counseling)
- Reinforcement of work-related independent living skills

- Benefits counseling
- Confidence building
- Reinforcement of appropriate/positive work behaviors and work ethics
- Employment related workshops and role playing
- Workplace conflict resolution

Job Search Assistance Services

Job Search Assistance (JSA) Services support PWD in understanding the job search process and developing the skills required to successfully identify and apply for potential positions. JSA services include:

- Creating resumes and cover letters
- Reviewing and identifying job leads
- Connecting with employers to secure interviews
- Preparing for interviews

Job Placement Assistance

Job Placement Assistance (JPA) involves contacting an employer identified in the Job Search Assistance plan or another employer with an available position that is consistent with or similar to the participants' employment goal, which results in a job interview and CIE. Services reflect support slightly more intensive than on-the-job training and less intensive than Supported Employment training.

Short-Term Job Supports

Short-Term Job Supports (STJS) are services that assist PWD who require moderate to maximum support to achieve successful CIE, and who do not require extended follow-along services but need short-term job training and assistance. This service is provided to participants once employment is located, to help them transition and stabilize the placement while enhancing job retention. Services include job coaching for people who do not have a Supported Employment goal authorized on the IPE and are designed to assist a participant with learning to perform job duties with accommodations, if needed.

Supported Employment

Supported Employment (SE) services are ongoing support services and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a more significant disability in maintaining supported employment.

Flexible Supported Employment Milestones are optional services designed to provide high level, ongoing maintenance and support for participants who continue to experience

barriers related to transitioning into stabilized employment after three months of job retention, if needed.

Adult and Youth Work Based Learning Experiences

Adult and Youth Work Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs) are available to adults and youth in the PTS project in which participants are placed into internships that may be paid or unpaid. Job coaching support is provided during the implementation of each WBLE. Internships span three job sites, each lasting a maximum of 90 days (or 3 months). For paid WBLEs, the employer reimbursement rate is equal to the participant's rate of pay plus 9.33% for Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment taxes. Reimbursement may not exceed 240 hours per employer for a maximum of three different employer placements (720 hours total per participant). Reimbursement may not exceed the equivalent of a 40-hour work week. Additional WBLE services include:

- Job Shadowing (3- to 5-hour increments with a Job Coach)
- Employer Site Visits (on-site job exploration with a Job Coach)

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are for high school juniors and seniors who have disabilities. These services are designed to assist students with transitioning to CIE after completing high school. Pre-ETS activities promote self-advocacy, development of soft skills, and foster leadership, while encouraging exploration of opportunities for post-secondary education. Pre-ETS services include the following activities at a minimum of 45 minutes per session:

- Instruction in self-advocacy (24 sessions)
- Counseling on post-secondary education programs (24 sessions)
- Job exploration counseling (24 sessions)
- Workplace readiness training (24 sessions)
- WBLEs (3 placements at 240 hours per placement)

Orientation and Mobility Services

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Assessments and Training in the home or community build confidence for people who are visually impaired to travel independently to support their employment or academic goals. An assessment is required prior to training. This individualized service is designed to orient the participant to the community, home, or work environments and to ensure the participant develops the skills required to access public transit resources, if required. Services address orientation and mobility skills using adaptive strategies to safely and effectively perform the following:

- Use sensory landmarks to orient to surroundings

- Identify environmental cues and clues
- Utilize a white mobility cane and/or other devices to navigate and avoid obstacles
- Cross a variety of intersections
- Ride public transit
- Map and track routes with GPS guidance apps
- Access wayfinding resources in public spaces
- Advocate for needs in public spaces

Assistive Technology Services

Assistive Technology (AT) Assessments and Training focus on a participant’s potential to use software applications and/or specialized hardware to meet employment and academic goals. An assessment is required prior to training to ensure the optimal selection and acquisition of AT devices. AT services address each participant’s knowledge and skills to proficiently manage the following:

