

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



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Abilities, Inc. of Florida, was established in 1959 in Clearwater, Florida as a not-for-profit organization 501(c)(3). As of July 2011, Abilities will be doing business as ServiceSource, Florida Regional Office. ServiceSource provides vocational evaluation, case management, benefits planning, pre-employment training and job placement services for individuals with disabilities throughout the State

Welcome!

ServiceSource is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities and special needs.

Our Mission

Our mission is to deliver exceptional services to individuals with disabilities through innovative and valued employment, training, habilitation, housing and support services.

Our Values

In all that we do, we value:

- Respect and honor the individual needs and choices of people we serve
- Support individuals with disabilities, their family members and other care providers to build stronger communities in which people with disabilities are integrated and valued
- Conduct ourselves with utmost ethical integrity, ensuring that our actions follow our word;
- Provide exceptional customer service in order to meet or exceed the expectations of both our internal and external customers
- Provide new and enhanced programs through innovative solutions, continuous process improvement, valued partnerships and accountability to those we serve
- Support and encourage continual personal and professional development;
- Actively listen, communicate openly, respect the views of others, and encourage employees and participants at all levels to be engaged by expressing their thoughts and ideas

Our Vision

ServiceSource provides the highest quality services to individuals with disabilities and, in so doing, creates an environment that attracts and retains employees, customers, families and supporters committed to our mission. We achieve our vision through the power of our people, effective leadership, commitment to innovation, strategic alliances, efficient information management and proven financial strength. As a result, ServiceSource and the people we serve are active, integral, and valued members of the communities in which we operate.

ServiceSource Services

ServiceSource offers the following rehabilitation services:

- Vocational Evaluation
- Job Placement Services and Pre-Employment Services
- Social Security Administration Programs (SSA)
 - Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) for Social Security recipients
 - Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND)
 - Work Incentives Counseling (WIC)
 - Enhanced Work Incentives Counseling (EWIC)
- Youth Transition Programs
 - High School/High Tech (HS/HT)
- Warrior Bridge
 - Placement and support services to wounded Veterans and Veterans with disabilities
- Brain Injury Services
 - ABIL House- Community/Vocational reintegration program based on the clubhouse model
- Permanent and Transitional Housing for people with disabilities subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Low income rentals through Homes for Independence (HFI)
- Case Management through the Supportive Housing program (HUD)

Each program has different referral and funding sources, and provides unique services. Please refer to the individual program brochures or program staff for more information.

Qualifications of Staff

Qualifications of staff are based on requirements of the individual job position and specific program. At minimum staff are required to have a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Many of the ServiceSource staff have undergraduate and graduate degrees and are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC). A list of job descriptions and required qualifications is available on request. In addition to the required qualifications, staff receives ongoing training in areas of safety, personnel issues, diversity, human rights, confidentiality and current rehabilitation modalities and strategies focused on serving the special needs of participants. Our trained and experienced staff is well qualified to assist you with your rehabilitation goals.

Business Hours

ServiceSource is open Monday –Thursday 8:00am to 5:00 pm;
Friday 8:00am to 4:00 pm.

Appointments

Please contact ServiceSource staff prior to your appointment if you are going to be late or absent. If you cannot reach your ServiceSource staff person, leave a message on his/her voice mail.

Dress Code

Participants need to inquire if there is a dress code for their appointment or training. It is expected that all participants will be well groomed while in attendance.

Parking

Cars are to be parked within the designated lines in the parking lot. If you have a permit for handicapped parking, please display it on your mirror.

Solicitation on ServiceSource Property

Participants are not permitted to take up a collection or solicit for any charges, parties or other purposes on ServiceSource property. No staff member is allowed to accept gifts from any participant.

Holidays and In-Service Days

ServiceSource observes ten holidays each year. These include: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veteran's Day; Thanksgiving and the day after; and Christmas Day. In-service days are scheduled periodically for training of ServiceSource staff. In-service dates will be announced in advance so you know regular services will not be available that day.

Severe Weather

In general, during periods of severe weather, ServiceSource will follow the policy of the county. If the county closes the schools for severe weather, ServiceSource will also be closed. The Executive Director of ServiceSource or his/her designee may also determine whether services will be available in the event that schools are not in session. If you are concerned that weather will affect your services, please contact the ServiceSource number for the site at which you are receiving services. If the location is closed due to weather, the telephone greeting will give you information.

ServiceSource is a Smoke and Drug Free Workplace

ServiceSource follows a drug-free workplace policy. Any legal or illegal substance that alters an individual's normal behavior and results in intoxication is not allowed. Substance abuse includes misuse of legally prescribed drugs, selling, trading, giving away, possession, or offering for sale illegal or prescribed drugs, including alcohol.

ServiceSource prohibits smoking and distribution or sale of smoking materials in all work sites that it owns, leases, and/or operates. Smoking is permitted only outside the building, 15 feet away from entrances and building air intake vents.

