

# INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

The Key Tool  
of a  
Successful Program



# The Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

- Builds on the information gathered in the assessment. The more comprehensive the assessment, the better the plan
- A process for helping each INDIVIDUAL participant accomplish as much as possible on the program, whether or not an unsubsidized job is the end result

- Participants must make the decisions and take responsibility for their decisions
  - trust and respect the participant's commitment
  - by enrolling, a major decision has already been made to take steps toward employment
  
- Those helping in the preparation must be supportive and patient
  - you are the facilitator
  - show no disapproval; be non-directive; encourage viable goals

- Results of the interview and other assessments feed into initial training and employment goals
  - Jointly interpret how these facts shape into a job goal ... ask:
    - What needs will a job fulfill?
    - What type of employment are you considering?
    - What do you want out of a job?
    - What type of occupation or job do you want?
    - When do you expect to be ready to apply for the type of job you want?

- IEP uses information in the assessment to build the plan

- strengths
- barriers
- support services needed to overcome barriers
- training needed to overcome barriers

- IEP determines the training strategy and timing/phasing of each strategy

- classroom
- Work experience
- OJE

- Ensure that the IEP is clear and specific enough that even individuals who have had no prior involvement with the case can understand it
- Relate every training activity to enhancement of a skill assessed as needed for employment
- Set priorities for action steps
- Clarify responsibility and consequences
  - Set dates to review progress and, if necessary, modify the plan

# Discussing goals with older workers

- The IEP should clarify the participant's goals and the landmarks that need to be established to meet the goals
- The IEP is a process for helping each participant accomplish as much as possible on the program, whether or not an unsubsidized job is an end result

# Envision the IEP as a series of stepping stones to an ultimate destination or goal

Participant's Assessment is the starting point

Participant's goal is the end point;  
Action steps describe how to reach the goal

# The IEP Should Contain:

- A statement of what the participant hopes to gain from the program
- Ways of overcoming any barriers to employment as identified in the assessment
- Training needs

# IEPs should also contain:

- More than one objective/action steps to achieve the job goal
- Appropriate community service assignments with rotation times
- Initial action steps with completion dates
- A statement by the participant that she/he agrees with the information and agrees to cooperate with the staff

# To help with IEPs, staff need to know:

- Current and potential host agencies
- Local job market, and qualifications for jobs
- Available training opportunities
- Basic education training locations
- Information on available social services



# **Analyzing the Regional/Local Labor Market**

# Regional and Local Labor Market Information

- Program Goal: Participants placed in high growth jobs according to local labor market data
  - Demand-driven approach to training, job development and placement
  - Through the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) model, regions integrate economic and workforce development activities and demonstrate that talent development can drive economic transformation in regional economies across the United States.
- Targeted jobs should enable participants to become self-sufficient in positions for which they would not have otherwise had without the skill training provided by the program

# FIRST TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Making placements involves more than successfully contacting the private sector
- Of equal importance in the equation:
  - Preparing participants
  - Ensuring host agencies understand their role in the program
  - Acquiring program visibility throughout the community

# Positioning Your Program to Meet Business Needs

- Understand the labor market in which you are working
- Identify business needs and market to them
- Understand your community's economic trends
- Identify employers' current staffing needs
- Target a specific employer market

# **Training must be closely tied to needs of the local labor market to:**

- Ensure jobs will be available to trained participants ---and---
- Ensure training content provides participants with skills/knowledge needed to compete for available jobs

**How well are your host agencies preparing participants to compete for available jobs?**

# What you need to know about the labor market ...

- What employers currently hire older workers? For what kinds of jobs?
- What are the types of recent job openings?
- What are wage rates for various industries & occupations?
- What are characteristics of the current labor force (skills, educational level, etc.)
- What industries are predicted by the WIB for future job growth? Demand occupations? (WIA Plan)
- What job trends are evident over the last 2 years? (downsizing, job growth, new business development)

# Title V Staff Are a Source of Labor Market Information

- What types of jobs have you found in recent months?
- Are there job openings you cannot fill due to participant skill lack?
- What did you learn about employers' hiring this past year?

# Information Sources .....

- [Melissadata.com/lookups/index.htm](http://Melissadata.com/lookups/index.htm)
  - Business Counts by ZIP  
Get a list of business counts and SIC codes by ZIP Code
- [WWW. Rileyguide.com](http://WWW.Rileyguide.com)
  - All things career development and job search
  - Research & Target Employers & Locations

# Now --- Incorporate This data into Participant IEPs

- Training/Position Descriptions should reflect skills to be learned at that host agency
- Use O-Net as a resource to lay out participant training plans / timing for accomplishing IEP action plans

## ALSO EXPLORE:

- Microsoft.com to determine software skills to learn .... Tutorials
- National Retail Foundation (industry-recognized customer services skills curriculum)

# <http://online.onetcenter.org/>

- **Occupation-Specific Information**

- Tasks — Occupation-Specific Tasks
- Task List — List of tasks for each occupation
- Tools and Technology — Machines, equipment, tools, software, and information technology workers may use for optimal functioning in a high performance workplace

- **Workforce Characteristics**

- Labor Market Information — Current labor force characteristics of occupations
- Occupational Statistics — Information related to economic conditions and labor force characteristics of occupations
- Occupational Outlook — Future labor force characteristics of occupations

