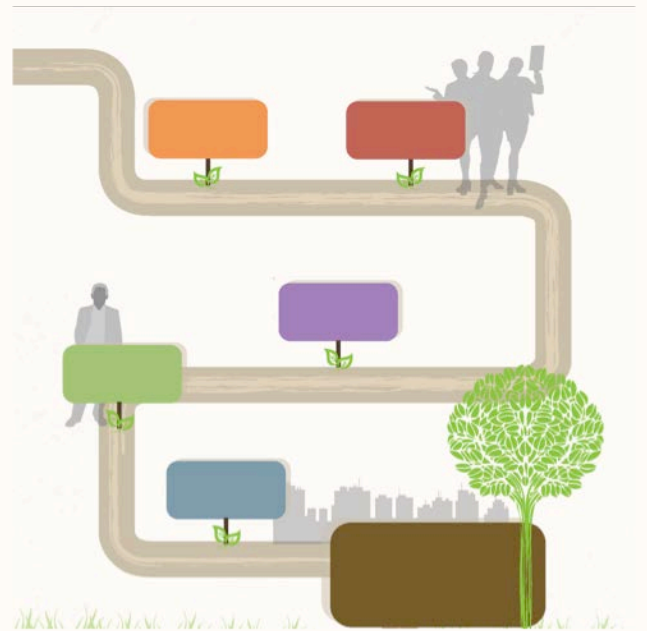


CAREER DISCOVERY TOOLS



Exploring What it Takes For Employment
Success

The Career Discovery Tools

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A Description of the Career Discovery Process

Career Discovery is a person-centered assessment and planning process that determines a job seeker's preferences, interests, support needs/accommodations and skills (PINS), resulting in a Career Discovery Profile (CDP). It can be used to assist the IEP, ISP or IPE team in identifying a person's place on the path to employment and the desired employment outcome. The profile assists team members to develop services, supports and the action steps needed to gain community employment that is aligned with the job seeker's PINS.

Career Discovery uses a team approach to get to know the person in depth. The individual participates in the various stages of Career Discovery which include team meetings, an initial home visit, interviews, social and vocational observations and a benefits analysis. The resulting Profile describes what is learned during Career Discovery and guides the team to explore the best possible community employment options that are potential job matches for the job seeker.

Introduction to Career Discovery Meeting The process begins with a team meeting to introduce the Career Discovery process to the job seeker, parents and family members, and school and agency personnel including:

- Teachers and Transition Specialist from local school districts
- Service and Support Administrators (SSA) from local county DD boards
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors from the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency
- Providers from community rehabilitation programs
- Friends and neighbors.

The individual and his/her team members meet and the Career Discovery process is explained. The expectations of the team members are shared and the job seeker agrees to participate. Authorization for Release of Information forms are signed, transportation arrangements are determined and dates are decided. The appropriate team members responsible for the individualized education, service and employment plans (IEP/ISP/IPE) document their respective plans during each team meeting. This meeting may be co-chaired by school or agency personnel including any of the following: teachers, transition specialists, the provider, the Career Discovery Manager, and/or the job seeker's SSA.

Home Visit and Neighborhood Observation The home visit is an opportunity for the chosen Career Discovery Co-Chairs and the provider and the SSA (optional) to further explain Career Discovery to the job seeker and his/her family, and to begin learning about the individual's interests, chores completed in the home, community activities in which the person participates, friends and transportation arrangements. A Career Discovery flow chart, along with an example of a completed CDP is shared with the family in order to familiarize them with the end result of Career Discovery. A date is set for the next stage, the Career Discovery Team Meeting, along

with the time and location. Information learned during the home visit is transferred to a draft copy of the CDP, to be finalized upon completion of all stages of Career Discovery.

The neighborhood observation is conducted and documented on the CDP to identify nearby potential social and vocational opportunities that may possibly match the interests of the individual.

Career Discovery Team Meeting. The Career Discovery Team meeting is facilitated by the provider(s). This meeting brings together team members to discuss the job seeker's PINS – preferences, interests, strengths, talents, personality traits, habits/routines, activities, dislikes, and needed accommodations and supports. All responses are documented on chart paper, and transferred to the draft CDP. Prior to the completion of the team meeting, discussion occurs among members, identifying the types of social and vocational observations that can be conducted and possible job/social sites where those can occur. Previous staff and/or teachers who have worked with the individual are identified to be interviewed by the Provider. All information learned is again added to the draft CDP.

Interviews. Interviews are conducted and documented in the draft CDP by the provider help to identify the job seeker's learning style and provide a baseline for understanding the job seeker's employability skills. This information verifies and expands the team's understanding of the job seeker's interests, accommodation and support needs throughout the process.

Social Observations. The provider conducts social observations with the job seeker to determine social connections, connections to community activities, accommodations/supports and/or training needs. When the individual is not actively engaged in any social activities, the provider will arrange to go with the individual to activities that reflect his/her interests. This information is added to the draft CDP.

