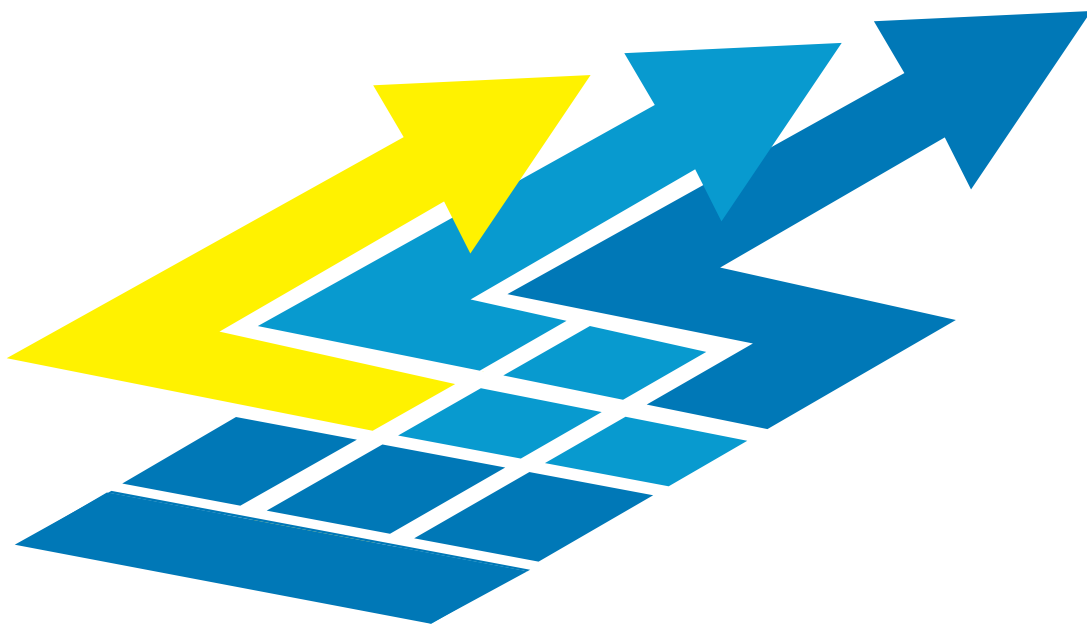


The Career Planning Process:

A Guide to Person Centered Career Planning in Connecticut

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This guide provides an overview of the career planning process and the CT DDS Career Plan. The guide will help you plan and implement the process and assist you in the development of the career plan itself. The guide is divided into 4 sections:

1. An Introduction to Career Planning
2. Using the CT DDS Career Plan
3. Putting the Plan into Action
4. Submitting the Plan for Review and Payment

An Introduction to Career Planning

Career planning is an essential first step in the process of helping individuals with disabilities to reach their employment goals. The career plan creates a road map for the employment process.

Career Planning

Career planning is a person-centered process

A person centered plan helps the individual identify their goals and aspirations and develops a plan to meet those goals

- The *job seeker identifies*, with assistance if needed, individuals who may be able to assist with the development and implementation of the career plan.
- The planning process is individually driven and focused leading to a *customized plan* to assist the job seeker, rather than a “one size fits all” approach.
- Career planning should be considered an *ongoing process*. New experiences, whether at work or in other parts of the job seekers life, will influence the job seeker’s goals and support needs.

Career planning is an inclusive process

The career planning process provides an opportunity to engage a wide range of people in a planning process directed to employment. It pulls in information from all aspects of an individual’s life to help the individual and the team develop a meaningful understanding of the individual’s aspirations and goals.

- The career planning process, with the consent of the job seeker, *brings together the full team of professionals* who know the job seeker well along with family members and others who may be able to contribute to the development of the career plan
- Information from all aspects of the job seekers life – home, community experiences, work, - should be brought into the planning process to help the job seeker and the team *think expansively about the job seeker’s interests, skills, experiences and dreams.*
- The inclusive nature of the career planning process provides an opportunity to identify pathways as well as potential barriers to employment. It helps to develop the *commitment of the team*, both individually and collectively to implement the plan.

Career planning is an active and action oriented process

Career planning requires an active and engaged approach to truly getting to know the job seeker, developing a plan and implementing the plan.

- Job seekers sometimes have had limited or fragmented work experience and may have difficulty identifying their goals. A range of *assessment approaches* may be used during the planning process to learn more about the job seekers preferences and skills.
- *Filling out the form is not enough.* The form, while important, merely documents the outcomes of the process. Without a meaningful process of truly getting to know the job seeker, the career plan is unlikely to reflect a person centered, customized plan that will lead to a great job match.
- The career plan is only as good as the action that follows. *All members of the team play a role in the implementation of the career plan.* Investigating transportation options, supporting access to benefits planning, or providing new contacts for job development are all examples of the ways team members can support the implementation of the career plan.

