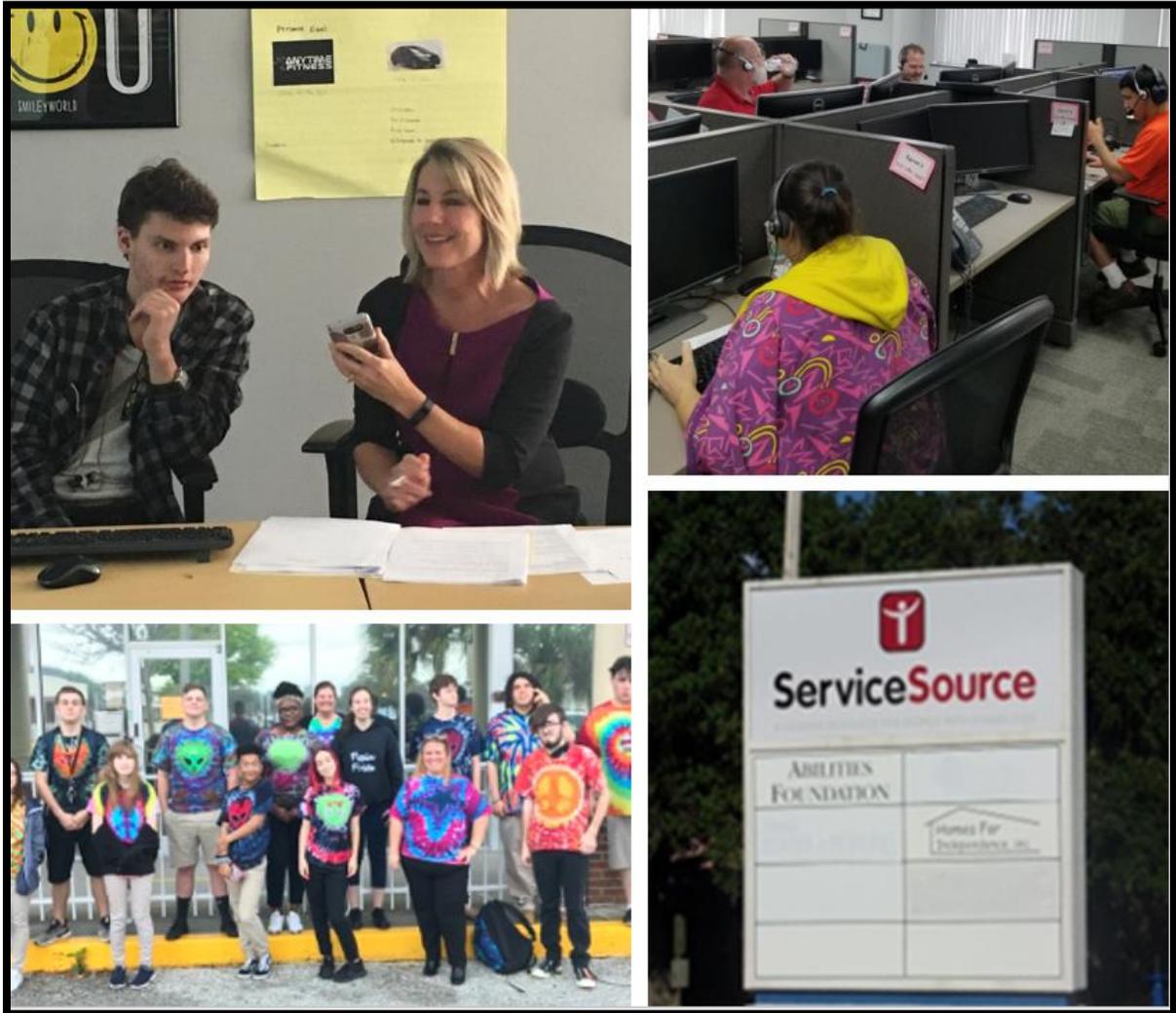


CONSUMER HANDBOOK



(Revised December 2024)

Welcome to ServiceSource!

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

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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, benefits planning, pre-employment training and job placement services for individuals with disabilities.



ServiceSource

Vision

We envision communities that welcome, value, and support the full diversity of their members.

Purpose

The mission of ServiceSource is to facilitate services and partnerships to support people with disabilities, their families, their caregivers and community members in order to build more inclusive communities.

Values

In all that we do, we recognize that we are a bridge to community. Our values comprise iBridge:



The iBridge Logo

The internal ServiceSource iBridge logo reminds us that we are a bridge to community for the people we serve.



ServiceSource Programs and Services

- **Vocational Evaluation Services**

- Traditional Comprehensive Evaluation
- Discovery

- **Job Placement Services and Pre-Employment Services**

- Pre-Placement Training
- Job Development
- Job Placement
- Short-term Job Coaching
- Supported Employment
- On-The-Job (OJT)

- **Youth Transition Programs**

- Career Camps
- Peer Mentoring
- High School High Tech Programs

- **Warrior Bridge**

- Placement and support services to wounded Veterans and Veterans with disabilities

- **Opportunity Calls (Call Center Training Program)**

- **Social Security Administration Programs (SSA)**

- Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)
- Benefits of Work Program (WIPA) for VR customers
- Ticket to Work (TTW)

- **Housing Services**

- For people with disabilities subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and
- Low-income rentals through Homes for Independence (HFI)

Each program has different referral and funding sources. Vocational Evaluation, Employment Services, Career Camps, Peer Mentoring, and the Benefits of Work services are provided by referral from Vocational Rehabilitation.