Vocational Observations. The provider arranges and conducts observations in employment settings that match the individual's stated interests. They consist of a variety of (usually one to three) job try-outs where the individual can partake in specific job tasks that are identified as those matching with his/her abilities and interests. Notes are taken during those observations that capture information about the motivation of the individual, skill level, the quality of performance in terms of pace, correctness, stamina, and observable employability skills, and added to the draft CDP.

Benefit Analysis. The provider arranges to have a benefits analysis completed, with results added to or attached to the CDP.

Upon completion of the many stages of Career Discovery, the draft CDP is reviewed by the individual/parents and finalized. It is then sent out to all team members to review prior to the next meeting, the Employment Planning Meeting.

Employment Planning Meeting. During the final stage of Career Discovery, the Employment Planning Meeting, the content of the Career Discovery Profile is discussed. Three employment themes are determined that match the individual's interests and team members suggest job opportunities that match those themes (list of 20). Team members may then assist the individual in determining his/her place on the Path to Employment from one of the following options:

- (1) The individual is already engaged in community employment and needs support for job stabilization, job improvement, or career advancement;
- (2) The individual expresses a desire to obtain community employment but is not currently employed and needs support to obtain employment or identify career options and employment opportunities;
- (3) The individual is unsure about community employment and needs assistance and support to identify career options and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision to work; or
- (4) The individual does not express a desire to work and needs support to learn more about careers and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision not to work.

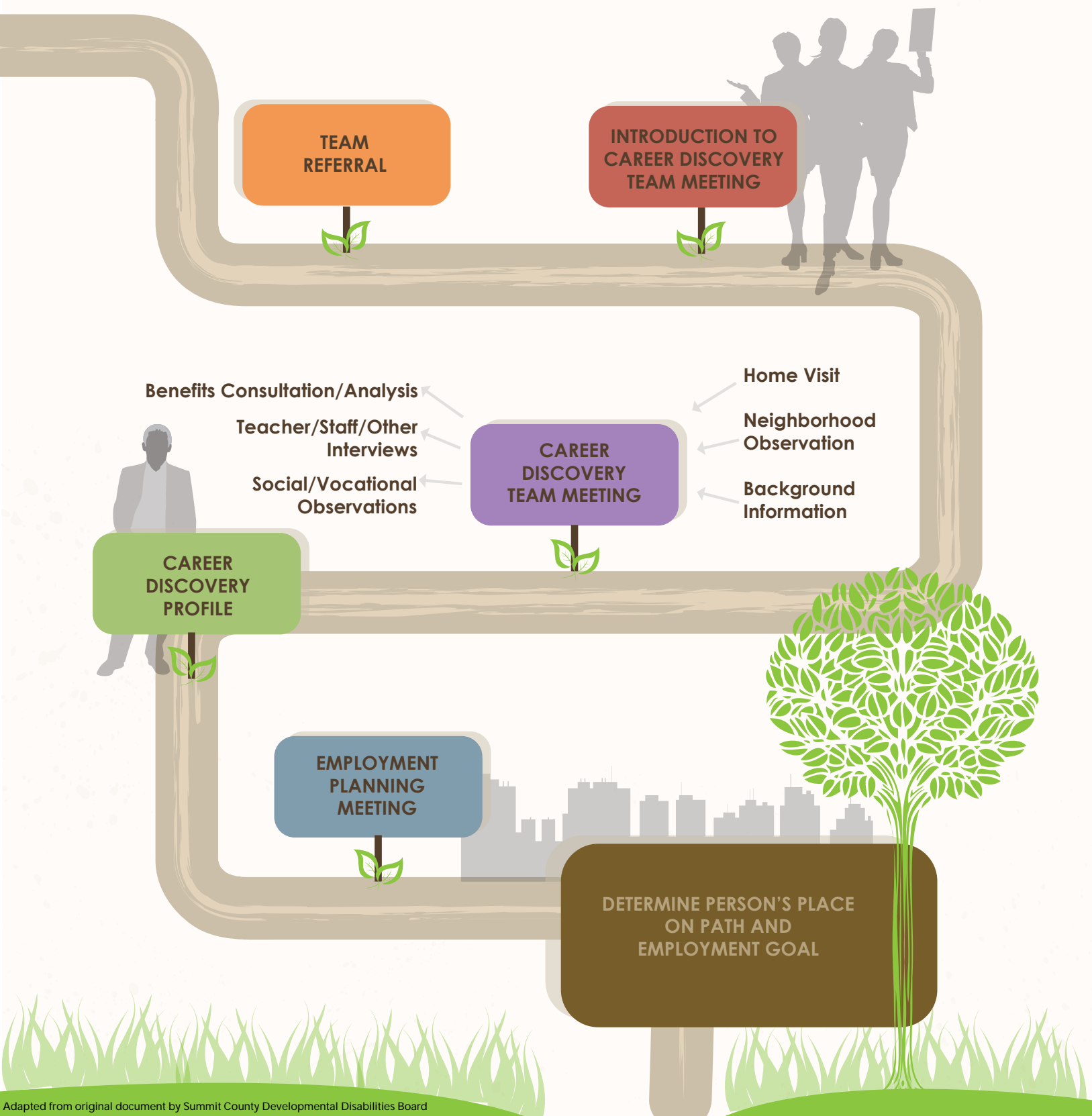
An employment goal is determined and next steps are then discussed so that the individual can begin to receive services in the community. Providers then utilize the information contained in the CDP to pursue paid, unpaid, and/or other work experiences for the individual. A job coach can use the information to develop a training plan and strategies to assist the individual in becoming successful and independent at the jobsite and engaged in meaningful activities. Staff will also use the profile to explore specific segments of the labor market that match the interests of the individual and identify specific contributions that the individual might offer to employers.