- **Education** — Prior educational experience required to perform in a job
- Experience and Training required
- Basic Skills - Entry Requirement
- Cross-Functional Skills - Entry Requirement
- Licensing —
- **Occupational Requirements**
  - Generalized Work Activities — General types of job behaviors occurring on multiple jobs
  - Detailed Work Activities — Detailed types of job behaviors occurring on multiple jobs
  - Detailed Work Activities List — List of detailed work activities for each occupation
  - Organizational Context — Characteristics of the organization that influence how people do their work
  - Work Context — Physical and social factors that influence the nature of work

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# Writing the IEP

- Begin with the first step(s) that must be taken to overcome barriers and reach goal

- Will have several action plans

- basic education
- skills training
- job search

- Each of the barriers and tasks in the IEP can be broken down into action steps that are specific, achievable and measurable

- Deadlines must be established for each action step
- Participants must be monitored against the deadlines
- Action steps must be in logical order

**The IEP is a succession of short term plans that guides the participant's movement through the program**

- Write a series of specific, detailed plans for how the participant will accomplish what they must
  - Describe, in detail, each specific action they must take
  - Describe a measurable outcome for each specific action
  - Set a deadline for accomplishing each specific action
- Keep the plan short term – 3 months maximum

# Cover relevant areas in logical order

- Pre-placement training
- Supportive Services
- Adult Basic Education
- Occupational Assessment
- Job Skills Training
- Reassignment to new training site
- On-the-Job Training
- In-service Training
- Job Search Training
- Job Search Activities

# Use right plan for each specific goal

- Participant needs to acquire **skills at the training site**
  - Clerical • Computer • Customer Service • Food Service • Retail
- Participant needs **classroom training** in job skills
  - Computer • Day Care • Food Prep • Health Care • Home Care • Office Skills
- Participant needs to **learn** how to **job search**
- Participant needs to participate in a **job club**
- Participant needs to **conduct** own **job search**
- Participant needs to successfully complete **OJE**



**Always be as specific as you possibly can:**

- contact 10 employers and submit applications for clerical jobs

**Always include a way to measure success, accomplishment, or completion (i.e.: # of employer contacts or applications submitted in a time period)**

# Examples of action steps that could appear in an IEP

- Attending job interviews
- Accepting an initial or alternative assignment
- Registering at a one-stop center; using resources/attending available free training
- Improving personal habits or appearance
- Participating in workshops, training, etc.

## Each action plan must be within the participant's reach

- set participant up for success, not failure
- always focus on the next logical step for the participant
- do not have participant pursue goals/steps for which they are not yet qualified

Each action plan should help the participant focus on his/her ultimate goal

Action plans are meaningless without **specific dates** as deadlines

# Involve the training site supervisor in the IEP

- The supervisor is often in the best position to be a “**coach**” to the participant
- The supervisor provides on-the-job training at the training site
- The supervisor can reinforce and help participant practice classroom training
- The supervisor can assist with and coach participant’s job search

# Follow-up Procedures Are Essential

- Follow-up determines whether the goals are still achievable
- Follow-up reveals if additional action steps or interventions are required

# There can be no follow-up without a specific IEP

- You must know what it is you are following up on
- The participant must know exactly what it is they are expected to do
- You cannot follow-up on anything that is vague or not understood

# Follow-up is ongoing & positive – Don't wait for failure

- The IEP is about succeeding
- Intervene to help participant be successful when necessary
- Track important dates and check prior to deadlines
- Reevaluate goals and objectives if they are not attainable



# **When All Else Fails ...**

# IEP Related Terminations

- IEP related terminations do not reflect well on the program
- The participant must know exactly what was expected of them
- The program must make attempts to help the participant succeed

# IEP RELATED TERMINATIONS(OWB 96-11)

Can only be executed if the DOL has approved the grantee's written policy

- Policy must include specific reasons for terminations
- Policy to be given out at orientation or at participants' meeting.
- Policy must be in a handbook or similar document.



SCSEP staff should make every effort to find out why participants are not cooperating before considering termination proceedings.

- Meetings should be held with the participant to find a solution to the problem without resorting to termination.

# Evaluating Your Forms

- Is your IEP form and process adequate, considering today's discussion?
- Enough space for on-going progress notes, monitoring updates, barriers and successes?
- Clear guidance for job developers?
- What would be better?

# Elements of a Good IEP Form

- Face sheet summarizing:
  - Job goal (including desired location and time preferences)
  - Assessed training needs and barriers to achieving goal
  - Proposed training plan
- Subsequent sheets each covering:
  - Individual action steps to achieve new skills and/or eliminate personal barriers
  - Specific, measurable, completion dates
  - Open-ended space for progress/case notes
- Signature/date lines
- Acknowledgement statements

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# **ACTION PLANNING**

- Evaluate quality of current IEPs
  - Begin process of upgrading
- Evaluate quality of position descriptions as training plans
  - Begin process of upgrading
- Train staff
- Analyze local job market in terms of jobs and skills in demand
  - Develop training sites and position descriptions to address these skill needs
  - Identify and target other resources to provide necessary training / position participants to qualify for jobs