Qualifications of Staff

The qualifications of staff are based on requirements of the individual job position and specific program. Many of the ServiceSource staff have undergraduate and graduate degrees. In addition to the required education, staff receives ongoing training in areas of safety, personnel issues, diversity, human rights, confidentiality, industry and workplace practices, and the current rehabilitation modalities and strategies focused on serving the special needs of consumers. Our experienced rehabilitation team works together to support consumers on the job and have contingency plans in place to provide backup and support in case of a staff member's absence, or tardiness.

Business Hours

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

Consumers need to inquire if there is a dress code for their appointment or training. It is expected that all consumers 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

Consumers 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 consumer.

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 and will be announced in advance.

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 Regional Executive Director of ServiceSource or his/her designee may also determine whether services will be available if 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.

Health & Safety Measures

Your health and safety are a top priority! ServiceSource follows the protocols recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and World Health Organization (WHO) to the greatest extent possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employees and visitors are required to follow these recommendations while at ServiceSource. Information will be communicated to you prior to starting services. If you have concerns or questions, please contact us.

Emergencies

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 lunchroom 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

Please notify your ServiceSource staff person if you move or change your phone number.

Personal Phone Calls/Cell Phone Use

Consumers 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 consumers, 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.

Consumer Bill of Rights

You have the right to:

1. Privacy and confidentiality regarding your personal information, disability, and services you receive.
2. Full information about the services available to you through ServiceSource or other resources and the time needed to make decisions.
3. Make informed choices regarding your services by having access to the information and the time needed to make decisions.
4. Respect your ideas, dreams, choices and contributions.
5. Fully participate in the development of your services, including how the services are provided, the staff you work with, how information is shared, involvement in research projects, and the right to make changes or withdraw your consent.
6. Receive services which are conducted with ethical standards. Report conflicts of interest or questionable employer behavior.
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 complaint if you are dissatisfied with your services, or feel your rights were not protected. Filing a complaint will not result in retaliation or barriers to services. Refer to Complaint and Appeal Procedure on page 12.
11. Appoint an individual or legal representative, advocate, or self-help support services.

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**.

Consumer Responsibilities

Consumers 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 ServiceSource.
6. Notifying ServiceSource when you no longer wish 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 consumers to speak openly on subjects regarding their rehabilitation program.
3. Keeping all consumers informed about pertinent activities at ServiceSource.

4. Making respect, fairness and courtesy an integral part of all relationships.
5. Keeping all consumers 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 consumer/employee files are of a confidential nature and will not be disclosed under any circumstances with the exception of the following:

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 consumer/employee.
3. During a medical emergency or an emergency situation in which it is felt the consumer/employee is dangerous to himself or others, the proper authorities must be contacted immediately.

Entrance, Transition and Exit Criteria

To participate in services at ServiceSource you must be:

- Referred through one of several referral sources;
- At least 16 years of age; and
- Independent in taking medication, feeding and toileting (with or without an attendant). Ambulatory or mobile with the use of a wheelchair.

ServiceSource does not provide attendant services, manage or monitor medications, or provide transportation to and from services. Referrals are accepted on a first come, first serve basis and if initiated, a waiting list would

function in the same manner. The final decision for acceptance for persons referred to the Employment Services program is made by the Department Manager. 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. If needed 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 eligibility and if this service will meet your overall goals. Your services will continue until you have either reached your objectives. Services may be interrupted due to absenteeism, 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 Consumers

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.

Complaint/Appeal Procedure

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organization, its policies, services or staff, where a response or resolution is expected. This might be formal such as a written/emailed complaint, or informal such as a discussion with a staff member expressing dissatisfaction, or how services can be improved.

Filing a complaint will not affect the services being received or result in retaliation. If, at any time in the process, you feel you need help with the

process you may choose an advocate or contact the Client Assistance Program on page 13.

ServiceSource is committed to a mutually beneficial approach to resolving complaints, so that each party is heard, understood, and respected. A consumer has the right to file a formal complaint at any time. It is their responsibility to write down exactly what happened so that it can be investigated. The person under investigation (if applicable) has a right to know what the outcome of the investigation is within a reasonable amount of time. Supervisors (or the investigating authority) have the right to complete a thorough investigation without being hindered by the parties involved.

Step 1 – Verbal Complaints

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

Step 2 – Written Complaint

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

Step 3 – Appeal to the Department Manager or Director

If the consumer is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint by the ServiceSource staff, the consumer may appeal the decision to the Department Manager or Director in writing or alternative format; the appeal must be submitted within 5 working days after the consumer 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 consumer is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint by the Department Manager or Director, the consumer may appeal that decision to the Regional Executive Director in writing or alternative format; the appeal must be submitted within 5 working days after the consumer 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 Regional Executive Director is final.

If the consumer is not satisfied with the resolution of the Regional Executive Director, the consumer 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 consumer 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.

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 & Families
Office of Civil Rights:**

1317 Winewood Boulevard
Building 1, Room 110
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 487-1901

**Architectural & 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)