Career Discovery is ideal for job seekers with developmental disabilities. It captures information in a positive way. It identifies information about the accommodation and support needs of the individual in a way that enhances the individual's chances of a successful outcome in community employment.

Career Discovery Flow Chart

Your Path to Community Employment

Use this flow chart and accompanying table to determine the steps and supports you need to reach your employment goal.



Suggested Services and Supports for Each Places on the Path to Community Employment

PLACE ON THE PATH TO COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Place #1 I have a job but would like a better one or to move up - The individual is already engaged in community employment and needs support for job stabilization and improvement, or career advancement.



- Follow-Along
- Job Coaching
- Natural Support Facilitation
- Skill Development
- Education and Training
- Job Development and Placement for Career Advancement

Place #2 I want a job! I need help to find one - The individual expresses a desire to obtain community employment but is not currently employed and needs support to obtain employment or identify career options and employment opportunities.



- Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation
- Career Exploration
 - Community-Based Assessment
 - Skill Development
 - Job Development
 - Job Coaching
 - Retention

Place #3 I'm not sure about work. I need help to learn more - The individual is unsure about community employment and needs support to identify career options and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision to work.



- Awareness of Employment Support Services
- Meeting with Peers who are Employed
- Family Meetings
- Interviewing Formal and Informal Support Network
- Learning from Authentic Experiences
- Exploring the Multiple Benefits of Employment
- Addressing Individual Concerns
- Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation, if Appropriate

Place #4 I don't want to work, but I may not know enough about it - The individual does not express a desire to work and needs support to learn more about careers and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision not to work.



- Awareness of Employment Support Services
- Meeting with Peers who are Employed
- Family Meetings
- Interviewing Formal and Informal Support Network
- Learning from Authentic Experiences
- Exploring the Multiple Benefits of Employment
- Addressing Individual Concerns

Career Discovery Profile

Identifying Information	Name:
Date Completed	
Date of Birth/Age	
Address Contact phone Contact email	
Emergency contact Phone Email	
Author's name, Title, Agency Phone Email	

Discovery Activities & Data Collected	Date:
Review of IEP, ISP, IPE, etc.	
Initial Meeting	
Home visit	
Neighborhood observation	
Team Meetings	
Staff/teacher interviews	
Social Observations	
Vocational Observations	
Benefits Analysis	
Employment planning meeting	

Team Members	Role	Phone	Email

Summary of Skills (Summarize identified skills that have been demonstrated and verified)

Summary of Interests/Emerging Skills (Summarize activities, hobbies, talents that the individual enjoys- home, school, work, leisure)

Career Discovery Profile

Character/Personality Traits (Summarize his/her personality; idiosyncrasies, habits and routines)

Ideal Conditions (Summarize those conditions that must be in place for any job that he/she may be working in; ie., morning/evening, inside/outside, specific hours of the day, noisy/quiet, work with public/outside public eye, etc.)

Environments to Avoid (Summarize activities he/she is known to dislike and environments/situations that should be avoided when looking for job opportunities)

Learning Style (Support needs and preferences for learning new skills)

Transportation (Summarize the transportation resources necessary; ie., transportation assessment needed, takes public transportation, receives transportation with public funds, family/friends can transport)

Medical Concerns at Work (List medical issues and/or medications that must be taken during work hours)

Career Discovery Profile

Specialized Support & Accommodations	Summarize those specific supports needed for successful employment
Technology	
Accessibility (physical)	
Personal Care	
Communication	
Other	

Educational History (Document highest level of education completed and school attended; May also summarize school reports if relevant to employment)

Previous Work Experience (Describe any paid or unpaid work experiences, including community and school volunteer activities, paid employment; focus on the tasks and duties and also mention the employer)

Check Place on The Path to Employment	Definition of Place
	1. Already engaged in employment and needs support for job stabilization, job improvement or career advancement
	2. Wants to obtain community employment but is not currently employed and needs support to obtain employment/identify career options and opportunities
	3. Is unsure about community employment and needs assistance and support to identify career options and employment opportunities/economic impact of decision not to work.
	4. Does not express a desire to work/needs support to learn more about careers and employment opportunities/economic impact of decision not to work.