Getting Started

Start with the job seeker

Engage the job seeker directly in the process right from the start.

- Learn about *why the job seeker is interested in going to work.* Why does the job seeker want to work? Why now?
- *Learn as much as you can about the job seeker's preferences, skills and talents.* Don't skip this step just because you may have known the job seeker for a while. It is amazing what you will learn about someone when you have time for intentional and focused conversation.
- Job seekers will engage in this process differently and their participation will likely be influenced by the nature of their disability and communication style, by the people participating in the process, as well as the job seeker's experience and personality. *Adjust the process to meet the job seekers needs.*
- *Think creatively about how to engage individuals who may struggle to participate in this process.* Consider spending time together in a range of community settings. Together tour a range of work places and assess the job seeker's interest in the jobs and environments you visit.

Build the team

With the job seeker develop a list of potential team members who can be counted on to participate in this process.

- *Job seekers should be actively involved in creating the list of team members.*
- *Think creatively about who is on the team but also make sure they can commit.* A former employer, for example, may be great resource for the team but may not be able to commit to the ongoing career planning process. Be sure to capture information and ideas from people like this and share it with the team.
- *Everyone doesn't have to be on the team. You and the job seeker can meet individually with people who may have unique perspectives on the individual's skills and talents and bring this information to the team. The same goes for people who may have helpful community or employer contacts. Some people are best engaged strategically only when needed.*
- *Keep in mind that there may be potential team members who are not as supportive of the job seeker's goals as you might like. Consider including them anyways. The career planning process can be very effective in identifying concerns of others as well as barriers that may exist and developing strategies to address these issues.*

Use the team

The team should be a resource throughout the career planning process and in the implementation process

- *Once you are ready to bring the team together for a planning meeting make sure you are well prepared.*
- *Be sure to share with the team everything you and the job seeker have learned so far.* This will provide a good foundation for the planning meeting.
- *If there are concerns or barriers identified consider whether there are team members who can assist.* For example, is there someone on the team who is well connected in the community who would be willing to share some contacts with local businesses for informational interviews or job shadowing opportunities? Does the team included someone who is knowledgeable about all the local transportation options who can help map out the geographic areas in which to focus the job search?
- *You may have one meeting or you may have a dozen. At the end of each meeting make sure everyone understands the action plan and their responsibilities.*
- *Follow up, follow up, and follow up.* Check in with team members to track progress and make adjustments in the action plan as needed.
- *Stay in touch.* Even if the team is not actively engaged for a period of time, keep them informed of the job seekers progress. This will keep them engaged and help them know when they might be able to step in to assist.

Using the CT DDS Career Plan

The CT DDS Career Plan was developed by the CT Department of Developmental Services in partnership with a group of DDS Service Providers. This Career Plan is a comprehensive tool that addresses both the job seeker's employment history and goals, as well as, a range of employment related areas that must be part of the employment plan if the job seeker is going to be successful. This document is intended as a "paper and pen" tool and as such, should not require extensive community activity to complete the initial document. The Career Plan tool is a road map to the Action Plan, which, once implemented, is when most of the related community activities will be captured. It may take multiple sessions with the job seeker and the team in order to create a comprehensive Career Plan.

Some sections of the plan, such as Section 1.1: Legal Status, may identify specific action steps that must be taken in order for the individual to be employed. Other sections such as Section 1.5: Education, Training and Academic Skills, are checklists that can be completed by the employment provider and will provide helpful background information in the career planning process. Finally, many of the sections will be best completed after going through a more comprehensive career planning process that provides the opportunity to inclusively consider all of the individual's interests, skills and talents and brings these forth to assist the job seeker in developing a job goal. Once completed, the Action Plan should be incorporated into the job seekers' DDS Individual Plan.

This part of the guide will walk you through each section of the Career Plan Form, its importance and action steps to consider.

Here are a few tips for completing the Career Plan:

- Before you start the plan make sure you have the current IP, LON, LON summary and a copy of the Automated Data System (eCamris) Client Summary Report. These documents will provide demographic, health and safety information that has already been collected by the case manager. These documents can be obtained from the case manager.
- The form is designed to be filled out electronically. There are character limits for the comment fields. If you run out of space use the blank pages at the end to supplement your responses. Be sure to number and title any supplemental responses so the reader can refer back to the correct section of the Career Plan.
- Appendix A provides a list of career assessment tools that can be used in the career planning process. This list also includes information about the type of job seeker for whom the tool may be most appropriate. You are not required to use any of these tools, but may find them helpful for some job seekers.
- Appendix B is an up-to-date listing of Community Work Incentive Coordinators and the geographic areas they serve. They are an excellent resource for job seekers and family members who may be concerned about the impact earnings will have on benefits.

