

**Department of Labor**

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**New York State  
Workforce Development System  
Technical Advisory #08-4.2**

**Date: January 29, 2015**

**To: Workforce Development Community**

**Subject: Effective Use of Initial Assessment in the Career Center System**

This advisory rescinds and replaces WDS Technical Advisory #08-4.1, *Effective Use of Assessment in the Workforce Investment One-Stop System*, and dated October 9, 2009.

**Purpose**

To establish guidance and policy for the effective use of initial assessment to determine the appropriate services that should be provided to customers of the Career Center system.

**Action**

Local workforce areas must have processes and procedures in place to ensure Career Center customers receive an initial assessment on the day they receive their first staff-assisted service, in accordance with NYSDOL policy.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) that all Career Center customers are to receive an initial assessment. The only exceptions to this requirement are Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants who are work search exempt or individuals who access self help or informational services only.

The initial assessment is intended to quickly decide which level of services a customer needs: Job Search Ready Services (JSRS) or Career Development Services (CDS). This assessment must be made on the same day the customer receives his or her first staff-assisted service, with the exception of a Rapid Response Orientation or a job referral.

Assessment is an ongoing process which may change along with a customer's varying needs and decisions. The initial assessment is exactly that – a *preliminary* indication of the customer's needs derived from the baseline information gathered at enrollment and initial provision of staff assisted services. All subsequent services should be driven by staff's reassessment of the customer's needs at that point in time.

## Background

A key service to be provided in the Career Center system is an initial assessment of a customer's knowledge, skills and abilities to support their employment goal, and to identify supportive service needs, based on an analysis of information gathered from the customer through an intake process which may include: a registration form, résumé, supplemental data collection tools and/or an interview.

A quality initial assessment will provide enough information on the customer's present situation for staff to create a next step service plan with the customer. The purpose of the assessment is to understand the customer's occupational goals, existing skills, and work search readiness and to determine whether there are any barriers to employment. This assessment is conducted within the context of local labor market conditions and also takes into account service needs that may be articulated by the customer, such as a desire to pursue training or education.

The initial assessment should result in a determination of next steps for the customer, which may include a comprehensive assessment and the development of an individual employment plan or training plan. New York State Workforce Development System Technical Advisory (WDS-TA) #09-17, **Individual Employment Plans/Training Plans for WIA Participants in Training** (10/09/09) offers policy and guidance on the use of Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) and Training Plans (TPs).

## Job Search Ready Services

Job Search Ready Services are to be provided to customers who possess the following: an occupational goal with a favorable labor market outlook; the occupational knowledge, skills and abilities required for the occupational goal; and no barriers that prevent obtaining and retaining employment. Job Search Ready Services prepare the customer for job referral and include (but are not limited to) résumé preparation and/or interviewing preparation.

## Career Development Services

Career Development Services are to be provided to customers who:

- Do not possess an occupational goal; and/or
- Do not possess the requisite occupational knowledge, skills and abilities to readily find work related to their occupational goal; and/or
- Have barriers that potentially prevent obtaining and retaining employment.
- Indicate an interest in training

Individuals initially classified as job search ready may subsequently be determined to need career development services. Individuals initially determined to need career development services will likely benefit from job search services as well.

## Initial Assessment Process

The initial assessment process includes the following steps:

### a) Occupational Goal:

Evaluate the customer's occupational goal as favorable or not favorable in the labor market.

- If the customer does not have a clear occupational goal or the outlook for the occupational goal is not favorable, then the customer is identified for Career Development Services (i.e., career exploration to identify an occupation with favorable local labor market outlook).

### b) Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

If the goal is for an occupation or occupational cluster that has a favorable outlook in the labor market, then evaluate the customer's occupational knowledge, skills and abilities. Does the customer have occupational skills that are currently in demand? How does the customer's work history, experience, and/or level or expertise relate to the goal? Are the customer's skills transferable? Does the customer have the education and training to compete in the job market? Are they unlikely to be able to return to their former occupation due to local economic conditions?

- If knowledge, skills and abilities are deficient, then the customer is identified for Career Development Services.

### c) Barriers to Employment:

If knowledge, skills and abilities are proficient, then barriers to employment are evaluated. Does the customer have barriers or obstacles preventing the customer from finding work or retaining work? For example: health and physical considerations, poor work history, lack of references, child care or elder care issues, criminal record, transportation issues, limited English skills, homelessness or other personal issues.

- If no barriers exist, or the barriers can be addressed during the initial assessment or a subsequent appointment, the customer is identified for Job Search Ready Services.

### d) Job Search Skills:

The customer's job search planning, preparation and job seeking skills should also be evaluated, for example: job adaptation skills, well prepared and up to date résumé, interviewing and communication skills, knowledge of where to look for work and how to research companies, basic computer skills to apply for work online, ability to do internet based job searches, social networking and self-marketing skills, motivation to find work, and having a work search plan.

An *Initial Assessment Guide* is provided in Attachment A. The Initial Assessment Guide is for staff use only and can assist staff with the interview process when gathering the information necessary to conduct a thorough initial assessment.

## **Inquiries**

Questions regarding this TA may be directed to: [help.osos@labor.ny.gov](mailto:help.osos@labor.ny.gov)

## **Attachments**

Attachment A: [Initial Assessment Guide](#)

Attachment B: [Recording an Initial Assessment Activity in OSOS](#)