Employment Themes (These are three specific areas of interest that have become evident through Discovery activities)	Possible Job Titles/Industries
Theme 1	
Theme 2	
Theme 3	

Career Discovery Profile

Employment Goal

Action Steps:					
Activities:	Next Step:	How to Achieve?	By when?	Who can help?	Achievements/ Milestones?

[illegible]

Introduction to the Career Discovery Meeting

Purpose

The purpose of the Introduction to the Career Discovery meeting is to confirm that the individual understands the Career Discovery Process and to amend the individual's plan (IEP, ISP, IPE) as needed.

AGENDA

- _____ Introductions: Relationship to the Individual
- _____ Review Purpose of the Meeting
- _____ Introduce Career Discovery to the Individual and Team Members
- _____ Provide written Materials on Career Discovery to the Individual and Team Members
 - Career Discovery Flow Chart
 - Description of Career Discovery
- _____ Describe Expectations of Individual and Team Members
- _____ Obtain Signed Authorization for Release of Information if needed
- _____ Confirm Team Membership
- _____ Schedule Home Visit
- _____ Schedule Career Discovery Team Meeting
- _____ Discuss Transportation Arrangements
- _____ Discuss Plan (IEP, ISP, IPE) Content/Revisions
- _____ Answer Questions

Home Visit Conversation

Individual: _____ **Date:** _____

Completed by: _____

Relationship to the Individual: _____

1. Obtain the names of _____'s parents, siblings and any other living relatives. Describe the relationship between _____ and each family member.

2. Tell me about _____'s friends. What kind of things do _____ and his friends enjoy? Where do they usually do these things?

3. Tell me about the community activities that _____ participates in. Does he/she have friends or family who participate in these activities with him/her? Does he/she participate in these community activities alone? What kind of support does _____ need in the community?

4. Tell me how _____ gets around in the community.

5. Describe any paid or unpaid work experiences that he/she has participated in. Which of these were most enjoyable? What kind of support was provided? Who provided the support?

6. Has _____ been involved in any specific vocational training? Describe type, location, supports provided.

7. In what environmental conditions does the individual thrive? (indoors/outdoors, noisy/quiet, many people/few people, slow/quick pace, time of day, etc.)

8. What kind of accommodations need to be in place for the individual in order to meet with success? (Physical accessibility, technological, personal care, etc.)

9. What job or type of job would _____ like to do? What about that job appeals to him/her?

10. Are there particular situations that you would recommend to avoid when searching for work opportunities?

11. When a job opportunity is developed, what kind of supports might need to be provided initially? Ongoing?

12. What conditions need to be in place for their work opportunities?

- AM or PM work?
- Number of hours per week?
- Inside or outside?
- Specific days of the week better?
- Proximity to home/school?
- Other:

13. Describe his/her daily routine. What kinds of activities, work, and social groups would he or she like to be involved with?

14. Is there any additional information that you would like to share regarding_____?

15. Please describe the individual's home and attach pictures if taken.

Home Visit Conversation Checklist

- _____ Discuss friends and the types of activities
- _____ Community activities and supports needed
- _____ Getting around the community
- _____ Personal areas of home (tour, description)
- _____ Chores around house and supports needed (like or dislike)
- _____ Any specific vocational training
- _____ Any paid/unpaid work experience and supports needed (like/dislike)
- _____ Environmental conditions preferred
- _____ Accommodations and supports needed for success
- _____ Situations/environments to avoid
- _____ Neighborhood observation

CAREER DISCOVERY: Neighborhood Observation

Individual's Name: _____ Date: _____

Individual's Address: _____

Closest Intersection: _____

Social/Community Activity Possibilities: Include name of activity and location. If there is contact information, please include.

Small Businesses in area: Document the name of the business, the type of business, and the address. If possible, obtain owner name(s) and contact information.

Observed by _____

Date

Dear Team:

We are scheduled to meet on **Date** at **Time** to hold a Career Discovery Team meeting for **Person** at **Location**. We anticipate the meeting to be about two hours in length.

The Career Discovery Process is a person centered assessment and planning process that results in a profile that identifies the individual's skills, interests, talents and support/accommodation needs that are used to identify individualized employment/community engagement outcome(s). It can also be used to identify ____'s place on the path to employment.

During the Career Discovery Team meeting we will begin to gather information about ____ which will form the contents of a Vocational Profile called the Career Discovery Profile. We will identify individuals who know ____ best, other than family members (teacher, staff member, other) so that they can be interviewed. Finally we will discuss social and vocational observations that will be completed with ____ and decide upon where those should take place. These activities will aid in identifying skills, contributions and conditions to be used when exploring employment opportunities. We will also be planning the next meeting to take place after all observations and interviews have been completed. There will be an opportunity to discuss questions and to identify any additional team members as well.