Section 1 • BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section 1.1: Legal Status

It is important to make sure that job seekers have timely access to the documents that are needed during the hiring process. Job seekers should be made aware of the steps involved in the hiring process. This includes the completion of I-9 forms, completion of CT W-4 and IRS W-4 forms as well as the potential for drug testing and criminal record checks. As part of this process you should ask about any legal barriers that may impact employment. Job seekers and their families should be encouraged to make sure they have the necessary documents and to make sure they have them in a safe and secure, but easily accessible location.

Possible Action Steps:

- Review I-9 form with the job seeker and make sure the proper documentation is available
- If the job seeker is not a US Citizen, request information on work status and a copy of documentation
- Provide the job seeker with CT W-4 and IRS W-4 forms and if necessary identify a family member or support person who is knowledgeable about the individual's financial situation and can advise on proper tax withholdings
- If the job seeker has legal issues that may emerge in the interview process, work with the job seeker to prepare an interview response related to these issues.
- Work with the job seeker to determine how these issues should be handled in the career planning process. Some job seekers may prefer not to disclose such information to their entire team.
- Learn about and access resources available for ex-offenders, including how to get a record removed. Some CT Works Centers have specific resources for to assist ex-offenders with their job search.

Section 1.2: Social Security

Most individuals served by DDS are receiving either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits, or sometimes both. Because earning money can have a significant impact on an individual's benefits it is essential that you know what type of benefits the job seeker is receiving. Too often, when discussing work and benefits job seekers, family members and service providers recommend that an individual only work part time to avoid losing any benefits. It is important to remember that there are a number of work incentives that can assist individuals as they become increasingly self-sufficient. There are also protections in place for individuals who may need to return to benefits in the future if they are unable to work because of their disability. Benefits planning is an important service for job seekers. Appendix B provides contact information for Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) who can provide this service.

Possible Action Steps:

- Determine if the individual is receiving benefits and if so, what benefits.
- Work with the job seeker, and a family member or support person, if appropriate, to determine the level of understanding about the impact of earnings on benefits.
- Determine the type of rent subsidy that may be in place and potential impact of earnings.
- Let job seekers and their family members or support staff know that there are work incentives available and assist

them in arranging an appointment with a CWIC. A list of benefits planning resources is provided in Appendix B.

- Develop a plan with the job seeker and the team for timely reporting of earnings.
- Learn about Social Security Work Incentives so that you can incorporate them into the employment plan if appropriate such as PASS, IRWE, Ticket to Work.

Section 1.3: Other Potential Funding/Resources for Employment

There are a number of different agencies and organizations that assist individuals in reaching their employment goals. Particularly today with the ever increasing demand on resources, it is important to consider all the options available to an individual job seeker. You should consider both the funding that will be necessary as well as the services that will lead to successful employment. You should work with the DDS case manager to consider when a referral to another state agency such as the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) or the Bureau of Education Services for the Blind (BESB) might be beneficial. When self-employment or a micro-enterprise is under consideration non-disability related resources such as SCORE as well as personal or family funds should be considered. Finally, consider supporting individuals to use the workforce development system, CT Works. They offer a range of self directed services that individuals can access either on their own or with support. Additionally, CT Works is the entry point for access to Workforce Investment Act funding for training.

Possible Action Steps:

- If the job seeker has an open case with either BRS or BESB make sure you include them as part of the team
- Consider other supports that may be needed for employment success and how other agencies might assist. For example, an individual who is blind may need mobility instruction or assistive technology on a new job that could be funded by BESB. BRS may be able to assist an individual seeking self-employment with business plan development.
- If the job seeker will need additional training or credentials to be successful in the target job area see what the options are for training through CT Works and/or the local community college.
- Be sure to integrate CT Works into the employment plan. They have an array of resources available to job seekers ranging from workshops to job leads. Job seekers also can find it helpful to be in an environment where everyone is looking for a job. They begin to realize that finding a job is hard work for everyone, not just for them.
- Ask if there are any personal or family resources to contribute. For example, family members may want to invest in an individual's micro-enterprise, or may be able to contribute to the start-up costs of a business that cannot be funded through BRS, DDS, or other state agencies.

Section 1.4: Transportation

There is nothing more frustrating than finding a great job match for a job seeker and that is then turned down because the individual could not get there or found the commute to be unreasonable. When reviewing the transportation currently being used by the job seeker, consider whether there are additional options that could be considered, encouraging the job seeker to be as independent as possible. When reviewing transportation options, be sure to get clarity on the parameters. For example a grandparent may be will to drive their grandson to work but only during daylight hours.

