



Occupational Classification and Funding Traceability

What Work Are We Paying For?

Why systems lose track of work – and what that does to funding and accountability

Introduction

Funding systems pay for services.
Pricing systems assign value to those services.

But both depend on something more basic:

What work is actually being done?

In many real systems, that question is not clearly answered.

Instead, funding and pricing are based on:

- program names
- service categories
- job titles
- administrative rules

These do not always describe the real work.

This creates a gap between:

- what is funded
- what people actually do
- what results are produced

When that gap exists:

- funding becomes hard to trace
- price becomes hard to interpret

Work is real — labels are not enough

People do real work every day.

They:

- assist with daily living
- support behavior
- help people work and participate
- coordinate and communicate

This work exists independently of:

- program names
- funding categories
- job titles

Programs and employers define **jobs**.
But jobs do not fully define the **work**.

To understand what is really happening, we need a stable reference.

That is what occupational classification (SOC) provides:

- a consistent way to identify types of work
- independent of how programs label them

It anchors the definition of work independently of programs, job titles, and funding structures.

Why systems lose track of work

Most funding systems were not built around occupations.

They were built around:

- eligibility
- service definitions
- administrative structure

So instead of saying:

- “this funding supports this type of work,”

they say:

- “this funding supports this service.”

Over time, this leads to confusion:

- the same work is called different things
- different work is grouped together
- payment does not match actual responsibilities

The system still runs — but it becomes harder to understand.

Blended work: what really happens in practice

In real life, work is not cleanly separated.

One person, in one job, may:

- provide personal care
- support behavior
- assist with employment
- coordinate services

This is normal. This is **blended work**.

It is not an exception — it is typical.

But most systems assume:

- one role
- one category
- one rate

So parts of the work become:

- unclear
- unpaid
- or misclassified

This is one of the main reasons funding and pricing stop making sense.

Where price enters — and where confusion begins

Price is always present:

- wages
- hourly rates
- reimbursement levels

So it is tempting to think:

“Price tells us something about quality.”

But this is where a key misunderstanding happens.

Price does not describe:

- what work is done
- how well it is done
- what results are achieved

Price reflects:

- funding rules
- cost structures
- market conditions

In other words:

Price belongs to the economic side of the system — not the quality side.

The real problem is not price — it’s how we use it

Price itself is not the problem.

The problem is how systems use it.

When work is not clearly identified:

- funding attaches to labels instead of real work
- price follows those labels

Then systems start to act as if:

- price represents quality
- or can stand in for it

But it cannot.

This mixes two different things:

- **quality** (work and results)
- **economics** (cost and price)

Once they are mixed:

- evaluation becomes unclear
- decisions become distorted

Why this matters

If we do not clearly identify work:

- we cannot connect work to results
- we cannot compare services fairly
- we cannot explain differences in price

And we start asking the wrong questions:

- “Why is this service more expensive?”
instead of
- “What work is actually being done?”

This affects:

- workers (misaligned pay)
- providers (unclear expectations)

- systems (weak accountability)
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A practical shift: make work clear

The solution is not complicated.

Start with the basics:

- identify the work using occupations (SOC)
- recognize blended roles
- align funding with that work
- then interpret price correctly

When work becomes clear:

- funding becomes traceable
 - differences in price become explainable
 - evaluation becomes clearer
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Conclusion

Funding and pricing systems depend on something they often do not clearly define:

the work itself

When work is not clearly identified:

- funding becomes disconnected
- price becomes difficult to interpret

At the same time, price must be understood correctly.

Price does not measure quality.

It reflects the economic conditions around the service, not the work itself.

The problem is not price.

The problem is using price in place of:

- clearly identified work

- properly evaluated results

When work is aligned with occupations:

- the system becomes clearer
- funding becomes traceable
- and price can be understood for what it is —
part of the economic context, not a measure of quality

Final line

If work is not clearly identified, neither funding nor price can be clearly understood.

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