I am enclosing the agenda for the meeting. There are a lot of things to share and coordinate during the meeting so please come prepared with any questions you may have and your planner. Please do not hesitate to contact me before the meeting if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Provider Facilitating the Meeting
Agency Name

The Career Discovery Team Meeting

AGENDA

Purpose of the Career Discovery Meeting

The purpose of today's Career Discovery Meeting is to identify interests, preferences and strengths that can assist in developing a comprehensive view of _____'s community employment options. We will do this by facilitating a team meeting where all participants will help answer questions about strengths/talents, interests and job preferences. All information will be summarized into a Vocational Profile called the Career Discovery Profile and will be shared with all team members upon the completion of the Career Discovery Process

Introductions

Facilitator

Team Members

Missing Members

Facilitated Team Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What are _____'s Strengths and Talents?

Describe _____'s Personality.

What are some of his/her Habits and Routines?

What activities does _____ enjoy?

What activities does _____ dislike?

What kind of Accommodations and Supports will be needed on any job?

Interviews

Who should be interviewed? (Staff, teachers, others)

Observations

Identify familiar social events in which _____ can be observed (2-4)

Identify non-familiar vocational settings that match _____'s interests. (2-4)

Benefits Analysis

Identify who/when a Benefits Analysis will be completed.

Employment Planning Meeting

Set meeting date, time, location (5 minutes)

Comments/Questions

The Career Discovery Process: Teacher/Staff/Other Interview Form

Individual: _____ **Teacher/Staff/Other:** _____

Date: _____ **Interviewer:** _____

Please name other staff members who have worked with the individual:

1. Has _____ completed a vocational interest inventory? If yes, please describe the results or provide a copy of the inventory.

2. Describe any vocational training that _____ has received or is receiving.

3. Describe employment skill training or work experiences that _____ has participated in at school, in a facility, and/or in the community. Please complete the Employment Skills Observation form (attached) for _____. This will provide baseline information.

4. Describe any accommodations or supports needed.

5. Describe _____'s academic skills.

6. In your opinion, are there any particular situations/environments that should be avoided?

7. Does _____ have a Behavior Support Plan? If yes, please provide a copy and share any additional information relative to behavior support needs.

8. Is there anything else you would like to share about _____?

9. Please complete the Employment Skills Observation form and the Vocational Learning style inventory along with this form, and return by _____.

Learning Style Inventory

Directions: Circle the letter before the statement that best describes you.

1. If I have to learn how to do something, I learn best when I:

- (V) Watch someone show me how.
- (A) Hear someone tell me how.
- (K) Try to do it myself.



2. When I read, I often find that I:

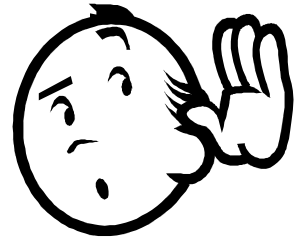
- (V) Visualize what I am reading in my mind's eye.
- (A) Read out loud or hear the words inside my head.
- (K) Fidget and try to "feel" the content.

3. When asked to give directions, I:

- (V) See the actual places in my mind as I say them or prefer to draw them.
- (A) Have no difficulty in giving them verbally.
- (K) Have to point or move my body as I give them.

4. If I am unsure how to

- (V) Write it in order to determine if it looks right.
- (A) Spell it out loud in order to determine if it sounds right.
- (K) Write it in order to determine if it feels right.



5. When I write I:

- (V) Am concerned with how neat and well spaced my letters and words appear.
- (A) Often say the letters and words to myself.
- (K) Push hard on my part or pencil and can feel the flow of the words.

6. If I had to remember a list of items, I would remember it best if:

- (V) Wrote them down.
- (A) Said them over and over to myself.
- (K) Move around and used my fingers to name each item.



7. I prefer teachers who:

- (V) Use a board or overhead projector while they lecture.
- (A) Talk with lots of expression.
- (K) Use hands-on activities.

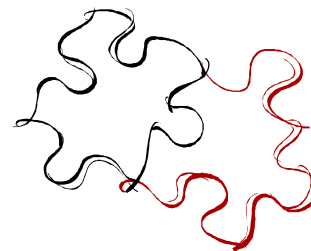
8. When trying to concentrate, I have a difficult time when:

- (V) There is a lot of clutter or movement in the room.
- (A) There is a lot of noise in the room.
- (K) I have to sit still for any length of time.



9. When solving a problem I:

- (V) Write or draw diagrams to see it.
- (A) Talk myself through it.
- (K) Use my entire body or move objects to help me think.



10. When given written instructions on how to build something, I:

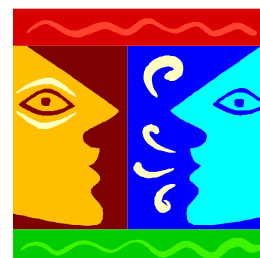
- (V) Read them silently and try to visualize how the parts will fit together.
- (A) Read them out loud and talk to myself as I put the part together.
- (K) Try to put the parts together first and read later.

11. To keep occupied while waiting, I:

- (V) Look around, stare, or read.
- (A) Talk or listen to others.
- (K) Walk around, manipulate things with my hands, or move/shake my feet as I sit.

12. If I had to verbally describe something to another person, I would:

- (V) Be brief because I do not like to talk at length.
- (A) Go into great detail because I like to talk.
- (K) Gesture and move around while talking.



