

Common Interventions Across the US DOL-HUD Sites

Workforce investment boards in five cities partnered with US Department of Labor and Housing and Urban Development from 2003 to 2008 in a pilot project to improve employment and housing outcomes for people who met the federal definition of chronic homelessness. A survey of the staff in these projects asked them to review 89 interventions and rate which ones were used most frequently in their programs. At least 67 percent of the respondents across the sites gave the interventions below ratings of 4 or 5 (most frequently used) which suggests that the practice is regularly used with participants and is common across the five sites.

Customized Employment (5 out of 24 items)

- The individual is hired and paid directly by the employer.
- Work occurs in an integrated, individualized work situation in the community or in a personal business alongside people who do not have disabilities.
- Employment results in pay at the living wage or the “going rate.”
- The process is facilitated through a blend of services, supports, and resources that include the workforce system and other public and private partners such as disability service providers. These resources are coordinated to meet the job seeker's needs.
- Exploratory time is utilized to uncover the job seeker's unique needs, abilities, and interests in addition to more formal or traditional assessment.

Vocational Assessment (13 out of 19 items)

- Staff help participants identify the kind of work the participant prefers to do (dreams and aspirations) through some kind of vocational exploration (and without limitation of whether or not they can currently do all of the tasks associated with such preferred work).
- Staff solicit from participants their likes and dislikes about certain kinds of jobs or occupations.
- The staff provides participants labor market and employer information about vacancies, job growth in key industries, training opportunities, wage ranges and other benefits, schedule options, location of job and similar information to support the participants informed choice about a job goal.
- The staff help participant identify the types of jobs that are the best match in terms of actual skills (work and transferable), knowledge, previous experience, preferred schedule, and type of environment that promotes a positive work experience (i.e. avoid triggers for relapse, etc.)
- The vocational assessment identifies the participant’s preferred job or type of work they want to secure.
- The vocational assessment identifies the participant’s current and needed level of supports, including the people, places, things or activities that may help them work. Supports may be professionals or natural supports.
- The vocational assessment identifies the participants’ current and needed level of occupational skills and abilities to perform the work tasks of their desired job – their behavioral strengths and weaknesses.

- The vocational assessment identifies disability related obstacles or other factors that may interfere with obtaining the participant's preferred job and the impact of these obstacles, e.g. active substance use may result in tardiness, no shows for work or on the job injury; or prior felony convictions may result in Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) problems.
- The vocational assessment includes a chronology of educational, training and work history (including training from military experience).
- The results of the vocational assessment are documented on a written form or profile.
- Each participant is a unique individual and staff conducts vocational assessments in ways that are guided by the individuality of the participant, their choices and their self-determined needs.
- Staff conducting vocational assessments develop discrepancy between participant preferences and behaviors as appropriate and use other motivational interviewing strategies to encourage change.
- Vocational assessments are conducted by staff trained in interpersonal skills or interviewing skills that support a client-centered counseling approach which is non-judgmental, attends not only to the facts but also to the participant's emotions and feelings about their life experiences, work and their disability, uses open ended questions to solicit information, avoids reliance on directive strategies alone.

Job Development (10 out of 26 items)

- The job seeker is fully involved in planning what employers to contact and which jobs to pursue, decides who will participate, and directs the job development effort.
- Each job seeker has a designated job developer or an employment specialist responsible for job development.
- The job developer uses Internet job sites, workforce system resources, trade publications, newspapers, and their personal network of friends, employers, and others who can provide job leads in industries in which clients want employment.
- The job developer intentionally coordinates with workforce system staff and related agencies in order to maximize options for the participant.
- Job developers or employment specialists provide job options that are in different occupations and industries and in diverse settings.
- The job developer follows up on job placements and coordinates services for job retention with the case manager, other employment specialists or job coach.
- The focus is on the job seeker's preferences, talents, life experiences, strengths and dreams, rather than their challenges or limitations.
- Concerns and complexities are considered solvable through negotiation and support, and must not become reasons to rule out career options.
- The planning process always focuses on obtaining community-based, integrated employment that pays a living wage.
- Family, friends, and natural social networks serve as a secondary source of input, opinions, and support. The job seeker is always the primary source of information.

Job Retention (5 out of 20 items)

- Staff responsible for job retention exchange information with clinical, case management, and other employment staff.
- Job retention services are not time limited but offered as long as the worker requires support.
- The project tracks job retention for those placed in jobs.
- Project staff works with participants to solve on-the-job problems, either at the job site or off site.
- Staff helps clients resolve employment support challenges, including child care, transportation, mental health care, etc.