- Typing and keyboard commands
- Operating system settings and controls
- Microsoft Office applications
- Access to electronic forms and documents
- Email tasks
- Internet browser navigation
- Assistive software applications
- Mobile technologies that include phones, tablets, and handsfree devices
- Emerging technologies that may include artificial intelligence (AI), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), visual interpretation, and speech command features
- Help features and trouble shooting
- Operating system accessibility features

Important Note

Temporary devices and software may be provided to a participant in the PTS project to support training services while AT recommendations are being processed. These items are intended for short-term use (up to 90 days) and must be returned to the PTS project inventory at the end of that period.

Technology- Based Training

Technology-Based Training provides opportunities for participants to develop additional technical skills that prepare them for success in today’s workforce and support CIE.

- General tech skills assessment
- Assistive software training
- Entry-level computer skills training
 - Microsoft Windows
 - Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)
 - Navigating the Internet
 - Navigating e-forms
 - Virtual meeting platforms
- Mobile technology
- Emerging technology

Participant Flow

The Pathways to Success (PTS) participant flow is structured to ensure individuals receive the support, tools, and guidance needed to achieve CIE. The steps outlined below describe the process.

Step 1: Information and Referral (I&R)

To begin, an I&R form must be submitted to eservices@lighthouseLouisiana.org for consideration for enrollment into the PTS project. Within two business days, a Vocational Services Coordinator will contact the individual to schedule an eligibility screening.

A virtual meeting will be held to complete the screening tool and determine eligibility for PTS. If the individual is not accepted into PTS, they will be referred for non-PTS Employment Services, which follow standard LRS vendor procedures. If accepted into the PTS project, the participant moves forward to Career Exploration.

Step 2: Career Exploration

During this step, a Career Counselor conducts career exploration activities using tools such as the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES). The findings are compiled into an Assessment and Career Exploration (ACE) Report, which is used to guide the project acceptance and referral process.

The Career Counselor explores options for benefits counseling and refers the participant to the Ticket to Work Helpline or CPWIC, if applicable.

Upon completion of Career Exploration activities, the participant moves on to Benefits Counseling, if applicable.

Step 3: Benefits Counseling

Participants who **do not** qualify for Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) but receive other types of benefits are referred to Lighthouse's Community Partner Work Incentives Counselors (CPWIC) for benefits counseling. Those who do qualify for WIPA and receive disability benefits (SSI, SSDI, or Concurrent) are referred to the Ticket to Work Helpline to connect with a WIPA Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC).

Once the Benefits Summary and Analysis (BS&A) report is completed, the Career Counselor reviews both the ACE and BS&A reports with the participant. At this stage, the participant decides whether to continue in the PTS project. If they choose to proceed, the Career Counselor initiates a referral to LRS.

Step 4: Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

The Career Counselor sends a formal referral to LRS, including a copy of the ACE report. An LRS representative then processes the referral and completes the PTS Service Order Form, initiating enrollment in the PTS project.

Step 5: PTS Services Initiated

Pre-employment services are delivered by the Career Counselor based on the Service Order Form issued by LRS. Technology recommendations are made to address training and employment gaps. Completion of technology training may impact services provisions.