13. If someone were verbally describing something to another person, I would:

- (V) Try to visualize what he/she was saying.
- (A) Enjoy listening but want to interrupt and talk myself.
- (K) Become bored if her/his description got too long and detailed.

14. When trying to recall names, I remember:

- (V) Faces but forget names.
- (A) Names, but forget faces.
- (K) The situation where I met the person rather than the person's name or face.

Scoring instructions: Add the number of responses for each letter and enter the total below. The area with the highest number of responses is your primary mode of learning.

Visual

Auditory

Kinesthetic

V = _____

A = _____

K = _____

Adapted from, Learning to Study Through Critical Thinking, J.A. Beatrice

Beatrice, J.A. (1995). Learning profile inventory. Learning to Study Through Critical Thinking. Retrieved February 24, 2015, from <https://www.edcc.edu/trio/documents/LearningStyleInventory.pdf>

Learning Style Study Strategies

VISUAL LEARNER

- Organize work and living space to avoid distractions.
- Sit in the front of the room to avoid distraction and away from doors or windows where action takes place. Sit away from wall maps or bulletin boards.
- Use neatly organized or typed material.
- Use visual association, visual imagery, written repetition, flash cards, and clustering strategies for improved memory.
- Reconstruct images in different ways - try different spatial arrangements and take advantage of blank spaces on the page.
- Use note pads, Post-Its, to-do lists, and other forms of reminders.
- Use organizational format outlining for recording notes. Use underlining, highlighting in different colors, symbols, flow charts, graphs or pictures in your notes.
- Practice turning visual cues back into words as you prepare for exams.
- Allow sufficient time for planning and recording thoughts when doing problem-solving tasks.
- Use test preparation strategies that emphasize organization of information and visual encoding and recall.
- Participate actively in class or group activities.
- Develop written or pictorial outlines of responses before answering essay questions.

AUDITORY LEARNER

- Work in quiet areas to reduce distractions, avoiding areas with conversation, music, and television.
- Sit away from doors or windows where noises may enter the classroom.
- Rehearse information orally.
- Attend lectures and tutorials regularly.
- Discuss topics with other students, professors and GTAs. Ask others to hear your understanding of the material.
- Use mnemonics, rhymes, jingles, and auditory repetition through tape recording to improve memory.
- Practice verbal interaction to improve motivation and self-monitoring.
- Use tape recorders to document lectures and for reading materials.
- Remember to examine illustrations in textbooks and convert them into verbal descriptions.
- Read the directions for tests or assignments aloud, or have someone read them to you, especially if the directions are long and complicated.
- Remind yourself to review details.
- Use time managers and translate written appointment reminders into verbal cues.
- Use verbal brainstorming and tape recording writing and proofing.
- Leave spaces in your lecture notes for later recall and 'filing'. Expand your notes by talking with others and collecting notes from the textbook.
- Read your notes aloud.
- Practice writing your answers using old exams and speak your answers.

Learning Style Study Strategies

KINESTHETIC LEARNER

- Keep verbal discourse short and to the point.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Use all of your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing.
- Use direct involvement, physical manipulation, imagery, and "hands on" activities to improve motivation, interest, and memory.
- Organize information into the steps that were used to physically complete a task.
- Seek out courses that have laboratories, field trips, etc. and lecturers who give real life examples.
- Use case studies and applications (example) to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Allow for physical action in solving problems.
- Read or summarize directions, especially if they are lengthy and complicated, to discourage starting a task without instructions.
- Use taped reading materials.
- Use practice, play acting, and modeling to prepare for tests.
- Allow for physical movement and periodic breaks during tests, while reading, or while composing written assignments.
- Role play the exam situation.
- Teach the material to someone else.
- Write practice answers, paragraphs or essays.

Employment Skills Observation Report

Individual's Name: Completed by: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Member <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Option IV/Work Study <input type="checkbox"/> OOD <input type="checkbox"/> County Board Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other Agency Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Indicate One: <div style="text-align: center;">Baseline:</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Vocational Observation:</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Location/Activity Observed</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Date:</div>
--	---

Please provide a brief, positive description of skills observed for each category, as well as accommodations that could be made to support the individual. Check the box next to categories that are critical to the job. Place "N/A" in the text space next to categories you did not observe.

If you are completing this report as part of an observation, place "N/A" in the above Activity Observed, Location, and Skills Observed box, and complete the report based on your general experience working with the individual.