Possible Action Steps:

- Map the target area for job development based on transportation options.

- Review the transportation/safety awareness questions in the Vocational Profile section of the Career Plan with the individual and the team to consider whether the range of transportation options could be expanded.
- Consider options for natural supports. Are there large companies that support Ride Share programs? Could the individual pay another employee at the company for gas in exchange for a ride to work?
- If the individual requires specialized transportation arrangements consider using Social Security Work Incentives to assist with funding.
- Assist the person to obtain travel training or to get their license.

Section 1.5: Education, Training and Academic Skills

It is important to have a basic profile of the job seeker's academic skills and level of education. This information will help you know if the job seeker is qualified for specific jobs and to plan for the supports and accommodations necessary for success on a particular job. This will also provide some of the basic information needed for resume development. Don't forget to include certifications such as CPR. If a certificate has expired still list it in the Career Plan. If a job seeker got it once they can probably get it again!

Possible Action Steps:

- Consider whether any additional adult education or training is needed to insure that the job seeker has the skills and credentials needed for the job goal.
- Contact local adult and community education programs, local community colleges and CT Works for information about training that may be available.
- Access assistive technology to compensate for functional limitations. Talking watches for example can be helpful, not just for individuals who are blind, but also for those who can't tell time. Or consider setting an alarm on a cell phone. Tools like these can lead to a more independent and successful worker.

Section 1.6: Work/Life Experience

An inclusive approach to career planning means everything counts. Whether a job seeker engages in a task or activity at home, at work, in the neighborhood or as a community volunteer, it is all relevant to the development of the individual career plan. How a job seeker feels about all they do, the environments they experience and the level of accomplishment they attain offers important clues in the process of defining a job goal that aligns with the job seeker's skills, interests and talents.

Possible Action Steps:

- In addition to the job seeker, be sure to talk with family members and others who provide support to the job seeker to get a thorough picture of the job seeker's life experiences
- Pay attention to the details and look for the hidden clues. Whether or not the job seeker does a good job of making the bed may or may not be important depending on the job seeker's interests. What may be important is the fact that the job seeker follows a consistent routine every morning and always gets out the door on time. A job seeker who professes to love animals and cares for the neighbor's fish may dislike cats!

- If there are particular volunteer or non-competitive work experiences that have been particularly successful consider whether there is any option to expand this into an individual job.
- When inventorying the job seeker’s work/life experience make sure to note key relationships. These relationships are part of the job seekers network and may be helpful in the job search process.

Section 1.7: Advocacy Skills

By identifying the job seeker’s advocacy skills you will be able to identify strengths and target areas for skill development. Successful employees know how and when to speak up and advocate for themselves appropriately on the job. In addition it is important that job seekers understand their rights in the work place particularly as it relates to wages, workplace safety and accommodations.

Possible Action Steps:

- Provide the job seeker with an orientation to rights in the workplace (i.e.: right to a fair wage, reasonable accommodations and, other protections under the Fair Labor Standards Act and Americans With Disabilities Act.)
- Identify areas where support may be needed and develop a support plan.
- Consider local self advocacy groups or job clubs that might provide peer support and assistance with advocacy skills.

Section 1.8: Paid Competitive Employment History

When applying for jobs a job seeker needs to have list of previous employers readily available in order to complete job applications. Developing this list during the career planning process will insure that you and the job seeker will be well prepared when the time comes to complete job applications. When you are reviewing the job seeker’s employment history be sure to take the time to understand the job functions, how successful the placement was and what the job seeker liked and didn’t like about the particular job. This information will help inform the development of the career plan and job goal.

Possible Action Steps:

- Develop a resume for every job seeker. Even if a position does not require it, it will serve as a “cheat sheet” for you and the job seeker during the job search.
- Be sure to get all the details, following up with family members or support people as needed to fill in addresses, dates, supervisors names; all generally requested on job applications.
- Depending on the job seeker’s work history, interview preparation should include responses to questions about why the individual left a given position and/or gaps in the job seeker’s work history.
- Look for patterns in work history. If the job seeker wants to work in food services but has had numerous unsuccessful placements, break it down to identify any common themes and see what you can learn that might lead to a more successful placement.
- Consider contacting recent employers for a letter of reference.