Safety Measures

In the event of any emergency situation while you are in a ServiceSource facility, follow the staff person's instructions to either evacuate the building or seek shelter in the building. The facility will evacuate all visitors due to: fire; potentially violent situations; bomb threats; or power failures. When directed to, please evacuate by the posted routes and seek a safe shelter after you have exited the building. If directed to shelter in the building (possibly due to severe weather) follow the posted routes to the shelter area or ask staff to assist you to a safe area. Sheltering in the building is only done when leaving the building puts your safety at high risk.



First Aid

ServiceSource staff at all locations has First Aid training if you are injured while at any facility. First Aid supplies are generally available in the common areas (like a lunch room or lounge area). Please seek help from the staff if you have a minor injury that needs attention. If more than first aid is needed the staff will contact 9-1-1 for emergency transportation to a medical facility.

Personal Information Changes

It is important that ServiceSource has your current address and phone number. Please notify your ServiceSource staff person if you move or change your phone number.

Personal Telephone Calls

Participants are not permitted to receive personal phone calls while receiving services, except in case of emergency. If you need to contact someone by telephone, please check with the ServiceSource staff for assistance. ServiceSource has a TDD available for your use.

Weapons in the Workplace

For the safety of all staff and participants, weapons are not allowed at any facility that is owned, leased or operated by ServiceSource. No one may carry firearms or weapons of any kind in the facility unless they are an on duty law enforcement officer. If you are aware of weapons within the facility you must report it to a ServiceSource staff person immediately.

Participant Bill of Rights

You have the right to:

1. Privacy and confidentiality regarding personal information, including information about your disability.
2. Full information about the services available to you through ServiceSource or other resources.
3. Make informed choices regarding the services you are eligible to receive.
4. Individual respect in your ideas, dreams, choices and contributions.
5. Fully participate in the development of your services and how the services are provided.
6. Receive services which are conducted with ethical standards.
7. Have access to your records maintained by ServiceSource.
8. Receive services which are free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, disability or veteran status.
9. Be in an environment free from abuse, financial or other exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, and neglect.
10. File a grievance if you feel that your services, the information regarding your services, or case closure does not meet your needs or is inaccurate. Refer to Grievance and Appeal Procedure.
11. Appoint an individual or legal services organization as a legal representative.
12. Report conflicts of interest where the ServiceSource ethical standards and employee behavior are in question.

Abuse Reporting

ServiceSource follows the abuse policy and procedures outlined in the Florida Statutes. Abuse investigations are performed by the state protective services and/or aging and adult services agencies. A copy of the legislation is in the ServiceSource personnel office. The toll free state Abuse Registry number is 1-800-962-2873 or TDD 1-800-453-5145.

Participant Responsibilities

Participants are responsible for:

1. Notifying appropriate staff member of any changes to address, phone number or employment status.
2. Being actively involved in your individualized service plan.
3. Attending all scheduled appointments.
4. Following through with goals as listed on the individualized service plan.
5. Providing documentation needed or requested by the ServiceSource program.
6. Notifying ServiceSource when you are no longer want to receive services.

While you are receiving services through ServiceSource you are expected to participate in the program, follow the rules within the facility you visit, and work in cooperation with the ServiceSource staff.

ServiceSource Responsibilities

The ServiceSource staff is responsible for:

1. Maintaining an environment in which you can develop skills, attitudes, abilities and habits to the maximum degree for a more fulfilling and independent life.
2. Encouraging all participants to speak openly on subjects regarding their rehabilitation program.
3. Keeping all participants informed about pertinent activities at ServiceSource.
4. Making respect, fairness and courtesy an integral part of all relationships.
5. Keeping all participants informed of their progress in their program.
6. Maintaining a safe and clean environment at all sites.
7. Making realistic recommendations and assist you in developing your individual goals to optimize your abilities.
8. It is the responsibility of ServiceSource to maintain a safe environment and to protect the people we serve against any threats to harm self or others. If a threat is communicated to ServiceSource staff this will be reported to the police and appropriate crisis and protective agencies will be informed.

Confidentiality

The participant/employee files are of a confidential nature and will not be disclosed under any circumstances with the exception of the following situations:

1. Subpoenas from a court of proper jurisdiction.
2. Outside agencies, physicians, psychologists, insurance carriers, etc. requesting information that provide a written release which is signed by the participant/employee.
3. During a medical emergency or an emergency situation in which it is felt the participant/employee is dangerous to himself or others, and the proper authorities must be contacted immediately.

Entrance, Transition and Exit Criteria

To participate in services at ServiceSource you must be at least 16 years of age and have been referred through one of several funding sources. During the initial contact, ServiceSource staff will provide you with a start date. The services you receive are at no out-of-pocket cost to you, other than what you may need for your personal needs. The ServiceSource staff can direct you to other available resources (transportation, advocacy, public assistance, and other benefits for which you may be eligible).