<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code	
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Appearance & Hygiene	
<input type="checkbox"/> Managing Personal Items on the Job	
<input type="checkbox"/> Courtesy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Attitude	
<input type="checkbox"/> Honesty	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conversation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice Level	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility	
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling Stress	
<input type="checkbox"/> Following Directions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Working Safely	
<input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving	

<input type="checkbox"/> Work Quality	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Speed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reliability	
<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative and Motivation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asking for Help	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anger Management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying on Task	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization and Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stamina	

Social Situational Observation Form

Individual's Name: _____ Date: _____

Name of Staff Conduction Observation: _____

Activity Observed: _____ Location _____

Length of Time Observing: _____

TIPS FOR COMPLETING AN OBSERVATION:

- When taking observation notes think about writing what you see—just the facts.
- Do not draw conclusions or write judgmentally about the performance or behavior.
- Describe it with enough detail and robustness so any reader who was not there can picture it in their mind,
- Capture information that will indicate the motivation of the individual, as well as the quality of their performance in terms of pace, correctness, and stamina.
- List specific tasks that you see them doing.
- Describe any connections to people, organizations and/or to the community that you become aware of the individual having.
- If any concerns arise, note them. Quotes work well in this instance.

Describe Skills to be Observed

Observation Notes

Positive Descriptors of Participant in this Environment/Activity

Accommodation/Support Recommendation

Vocational Situational Observation Form

Individual's Name: _____ Date: _____

Name of Staff Conducting Observation: _____

Activity Observed: _____ Location _____

Length of Time Observing: _____

Describe Skills to be Observed

Observation Notes

Positive Descriptors of Participant in this Environment/Activity

Accommodation/Support Recommendation



GRIFFIN – HAMMIS ASSOCIATES, LLC

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: *A GUIDE FOR DISCOVERY & JOB DEVELOPMENT*

Cary Griffin, Senior Partner

Informational interviewing is an effective means of developing work experience settings, building a job placement network, discovering new types of jobs, introducing employment seekers, yourself, and your services to employers, and building the database of employment ideas. Informational interviews are also, of course, vital for refining emerging Vocational Themes during the Discovery process, and critical for gaining insight into the motivations and experiences of others with similar themes to the employment seeker being served.

In the Customized Employment process, Informational Interviews are generally used in two distinct situations:

1. During Discovery: *Getting to know* the owner or manager and having a discussion about them. This is not a job development meeting; it's the opportunity to learn more about the work people with similar Vocational Themes do in the local community. This is also where we ask for "advice" for an individual's career plan from the experienced business owner or manager.
2. During Job Development: Making clear that the employment seeker appears to match the core work and culture of the business, emphasizing the possibility of creating or restructuring tasks that bring greater efficiency and quality to the company and its customers.

Getting an appointment for an informational interview during Discovery is usually easier than setting up a job development meeting. GHA recommends using your Community

Action Team (CAT), Active Employer Council (AEC) or even your local Business Leadership Network (BLN) to “warm up” the business’ manager or owner (*see the section on Active Employer Councils*). Introduce the employment seeker to whatever business roundtable group your agency utilizes and ask the members to assist with connections to business people in their supply and customer chains who have Vocational Themes similar to that employment seeker. Sometimes less effective, but just as legitimate, is a casual conversation with a prospective employer at the monthly Chamber of Commerce “Business After Hours” social or at a service club meeting (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, et al.) that prompts a probe such as, “I’ve never seen your operation before, would you mind if I called you to set up a time for a chat and maybe a brief tour?” Most folks love to talk about their business and since you are not pressing them, setting up a phone call is considered low-risk. Make sure to follow-up soon, before the conversation is forgotten, and to illustrate commitment.

Generally a request for a twenty to thirty minute discussion works well because it signals respect for the person’s time, and it indicates that you are busy as well. In our experience, twenty minutes always becomes sixty minutes once the discussion begins. And, just as we use Smooth Listening in Discovery, its impact is substantial during Info Interviews. During the Discovery phase of Info Interviews remember that job developing is not the point; gathering information that refines Vocational Themes, exposing employment seekers to an array of jobs and work settings, fostering prospective work experience options, and building the database of supply chains and local businesses is the purpose.

Getting a tour is secondary to this first Informational Interview. During Discovery we seek to learn from the business owner’s experience. Ask for a tour and that’s all you are likely to get. Instead, when setting up the interview, ask specifically for twenty minutes of “seat time” to sit and discuss the owner’s career and to get “advice” from the person by asking: “if you were starting out fresh, what steps would you recommend for building a career in this field?” Explain that this information will assist in developing a career plan for the individual with a disability. Make certain you and the job seeker have rehearsed asking a few questions, but make the interview about the owner or manager; show them

they are assisting. Business people tell us they want to help, but short of hiring, they do not always know how. Reinforce that this interview (and subsequent tour) helps refine the career plan. This visit is not for job development. However, should a likely match become obvious after Discovery, a return visit may be considered.

On-site, the employment seeker and the employment specialist are seeking information about the owner or manager first and foremost. Again, during Discovery the process of refining Vocational Themes and matching related skills, tasks and conditions of employment to real work settings is the reason for this research. The individual interviewed should be the owner or upper level manager because the business most likely reflects their themes, skills and conditions of employment. Interviewing the manager of Human Resources is not the aim, and it signals the likelihood the company is too large and bureaucratic for customizing work.

