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***Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities***

***Employment Services Toolkit***

**Tool #6: *Job Development* - Action Plan Instructions**

**Tool Purpose:** The tools used to this point are information-gathering tools. Through the previous activities, the job seeker and their support team have generated and gathered the information necessary to confidently identify a good job match. Using the information generated as a basis, the intent of the *Action Plan* is to develop a series of action steps that will result in a successful job search. It also helps ensure investment by the job seeker and their support team in the process. The plan includes specific assigned tasks and deadlines to keep the entire team on track and focused, in order to maintain ongoing job search activities and ensure accountability. The *Action Plan* also provides the opportunity to regularly review steps taken, what has been learned via the actions to date, and to determine whether to continue in the same direction or consider new courses of action.

**Directions and Guidance for Tool Use**

1. The *Action Plan* works best within a team process, that allows for sharing of ideas, brainstorming, and mutual accountability. Empower the job seeker to lead the process as much as possible.
2. Prior to development of the *Action Plan*, determine with the job seeker who they would like involved. The more expansive the group, the more ideas and connections will be generated. Along with the job seeker and employment support staff, consider including members of their support network, including professionals, family, friends, and others.
3. It is important to remember that an *Action Plan* is different from a long-term plan (like an *Individual Service Plan*) that focuses on the overarching system and agency provided services, rather than specific action steps focused on becoming successfully employed.
4. The job seeker, support staff, and other staff members review Tool #5 - *Career Planning:* Personal Employment Profile, and using the criteria listed, identify an overall job goal, and possible positions to explore. Remember, the individual’s preferences and interests drive the process.
5. Based on the career goal and possible employers/positions, the team develops a list of tasks to be accomplished to pursue the job goal. Each member of the team should be responsible for one or more tasks.
6. When the team initially meets, discuss:
   * How the team will communicate
   * Frequency and methods for meeting
   * How the team will hold each other accountable for following through on their assigned tasks
   * Others who could potentially participate in the action planning team
7. When identifying tasks, make sure they are:

* things that can be completed within a 30-day timeframe, with specific dates for completion.
* specific, so everyone knows exactly what they have to do.
* divided up among the job seeker, employment support staff, and others.
* measurable, so that it is clear whether or not they have been achieved.

1. Effective use of networks is an important element of successfully implementing a plan. The majority of activities should include outreach to business and community contacts. Remember an important rule of networking: don’t focus only or primarily on “who’s hiring”. Instead, focus on identifying contacts that can move the job development process forward, are a match for the job seeker’s employment goals, and that can be used to explore possible options. This is particularly important when developing a customized position. Have a mindset of “our goal is to get a meeting with a contact and go from there”.
2. Most successful job searches, particularly for customized-type positions, require personal contact. Therefore, the majority of tasks should be in-person outreach to businesses and community members. Online research regarding potential employers and contacts can be a useful task. However, time spent searching online job listings and filling out job applications should be limited.
3. Every 30 days, review progress on the plan with the team. Have team members provide updates on the items they are responsible for. Consideration should be given to whether forward progress is being made, or whether new strategies and action items need to be considered. Continue to update the plan until the individual has become employed.
4. Within this process build a sense of trust, camaraderie and mutual support. Also, find ways to keep it energized, fun, and enjoyable for all.

See the Institute for Community Inclusion publication, [*“Institute Brief: The 30-Day Placement Plan: A Road Map to Employment”*](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=ici_institutebrief)for further details, with examples.

**Examples of Tasks**

Job seekers can:

* Identify individuals in their network who can help with the job search.
* Talk to friends, family members, and people they know in the community about possible connections that can lead to employment.
* Prepare to write a resume by developing a list of volunteer and work experiences ~~jobs they have held and volunteer experience.~~
* Practice interviewing with peers and others.
* Take pictures and videos for a video resume.
* Obtain job applications from places where they would like to work.
* Research a company online.
* Make a list of questions to ask during ~~on~~ an informational interview.
* Take a tour of a business in a field they are interested in working in.
* Go on an informational interview.
* Research transportation options for employment.
* Make a list of three to five people who might be willing to serve as personal or professional references and reach out to confirm this. ~~call them.~~
* Give copies of their resume to people who are acting as references.
* Set up an email account to be used for a job search.
* Change voicemail message so that it is professional.
* Work with the employment services staff to review social media accounts as this relates to what may be visible to potential employers.
* Work with the employment services staff on using social media for outreach regarding potential employment opportunities.

Friends, family, support people can:

* Use their connections to network on behalf of the job seeker.
* Assist the job seeker in reading job postings, either in print or online.
* Help the job seeker identify local businesses that might be a good fit.
* Accompany the job seeker on a shopping trip to buy interview attire and accessories.
* Proofread the job seeker’s resume.
* Participate in brainstorming process regarding job seeker’s strengths, possible jobs, and connections.

Employment specialists can:

* Facilitate brainstorming of connections with businesses and community members for exploration of employment options.
* Contact employers they already have relationships with on behalf of the job seeker.
* Contact community members and organizations on behalf of the job seeker.
* Follow up on contacts from the job seeker and others.
* Call the job seeker's references (with the job seeker's permission) to see what they will say to an employer.
* Help the job seeker update their resume, and customize for specific employers.
* Develop a visual resume with the job seeker.
* Help the job seeker create a cover letter, and discuss how to customize it for different positions.
* Help the job seeker to identify specific employers to target.
* Help the individual practice different types of interviews (in-person, virtual, working).
* Discuss with job seeker disclosure of disability, possible job accommodations, and advocating with potential employers for support needs.
* Help the job seeker track job development, follow-up efforts, and interviews.
* Keep the team on track with each task in the 30-day plan.
* Use LinkedIn and other social media to identify connections and make others aware about the type of job the individual is seeking.