

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (SES)

Description

Supported Employment Services (SES), established by MHA, is dedicated to empowering individuals with mental illness to achieve their goals related to employment, independence, wellness, and recovery. We offer personalized support through group sessions and one-on-one job development, helping participants identify strengths, develop skills, and improve their chances of finding and maintaining meaningful work.

Our person-centered approach involves coordinating with other service providers to create tailored support plans that meet each individual's unique needs and aspirations. Once participants secure employment, our Employment Specialists provide ongoing coaching, both on-site and off-site, and continuously monitor progress to promote long-term success and stability in the workplace.

Personnel

Supported Employment Services (SES) is comprised of a team of three full-time employees, including a Licensed Program Director and two Employment Specialists.

The SES team is intentionally diverse, reflecting the cultural and demographic makeup of the Essex County community served by MHA. This diversity enhances the team's ability to provide culturally competent services and build stronger, more meaningful connections with consumers from various backgrounds.

Caseload

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, Supported Employment Services (SES) served a total of 133 clients of which 52 were new enrollees.

Referrals came from a diverse range of sources, including self-referrals through the internet and word of mouth, as well as from various partner programs and organizations. These included MHA's PATH Program, PATH Outreach Program, Collaborative Justice Services (CJS), Criminal Justice Reform (CJR), Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), Prospect House (PH), Integrated Case Management Services (ICMS), Community Support Services (CSS), Northwest Essex Community Healthcare (NWECH), Ancora Psychiatric Hospital, Rutgers Behavioral Health, Care Plus Behavioral Health, the Center for Behavioral Health, Advance Behavioral Counseling, Mind Body Spirit, Morris SURE Outpatient Program, and New Essecare.

This diverse referral network highlights the collaborative and community-integrated approach of SES in supporting individuals with serious and persistent mental illness on their path to employment and recovery.

Demographics

The majority of clients served by Supported Employment Services identify as African American (69%), followed by Caucasian (25%) and Hispanic (11%). While SES serves individuals across all of Essex County, the highest concentration of consumers resides in the East Orange and Newark areas.

Additional consumer representation comes from various other municipalities within the county, including Belleville, Bloomfield, Fairfield, Irvington, Orange, Maplewood, Montclair, Nutley, West Orange, South Orange, and Livingston. This geographic diversity underscores the program's broad reach and accessibility within the region.

Performance Outcomes

The target number of clients to be served was 130, but SES exceeded this goal by serving 133 clients, reaching 102% of the target. Additional key outcomes include 52 individuals placed into full-time employment, reaching 104% of the goal, and 60 individuals placed into part-time employment, achieving 100% of the goal. Additionally, individuals were re-placed in employment, representing 24% of the target. At the close of the fiscal year, SES maintained an active caseload of 98 consumers.

SES placed 23% of clients into employment within 120 days of program entry. Notably, 100% of those placed were employed in occupations of their choice. By the end of the year, 42% of clients retained employment for three months or longer.

Employment Specialists worked diligently to support clients, providing consistent motivation and conducting multiple follow-ups to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce. Staff actively engaged clients in Job Readiness activities focused on key areas such as interviewing skills, work ethics, problem-solving, and positive communication.

The target wait time for intake was three business days, with program admission was completed within one day. Individual Service Plans were developed collaboratively with consumers and reviewed on a monthly and quarterly basis, with additional reviews conducted as needed to support consumer progress and goal attainment.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

MHA continuously refines its services based on consumer input, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to share feedback and have their voice heard. Feedback is collected through various methods, including the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

The survey was made available via SurveyMonkey, distributed through email, and offered in-person to maximize accessibility. A total of 26 responses were received. Results indicated an impressive 96% overall satisfaction with SES services.

Program Highlights

Employment Placements: SES successfully placed individuals in a wide range of competitive jobs, including: *Dietary Aide, School Lunch Aide, Dishwasher, Retail Worker, Certified Nurse Aide, Groundskeeping, Housekeeping, Package Handler, Direct Support Professional, Substitute Teacher, Case Manager, Transportation/Bus Aide, Office Assistant, Security Officer, Patient Care Technician, Customer Service Representative, Accountant, Recreational Aide, Inventory Specialist, Dock Runner, Stocker, and Cashier.*

Transitional Employment Program: SES continued oversight of the in-house Transitional Employment Program, providing paid training and ongoing support to six consumers employed as Receptionists and Cleaning Technicians within MHA offices to strengthen their work experience and build their résumés.

Warm Line Support: Employment Specialists provided ongoing support to Peer-to-Peer Warm Line Peer Support Specialists, reinforcing the value of lived experience in service delivery.

Dress for Success Partnership: SES maintained its partnership with Dress for Success Northern NJ by referring and assisting 10 women in receive professional attire for job interviews and employment. The clothing included dress suits, pantsuits, dresses, blouses, slacks, shoes, and more. SES also utilized the PATH Program Clothing Pantry as an additional resource.

Technology & Certification Support: SES provided direct assistance to consumers by distributing refurbished tablets to consumers enrolled in school. Additionally, SES helped repair a donated laptop for a full-time student pursuing a BA degree at Caldwell University. The program also provided bus cards for work transportation and covered cost for CPR and Food Handlers Certifications.

Referrals and Supportive Services: SES referred consumers to key community resources, including local food pantries, Bridgeway Support Services for supported education, Prospect House (day treatment program), Community Support Services.

Health Insurance Support: MHA staff included Certified Application Counselors who assisted uninsured individuals in applying for health coverage.

Academic Partnerships: SES continued to serve as an internship site for Rutgers School of Health Professions, supporting student training in real-world mental health service environments.

Employment Partnerships: Ongoing collaboration with Gourmet Dining Services, a provider to Seton Hall University, has resulted in the employment of several consumers. SES also continued its partnership with Care Well Health's Human Resource Department to explore and pursue job openings within their hospital network.

Advocacy Activities

Monthly Outreach Community Meetings are regularly attended to strengthen collaboration with community partners and stakeholders, with the goal of increasing referrals and ensuring that community needs are effectively addressed.

Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings to stay informed about industry best practices, emerging trends, and community priorities. This ongoing engagement helps ensure that program strategies remain aligned with current standards and effectively meet the evolving needs of the population served.

FY 2026 Goals

SES will continue its collaborative efforts with community providers to secure additional employment opportunities by leveraging internal resources within partner organizations and agencies. By strengthening these partnerships, SES aims to expand the network of available job opportunities and facilitate more effective placement for consumers. Additionally, the program will focus on improving employment outcomes by actively reducing service gaps, enhancing linkages between different service providers, and ensuring smooth transitions between various stages of support for consumers. This approach is designed to create a seamless experience and better support sustained employment. Furthermore, SES will prioritize in-person engagement with consumers throughout FY2026 whenever appropriate and feasible, recognizing the value of face-to-face interactions in building trust, providing personalized support, and addressing individual needs more effectively.