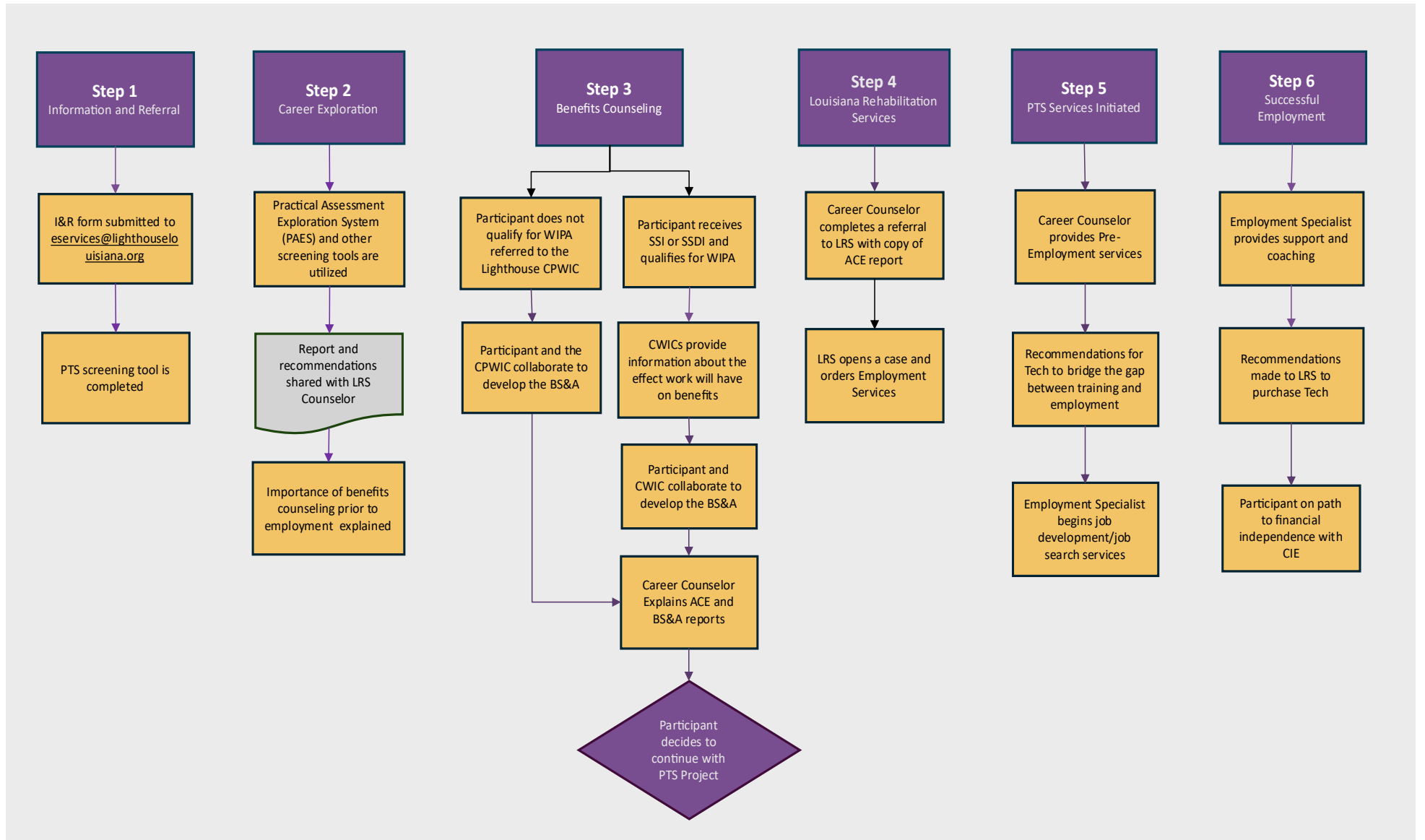
Employment Specialists begin job development and job search activities in alignment with LRS services ordered. They also serve as agents, identifying and securing CIE opportunities that match the participant's interests and abilities, while filling employer workforce gaps.

Step 6: Successful Employment

Employment Specialists continue to support and coach participants as they transition into their new role. Recommendations for the purchase of technology necessary to support job stability are submitted to LRS.

Once the participant has obtained CIE, transitioned into workplace stability and maintained independence in their workplace duties and expectations, both LRS and the PTS project will formally close the participant's case, marking a successful outcome.