Section 1.9: References for Competitive Employment

- Many job applications request references. While some companies may request a personal reference, frequently they are interested only in work related references. References from a volunteer position can be a good alternative. A job seeker should never list a reference without first seeking permission to do so. Identifying references now, contacting them to get their permission and updating all contact information insure that you and the job seeker are well prepared for the job search.
- Review sections 1.6 and 1.8 and identify those individuals who should be contacted to be either a personal or work reference.
- When the job seeker, with or without your support, contacts them to ask them to be a reference they should be direct in asking if the individual has any reservations about being a reference. If any come up the job seeker will know in advance not to use this reference contact.
- Consider asking for a letter of reference as well. Some job seekers find traditional interviews to be challenging. A written letter of reference provided before or during the interview might help the interviewer have a more complete picture of the job seeker's skills.
- If you are using service providers for personal references, be sure that they will talk about the job seeker as a potential employee not as a recipient of services. Make sure they can put their experiences with the job seeker into relevant terms.
- Develop a list of references with the name, contact information and the references relationship to the job seeker for each person listed.

Section 2 • VOCATIONAL PROFILE

Section 2.1: Vocational Preferences

The individual's preferences, skills and talents should drive the Career Plan. This section will help you clarify those preferences and better understand the expectations others may have. Sometimes these will neatly align and other times there will be discrepancies that will be important to understand, and if possible address. The Career Planning Process outlined earlier in this guide provides an ideal way to learn about the job seeker's preferences and to obtain input from others on the team, whether family members or professionals. Once completed, the Background section of this plan can provide a good foundation for a career planning meeting that can help the job seeker and the team to develop a career plan and action steps that will lead to a great job match.

Possible Action Steps:

- Confirm the job seeker's preferred work hours and compare to available transportation options and share with other members of the team. While a job seeker may be quite flexible there may be limitations imposed by residential service parameters or limited transportation routes.
- When the goal is part time work, make sure you understand why. If it is due to concern about loss of benefits make sure that the job seeker and support team have had access to benefits planning.
- Be thorough. When the job seeker talks about a dream job, break it down so you understand why they are so interested in this particular job. Likewise, listen carefully to others to understand why they think a particular type of job or work environment would be a good fit.
- Be sure to integrate all the information you learned in preparing the Background section of the plan!

Section 2.2: Skills, Gifts and Strengths

As an employment provider you may be representing the job seeker to employers. It is important to be able to share with an employer the strengths the job seeker will bring to the job, particularly when a job seeker does not have a strong work history. For example, a perfectionist may be just the right candidate for a job with a medical device manufacturer who requires a high level of accuracy on a day in, day out basis. Someone who has a smile on his or her face everyday and great sense of humor may be just right for a customer service position. Awards and recognition may demonstrate leadership or in other cases community engagement. Just be careful though. The "Client of the Month" award may not send the right message.

Possible Action Steps:

- Include awards on the resume
- Consider how to highlight the job seeker's positive characteristics using a functional resume or video resume rather than a chronological resume.
- Prepare for interviews, considering how these skills, gifts and strengths can stand out
- Help the job seeker learn how to submit resumes and applications online

Section 2.3: Vocational Skills

It is important to have specific understanding of the skills, certifications and/or licenses the job seeker has as you move forward in developing the career plan. In addition to noting that these are present, it is important to learn from the job seeker how the skills have been used and whether he or she actually liked the type of job and/or environment where these skills were used. In cases where the job goal requires specific skills that may not be taught on the job, it is important to be able to identify any skill gap that may exist so that the job seeker can access training.

Possible Action Steps:

- Include skills and current certifications on the resume.
- Identify skill gaps and determine options for training.

Section 2.4: Natural Supports

Natural supports are most effective when they are integrated into the job seeker's support plan right from the start. Identifying the natural supports that currently exist will help you understand what type of natural supports have been successful and then consider how such successes might be applied to the work place. In addition, those providing natural supports may be helpful allies in the career planning process and may be able to provide different or additional support upon the job seeker's entry into the workforce.

Possible Action Steps:

- Identify existing sources of natural supports and include selected individuals not part of the team in the career planning process. Identify gaps in the support network and possible strategies for filling these gaps.
- Consider how natural supports might be integrated into the support plan for a job.

Section 2.5: Work Environment Preferences

While we often focus on the type of job, the environment can make all the difference. Be sure to provide the job seeker with some examples when considering options. For example, a job seeker might think that working outdoors sounds great when interviewed in September but given an example such as working outdoors in the winter or summer the response might be different. Likewise when considering the level of interaction include not just immediate co-workers, but contact with the public and the overall environment. The same job can be very different from one setting to another and this might make all the difference for the job seeker.

Possible Action Steps:

- If the job seeker has limited experience or exposure consider a recommendation for community exploration. For example, compare the information desk in a small branch library to the information desk at a large hospital.
- Consider how the job seeker experiences non-work environments.
- Be sure to note medical conditions that might be impacted by working conditions.
- Make sure you are aware of accommodations that could be made if everything else was right about a job. For example, a job seeker who is bothered by bright light could wear slightly tinted glasses.