The best method for conducting an interview, whether during Discovery or job development is to make certain the meeting is structured around a discussion with the owner/manager; that seat time in a quiet place in the business precedes any tour, and that for the Discovery period, information and advice is sought on the career plan. During job development, however, the point of the interview is discussing the possibility of a job match.

Throughout the process, find answers whenever possible through conversational exchange rather than a checklist of questions. Discovery is not job development; do not press for a job. That comes later in the relationship. For now, the interview and tour are answering questions about the varying tasks and duties people perform, the values and culture of the company, and needs the business has that the employment seeker can address.

While a more in-depth tour and job analysis occurs during the job development phase, it is essential to pay attention during initial Informational Interviews and tours. The tour provides an opportunity to witness, for instance, the level of natural support that may be

available to someone with a disability. Keen observation reveals whether co-workers and supervisors help each other out during a typical day; it reveals who does the training and how an employment specialist might structure the initiation period so that the employer takes significant responsibility for supervision and training right from the start; it reveals what is valued on the worksite, such as muscle, brains, humor, attendance, speed, quality or other worker traits. These are important considerations, of course, when designing a job match that minimizes on-site training and consultation. (*See the section on Unmet Employer Needs for more information*).

The Informational Interviewing process, as well, reveals opportunities or red flags if the place of employment does not provide a good working environment. Some standard questions for an Informational Interview, again, asked in a conversational and not an interrogative tone, include:

1. Where do you find or recruit employees? (This is asked in case you now need to refer to the Workforce system if they do all the hiring searches for this particular employer; to identify your competition; and to create an opportunity to discuss the service you provide).
2. How are people trained in their jobs? (This gives information about natural training means and methods that can be sculpted into a job match and training plan, especially one that recognizes that in most cases business already trains its employees and that the support you offer is customizing their training, not replacing it).
3. What are the prerequisites for working here? (This points out the various qualifications, certifications, etc., that might be needed).
4. How or where do your employees gain the experience required to work here? (Another question that gets at qualifications and that seeks the advice of the “expert.” This also gives the job developer a list of other similar companies).

5. What personal characteristics do you look for in employees? (This gives insight into the kind of candidate the employer seeks; provides information on what to highlight in a resume or interview; and gives a glimpse inside the culture of the company regarding the most valued skills and attributes).

6. When employees leave, what other industries or businesses do they go to? (This starts getting at issues of staff turnover, which might be an indicator of a great place to work in the case where no one leaves, to an indication of poor management in the case where there is high turnover. It also provides the employment seeker and job developer with information on related industries and possible opportunities for someone interested in similar work).

7. What are the pay and benefit rates?

8. What are the work hours? Is there shift work? Does the company allow for flextime or other job accommodations? (This gives insight into the flexibility of management and the company's policies on work hours and expected work effort).

9. What impact is technology having on the industry? (This is a common concern for most businesses today and provides an opportunity for using Resource Ownership strategies to propose a job for someone who can use or bring with them a piece of essential technology that can be purchased through a Social Security PASS Plan or through Vocational Rehabilitation).

10. What are the current forces for change in this industry? (This question often leads to a lively discussion of how the market is changing, how personnel preparation and training is evolving, and how the competitive market is adapting).

All these questions and their answers breed add-on questions and discussion points that provide opportunities to solve labor problems or to innovate in the face of emerging trends in hiring. Informational Interviews are a low-tech, high-touch option that provides

insight into the inner workings of business. Knowing what goes on in a company gives the employment seeker and employment specialist added advantage when creating employment or responding to an employer need.

Informational Interview Documentation Form

Business Name:

Name of person you interview:

What does the business do (products and services)?

How many people work at the business?

How long has it been around?

What are the different jobs in the business?

Does everyone do every job or do some people do one job?

How did the person get started in this job?

Does it require special training?

What do you like best about this job?

What is the hardest part of the job?

What do you look for in employees?

Where do you find or recruit employees/ How do people apply for this job?

What are the pay and benefits?

What are the work hours?

Is the business changing?

What impact does technology have on your work?

Describe your supply chain (note other businesses to contact and contact information)

Observations:

Employment Planning Team Meeting

AGENDA

Introductions

Discuss Career Discovery Stages Completed and Review
The Career Discovery Profile

Obtain Confirmation from the Team that the Profile is Accurate

Identify three themes

Review the Benefits Analysis Summary (or entire Document)

Identify the individual's Place on the Path to Employment
(If this has not already been determined)

Identify the Individual's Employment Goal

Determine and Document Next Steps for Job Development/Coaching

Plan (IEP, ISP, IPE) Revisions

Discovery “List of Twenty”

Student's Name:

Date:

Individual Completing Form:

Relationship to Individual:

Please list places in the community where each theme happens. If you know the owner or manager of the business, please provide contact information.

Vocational Theme #1:

Name of Business		Owner/Manager You Know	Contact Information (email/phone)
1.			
2.			
3.			
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Vocational Theme #2:

Name of Business		Owner/Manager You Know	Contact Information (email/phone)
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Vocational Theme #3:

Name of Business		Owner/Manager You Know	Contact Information (email/phone)
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