If you would like to transition from one service to another, ServiceSource staff will work with you and your referral source to determine what is needed to participate and if this service will meet your overall goals. Your services will continue at ServiceSource until you have either reached your objectives or something interrupts your services. An interruption might be absenteeism, or that you have moved away from this area, or because you no longer wish to receive services. If there are any changes in the funding of your services, ServiceSource will work with referral sources and other community organizations to resolve these.

Input from Participants

ServiceSource strives toward exceptional service delivery. Depending on the program, you may be asked to complete questionnaires or surveys and work with staff to design the services you need. An individualized plan will be developed with your goals, services, and expected outcomes. Service frequency and settings are included in this plan. This plan is reviewed regularly with you for any changes and to ensure your satisfaction with the services you receive.

Upon completion of your program, you may be asked to complete a satisfaction survey. The information you provide will help us to improve. Your input will be anonymous unless you wish to speak with someone regarding your experience with ServiceSource.

Grievance/Appeal Procedure

Any participant who feels dissatisfied with his/her program, discriminated against, that a disciplinary action applying to him/her is unfair, or that in any way there is an infringement upon his/her rights may use the following grievance procedures. Filing a grievance will not affect services being received nor will any retaliation be taken because of the grievance. If, at any time in the process, you feel you need help with the process you may choose an advocate or contact the Advocacy Center listed on page 9 in this booklet.

The time limits expressed do not include non-working days.

Step 1 – Verbal Complaints

A participant who has a grievance should first discuss it with an ServiceSource staff within 5 days after the incident that led to the complaint. If the grievance is settled to the mutual satisfaction of the participant and the ServiceSource staff, the matter will be considered resolved.

Grievance/Appeal Procedure (Cont)

Step 2 – Written Complaint

If the participant is not satisfied with the results of the discussion with the ServiceSource staff, he/she must then submit the grievance in writing or alternative format to the ServiceSource staff within 5 days after the discussion; failure to submit a written grievance within that time period for any reason will be considered adequate grounds to dismiss the complaint. The ServiceSource staff must respond to the written grievance within 3 working days after receiving it in writing.

Step 3 – Appeal to the Department Manager or Director

If the participant is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance by the ServiceSource staff, the participant may appeal the decision to the Department Manager or Director in writing or alternative format; the appeal must be submitted within 5 days after the participant has been given notice of the ServiceSource staff's decision. The Department Manager or Director must render his/her decision on the appeal, by written notice, within 3 working days after receipt of the appeal.

Step 4 – Appeal to the Regional Executive Director

If the participant is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance by the Department Manager or Director, the participant may appeal that decision to the Regional Executive Director in writing or alternative format; the appeal must be submitted within 5 days after the participant has been given notice of the decision. The Regional Executive Director must render his/her decision on the appeal, by written notice, within 3 working days after receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Executive Director is final.

If the participant is not satisfied with the resolution of the Executive Director, the participant may appeal the decision by contacting:

**Disability Rights Florida
2728 Centerview Dr. , Suite 102
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 488-9071; Toll Free 1-800-342-0823**

TDD 1-800-346-4127
www.disabilityrightsflorida.org
Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Please be advised that there is a Client Assistance Program (CAP) in Florida. As a participant of services, you are eligible for assistance under CAP.

CAP staff can give advice and provide clarification or assistance with the services provided by ServiceSource. If you are dissatisfied with services, CAP staff can work with you and ServiceSource to resolve the problem. They may also assist you with an Administrative Review or Fair Hearing.

Services are free and CAP is independent of all state agencies providing services to individuals with disabilities. CAP is a statewide program and can be contacted by calling toll free:

1-800-342-0823 (voice) or 1-800-346-4127 (TDD).

Affirmative Action Statement

Apart from the application of disability preferences, when all other factors are equal, it is the policy of ServiceSource that no person seeking employment shall be appointed, promoted, demoted, terminated, favored or discriminated against because of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, national origin, or political or religious opinions.

Employment and training practices provide that all individuals be recruited, trained, hired, assigned, advanced, compensated and retained on a basis of their qualifications and treated equally in these and all other respects without discrimination. It shall be considered the responsibility of every supervisor and/or employee to further the implementation of this policy and ensure conformance by his/her subordinates. ServiceSource supervisory personnel and others responsible for hiring or training must take affirmative action to eliminate any possible discrimination towards trainees, employees and applicants for employment. ServiceSource is required by Federal Law to comply with the following:

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

-Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin when offering or providing health, welfare or social services.

Affirmative Action Statement (Cont)

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

-Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in admission, treatment or employment in educational/training programs.

SECTION 504 OF TITLE V OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

-Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in admission, treatment or employment in health, welfare or social services.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

-Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the employment service delivery and accessibility of programs. Any trainee who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability may file a complaint with:

Department of Children and Families

Office of Civil Rights

1317 Winewood Boulevard

Building 1, Room 110

Tallahassee, FL 32399

(850) 487-1901

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board:

1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20004-1111

(800) USA-ABLE (872-2253)

(800) 993-2822 (TTD) (202) 272-5434 (V/TT)

www.access-board.gov