Section 2.6: Physical Skills and Related Information

Understanding the job seeker's physical skills and other related information will help you make a good job match. It may also help you identify areas for intervention such as grooming and hygiene, or to determine when an accommodation may be needed. It's important not to make assumptions about a person because of a perceived physical limitation. A person who uses a wheelchair may not typically be considered for a role of a ballerina or as a rock climber. Yet, there are examples of people with physical limitations who have obtained these types of jobs.

Possible Action Steps:

- Work with the job seeker to set expectations for appearance during the job search process. Seek out support from family members or support staff if needed.
- Now is a good time to shop for new clothing if needed or check out social service organizations that provide clothing for job seekers
- Begin thinking about possible job modifications that may minimize the impact of any physical limitations.
- When concerned about a physical limitation that would impact a job match, now it time to seek additional medical information.
- Think creatively about how a job can be customized or how an accommodation can be provided to address a physical limitation.

Section 2.7: Work Skills and Behaviors

This review of work skills and behaviors will provide you with a picture of the job seeker's skills in both current and past work and/or service environments. Consider some of the things that you have learned so far about the job seeker. Might a different environment or different type of job help the job seeker be more productive?

Possible Action Steps:

- Consider how the skills identified align with the job seeker's goals. Consider opportunities to customize a job in order to align with the job seeker's skills.
- Identify supports that might be needed.
- Identify any accommodations and/or assistive technology that might lead to improved job performance.
- Review the positive behavioral support plan to determine if changes will be needed as the job seeker moves to an individual job.

Section 2.8: Communication Skills

Understanding the job seeker's communication skills will help you prepare for the job search process. And, of course communication will be an important factor in developing a good job match.

Possible Action Steps:

- Practice interview skills with the job seeker. As the job seeker becomes more confident consider informational or mock interviews that will give the job seeker more experience and help with the development of confidence.
- Help the job seeker develop and practice answers to typical interview questions. Video taping a practice interview and

then reviewing it with the job seeker can be a helpful strategy.

- If the job seeker is likely to have difficulty communicating in a traditional interview environment consider developing a portfolio to share the job seeker's skills and background with potential employers.
- When developing a plan to support the job seeker on the job consider the individual's communication style.

Section 2.9: Accommodations

It is important to review any disability related concerns and to consider how these might impact the job seeking process and work performance. In some cases these issues may be dealt with through the job match process. In other situations an accommodation may be needed.

Possible Action Steps:

- Be sure to understand any health condition and possible implications on the job. Be prepared to rule out jobs that may be contraindicated by the job seeker's health needs.
- If the job seeker typically takes medication during the work day and cannot do so independently now is the time to work with the health care team to see if the medication schedule can be modified.
- If the job seeker uses any assistive technology, is the device or technology available for use on the job?
- If the job seeker will need personal assistance in the workplace be sure to have a plan for how this service might be provided and be prepared to respond to employer questions and concerns.
- Once a job is identified do a thorough job analysis. Talk with co-workers to identify tools they use to do their job as well as "tricks of the trade". This may help you identify strategies and tools to help the job seeker be successful on the job.
- Develop a plan for requesting accommodations for the interview process if needed. Be prepared to provide documentation of disability if needed.
- When reviewing current behavioral challenges, think carefully about the environments and circumstances under which the behaviors occur. Are there jobs and/or work environments that might minimize the behavioral challenges?

Section 2.10: Transportation/Safety Awareness

When reviewing the transportation options currently being used, consider whether this list could be expanded. For example, is a travel assessment in order to determine whether the job seeker might be able to use public transportation? When reviewing transportation options, be sure to get clarity on the parameters. For example, a parent may be willing to assist with transportation if the location and hours align with the parent's own work schedule.

Possible Action Steps:

- Conduct a travel assessment and develop a plan to increase the job seeker's travel related skills as needed.
- Map the target area for job development based on transportation options
- Consider options for natural supports. Are there large companies that support Ride Share programs? Could the individual pay another employee at the company for gas in exchange for a ride to work?
- If the individual requires specialized transportation arrangements consider using Social Security Work Incentives to assist with funding.

Section 2.11: Community Advantages/Disadvantages

Developing an inventory of community resources will help you identify potential employment opportunities as well as other resources that will help in the employment process. In addition to identifying the types of businesses and other resources that exist in the job seekers neighborhood, be sure to consider other factors such as safety and travel options.

Possible Action Steps:

- Be sure to identify those businesses and other community resources, such as the public library, that the job seeker frequents. Does the job seeker have relationship with others who work in these settings? Be thorough in identifying the job seeker's community networks.
- If there are safety concerns, what are the implications for the job search? Develop a plan to address these issues.
- Are there businesses in the local community that might be potential employers? If so, does the job seeker have contacts at these businesses? Are there other people in the job seeker's network who might assist in making contact?
- Identify any transportation options that exist. Be sure to check out the routes and schedules.

