

State Services for the Blind (SSB) Community Partner Monitoring Policy

Introduction

As part of the contract with the SSB and as part of the Code of Federal Regulations title 80.40(a), contract service providers agree to permit monitoring of all contractual functions.

Monitoring reviews may include:

- Observation of evaluation/training sessions
- Product delivery
- Service performance
- Consumer records and interviews and surveys
- On-site visits or inspections
- Provider qualifications reviews
- Compliance with state and federal regulations
- All financial records, documentation, management control systems, and curriculum relating to the provision of products or services
- All documents, records, or other information relating to the health, safety, or welfare of SSB consumers

Ongoing Monitoring

SSB staff in local field offices continuously monitor the products and services that are purchased for SSB consumers. The ongoing monitoring process includes verification that the purchase meets contract terms and specifications, that all supporting documentation is received promptly, and accurate invoices are submitted on time.

Additionally, central office staff may require contract service providers to produce records on an as-needed basis.

Community Partners may be temporarily suspended from providing services if, in the opinion of SSB staff, circumstances require this action. Examples of such circumstances include -- but are not limited to -- suspected fraud, consumer abuse, failure to meet contract specifications, and/or failure to perform according to the terms and conditions of the contract.

Comprehensive Monitoring

Overview

SSB central office and field staff will conduct comprehensive monitoring of the products and services purchased for SSB consumers. This monitoring process encompasses both programmatic and financial reviews and may be conducted periodically or as needed. However, Community Partners providing Adjustment to Blindness training services will be monitored at least every three years. Usage is also a factor in determining the timing of monitoring a Contractor.

The comprehensive monitoring review can include surveys, interviews, review of financial records, reports, correspondence, and qualifications.

Preparing for the Monitoring Review

Notifying the Contractor

At least thirty days before the date of the Contractor monitoring review, the lead monitor will send an appointment request. This request will be sent via email with a letter attached to the Community Partner. This letter will include a request for a current copy of the required documents SSB has on file for your business, the date and time of the scheduled monitoring visit, and the link to the Monitoring Survey Tool. SSB utilizes this survey tool to collect data from SSB staff and recent customers who have received services, as well as information entered by partners and data collected by the monitoring team. Any staff members who will be attending the monitoring visit will also receive the appointment information and survey link.

The monitoring survey tools may vary from Community Partner to Community Partner, as the relevant questions asked for each vary due to the Community Partner's service type.

Each appointment letter contains the following:

- Notice of monitoring review
- Authority to conduct the monitoring review
- Date and time of the scheduled appointment
- Names of monitoring team members scheduled to perform the review
- Contract number(s) and effective date(s) of contract(s), if applicable
- A copy or link to the service-specific checklists to be used during the review. This allows the Community Partner the opportunity to gather and organize the required information.
- A request for the Community Partner to confirm the appointment and assign a designated contact person or team members to the appointment
- Name and contact information of the lead monitor, who can answer questions regarding the review

Unscheduled Monitoring Visits

SSB staff may conduct unscheduled monitoring visits when deemed appropriate by SSB.

Monitoring Process

Monitoring reviews for facility-based Community Partners are conducted at the facility whenever possible. All other reviews are conducted at the central office, local field office or other appropriate location, as determined by the lead monitor, or via video conference.

Conducting the Monitoring Review

The monitoring review process includes a conversation and discussion of all the relevant questions included in the Monitoring Survey Tool. The tool can skip over questions that do not apply to non-facility-based Community Partners. The Monitoring Survey Tool has streamlined the process by providing a single service provider to answer only the questions that apply to smaller businesses and the number of consumers they serve.

Failure to Meet Contract Standards

Failure to meet SSB contract standards is a disservice to SSB consumers and may result in:

- Suspension of the contract service provider's approved status until all deficiencies have been corrected.

or

- Termination of the contract.