Participant Flow Chart



Reporting Requirements

As a DIF grant recipient, Lighthouse Louisiana is required to report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on a biannual basis to demonstrate progress toward project objectives and performance measures. In conjunction with these required measures, The Lighthouse has identified additional project measures and will report on the following data related to the PTS project:

- **Participant characteristics:** gender, age, primary impairment, and parish
- **Referral and enrollment data:** number of referrals received, and number of participants enrolled
- **Employment at enrollment:** employment status, hourly wage, and total income (wages and benefits)
- **Employment outcomes at closure:** employment status, hourly wage, total income (wages and benefits), and impact on benefits

A performance dashboard summarizing these indicators will be shared quarterly with our state partners and made available on our website. This will enable all stakeholders to track progress toward the outcome measures.

Lighthouse Louisiana has also engaged an independent evaluator to assess the project's effectiveness and potential for replication. The evaluation will document successes, challenges, and lessons learned. It will draw on project data, interviews with staff and stakeholders, as well as surveys and interviews with both participants and employment support professionals involved in the PTS project.

Lighthouse Louisiana follows established protocols set by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) for vocational rehabilitation documentation and reporting. Staff complete and document all services in compliance with LRS guidelines, and all confidential client information is managed in accordance with the Lighthouse's privacy standards.



PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS (PTS) PROJECT INITIAL REFERRAL FORM

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

Name: _____

Agency (if applicable): _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

APPLICANT

Name: _____

Age: _____ Parish of Residence: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Best time and preferred format of contact? _____

Does the applicant have a disability that has been diagnosed by a physician? (Y/N)

Does the applicant currently use a mobile phone or computer independently? (Y/N)

Does the applicant have a desire to work in the community? (Y/N)

Does the applicant currently have an open case with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)? (Y/N)

Please provide any additional information that we will need to know prior to contacting the applicant to set up a virtual interview and information sharing session:

Thank you for submitting a referral to the Pathways to Success Project. The applicant will receive a phone call within 2 business days to schedule a virtual appointment to screen for eligibility.





PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS (PTS) PROJECT SERVICE ORDER FORM

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES INFORMATION

Date: _____ Region _____

Regional Office Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Counselor Name: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

REFERRED PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Parish of Residence: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Preferred Contact Method: Phone Email

SERVICES REQUESTED

The participant referenced above has an open case with LRS and has selected Lighthouse Louisiana as the preferred vendor for services. Please select the boxes below to indicate the services being requested through the Pathways to Success project to support progress toward competitive integrated employment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Vocational Assessment
 - Community Based Assessment
 - Trial Work Experience
- Job Readiness
- Job Search Assistance
- Job Placement Assistance
- Short Term Job Support
- Supported Employment
 - Flexible Supported Employment Milestones
- Adult Work Based Learning Experiences
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
 - Youth Work Based Learning Experiences



DISABILITY RELATED AUGMENTATIVE SERVICES

- Orientation & Mobility
- Assistive Technology

TECHNOLOGY-BASED TRAINING

- General Tech Skills Assessment (Non-Blind/Low Vision)
- Assistive Software Training
- Entry-Level Computer Skills Training
 - Microsoft Windows
 - Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)
 - Navigating the Internet
 - Navigating E-forms
 - Virtual Meeting Platforms
- Mobile Technology
- Emerging Technology

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following documents must be included with this request for participant acceptance into the Pathways to Success Project:

- Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE)
- LRS Personal Information Form
- LRS Application

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Each participant will be contacted to determine eligibility prior to admission into the PTS project. Upon acceptance, the participant will receive an Assessment and Career Exploration (ACE) Report developed by a Career Counselor utilizing the 2025 Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES).

PTS services are offered at no cost. However, Lighthouse services that are not specific to the PTS project must be processed through AWARE. Please refer to the LRS Rate Manual in AWARE for pricing information pertaining to services outside the scope of the PTS Project. **Services not included in this Service Order must be submitted through the standard Purchase Authorization process.**

Submit this Service Order by email to Lighthouse Employment Services at eservices@lighthouselouisiana.org. Please allow up to two (2) business days for processing.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Signature