Section 2.12: Contributions to Getting a Job

Developing an understanding of the job seeker's experience with and preparation for the job search process will help you create a proactive plan for engaging the job seeker in the job search.

Possible Action Steps:

- Work with the job seeker to develop a resume. If the job seeker already has one, make sure it is up to date. Use the resume format that best represents the job seekers background.
- Consider developing a portfolio, particularly if the job seeker has communication challenges that may make it more difficult for the job seeker to share his/her strengths, talents and experience.
- Be sure to include plenty of opportunities for practice into your plan to help the job seeker prepare for the interview process. Make sure the job seeker is prepared for the tough questions about his/her work history. Writing out the responses can help you and the job seeker to work through the details and be confident about the job seeker's response.
- Make sure the job seeker has appropriate clothing for job interviews. If not, work with family and/of friends to purchase appropriate clothing. Or consider organizations such as Dress for Success that provide low-income job seekers with clothing for interviews.
- Become familiar with the services offered through the local CT Works One Stop Career Center and consider how you can integrate these services into the job seeker's employment plan. An interview workshop or a soft skills training session may be excellent resources for some job seekers.

Section 2.13: Job Development Prospecting List

Now that you have really been able to get to know the job seeker well it is time to brainstorm potential job opportunities. Working with the team it is important to develop a list of potential job duties that would align well with the job seeker's skills and preferences. This list will be a starting point for your job development efforts.

Possible Action Steps:

- Be sure to include the team in this step. We often are limited by the types of jobs and tasks with which we are familiar. A brainstorming process that includes individuals familiar with both the job seeker and the local community may open possibilities that may have been missed otherwise.
- Don't be afraid to just list tasks or job duties rather than specific positions. A list of duties can be the basis for customizing a job to meet the needs of both the job seeker and the employer.
- This list can also include environments that might be a good fit. For example, the job seeker may love fishing and may be less concerned about the specific tasks and more interested in being in a bait shop or sporting goods store.
- As you go through this process be sure to capture other information that may emerge such as specific employer contacts and personal or professional networks.

Section 2.14: Possible Employment Locations Near Home

Developing a list of potential businesses that are within the job seeker's travel radius is the next step in the process. This list should build off of the Job Development Prospecting list in Section 2.13.

Possible Action Steps:

- Be sure to include the team in this process as well. They may know of businesses in the area that others are not familiar with. Make sure you capture any personal or professional contacts the team may have with the businesses being identified.
- Get out in the community and explore. Depending on the type of opportunities you will be seeking with the job seeker, check out local business parks, walk down main street, ride the bus that the job seeker may take. All of these steps will help you identify potential new business contacts.

Section 2.15: Possible Contacts for Employment Including Personal Networks

Today more than ever networking is an essential part of the job search process. Once you have identified the type of work and work environment the job seeker would like and a list of potential businesses, now it is time to use the personal and professional networks of everyone on the team, including of course, the job seeker. Sometimes people worry that there won't be a job opening and are reluctant to share their contacts. Consider making the initial "ask" a request for a tour and informational interview to learn more about the company and their business needs. While cold calls are always an option, they are generally your last resort.

Possible Action Steps:

- Review the list of businesses you have developed and identify any contacts that have emerged. If possible have the team member make an initial contact on your behalf. Otherwise be sure they are comfortable letting you use their name.
- If you have identified businesses but don't have any contacts follow up with the job seeker and the team to see if they have any contacts in their network that might be able to pave the way.
- Make sure you follow up with the team member to thank them for the contact and to let know how it went.

Section 3 • THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan outlines the steps to be taken, who is responsible for each step, the time frame for completing the steps or tasks and the resources that may be needed to implement the plan.

- All members of the team should be involved in the development of the action plan. The implementation of the action plan is a shared responsibility.
- The Action Plan should describe steps that can occur within one year or less.

The plan should include information on how the cost of the activity may be addressed through:

- Natural supports (family, friends, community members, trust funds, etc.),
- Community agency supports (BRS, DOL, Workforce Centers, School Scholarships, Service Agency Grants, SCORE, etc.),
- DDS Waiver Supports (ISE, IDS-Voc, GSE)
- DDS incentive funding (training dollars, GSE Enhancement, Working Interview etc.) or
- Other resources (Benefits Counselors, Advocacy Groups, etc.).

You may also want to consider breaking some steps down using a tool such as the 30-Day Placement Plan. This tool can help you break the job search down into a series of specific short-term tasks. (http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=151)

Finally, be sure to review some of the career exploration and planning tools outlined in Attachment A of the Career Plan. Often times job seekers have had limited exposure to the wide range of job opportunities that exist. They may not know how their interests might be relevant to a job. In addition to community based career exploration opportunities such as tours, informational interviews, and working interviews, these tools can help the job seeker identify areas of interests and inform the career planning process. Appendix A provides some basic information about whom each tool might be used for that can guide you when selecting your options. You will want work with your agency to identify those tools that are readily available to you or may be available through other resources.

Putting the Plan into Action

Once the plan has been developed it is time to take action. The Action Plan and the IP will provide a framework for taking action. Monitoring progress will an important task. Some team members may need reminders to move forward on their assigned tasks. Some action steps may need to modified or updated as progress is made or options are ruled out. From time to time it may be necessary to reconvene the team, review the action plan and develop an updated plan.

As you work with the job seeker and other members of the team take time to reflect on what is working and where you, the job seeker and/or other team members have encountered success and challenges. These reflections will help the team to make modifications in the Career Plan, Action Plan and IP that will lead to greater success. Don't be afraid to change direction when it is warranted. Career planning and the implementation of the Career Plan is an exploration process. While the implementation of the Career Plan may quickly lead to a great job match, sometimes new barriers will be identified with a corresponding need for new action steps. Other times the action steps outlined will lead the job seeker to identify new options for employment that had not previously been considered. This can lead to new and exciting opportunities for the job seeker.

Section 4 •

SUBMITTING THE CAREER PLAN FOR REVIEW AND PAYMENT

The individual receiving services and those team members involved in the development and implementation of the career plan are to review and sign off on the sign off section of the plan. A COPY of the completed career plan is to be submitted to the Region's Resource Manager for review. The Resource Manager is to review the plan for completeness using the Career Plan Completion Checklist, which mirrors each section and subsection of the Career Plan.

Resource Manager Career Plan Completion Checklist

The Career Plan Checklist is intended to be used by the Resource Manager as a guide to determine the degree to which a Career Plan submitted by a community provider is complete. Career Plans that are complete will be approved and authorized for payment. This guide and the approval process are designed to evaluate whether the Career Plan has been fully completed. It is not a qualitative review of the content of the plan. When a Career Plan has been submitted to the Resource Manager it should have already been reviewed and signed off on by the individual receiving services and that person's team.

A complete Career Plan has all sections completed or addressed as N/A, not applicable. If a plan is found to be incomplete the Resource Manager will identify the sections of the plan that need to be addressed and return a copy of the Checklist to the provider electronically. It is important to note that there may be sections of the plan that may not apply to the individual receiving services and therefore those areas will be noted as N/A (Not Applicable). The N/A indicates that the team has considered that section of the plan and deemed it unnecessary or unable to be completed at this time. Sections noted as N/A should not be considered incomplete.

The Career Plan Checklist follows the format of the Career Plan. Each section of the Checklist should be checked as Complete, Incomplete or N/A. A checklist for a complete Career Plan should be noted as approved, signed and dated by the Resource Manager. A completed and approved Career Plan should be followed with a payment authorization to the provider.

Resource Manager Career Plan Completion Checklist

Individual Receiving Services:	Resource Manager/FI Liaison:
Organization/Individual Providing Services:	Date Career Plan Received by Resource Manager or FI Liaison:
Individual Submitting Career Plan:	Email Address of Individual Submitting Career Plan:

Career Plan Section	Complete	Incomplete	N/A
Section 1 Consumer Profile			
1.1 Legal Status			
1.2 Social Security			
1.3 Other Potential Funding/Resources for Employment			
1.4 Transportation			
1.5 Education, Training and Academic Skills			
1.6 Work/Life Experience			
1.7 Paid Competitive Employment History			
1.8 References for Competitive Employment			
Section 2 Vocational Profile			
2.1 Vocational Preferences			
2.2 Skills, Gifts and Strengths			
2.3 Vocational Skills			
2.4 Work Environment Preferences			
2.5 Physical Skills and Related Information			
2.6 Work Skills and Behaviors			

Career Plan Section	Complete	Incomplete	N/A
2.7 Communication Skills			
2.8 Accommodations			
2.9 Transportation/Safety Awareness			
2.10 Community Advantages/Disadvantages			
2.11 Contributions to Getting a Job			
2.12 Job Development/Prospecting List			
2.13 Possible Employment Locations Near Home			
2.14 Possible Contacts to Employment			
Section 3 Action Plan			
Signature Sheet			

Career Plan: **Approved** **Not Approved**

Resource Manager/FI Liaison Signature:

Date Approved for Payment:

Comments: