**Career Plan Development Guide**

**How to Create and Maintain an Effective Career Plan**

**Q & A**

**What is an APN Career Plan?**

Career Plan (CP) is the key component of the Aligned Partner Network career Coaching model. Plan is step- by-step guide designed to help APN customers to identify, create, track, and achieve their long-term employment and career track goals. The plan documents their career interests, strengths, skills, work- related preferences, short-and long-term education, employment goals and supports needed to meet these goals and customer’s accomplishments.

Plans should be developed as a professional collaboration between the participant and Career Coach. Plan development starts with a Career Mapping workshop in a group or 1:1 setting.

**Why Career Mapping Workshop important?**

Career Mapping is the first step in the individualized career planning journey. Career Mapping is a career exploration method that is a strengths- focused, evidence based practice. It is designed to guide the customer through a process of discovering their strengths, skills, abilities, interests, work related preferences and results in creating a list of possible jobs, occupations, career directions that would be compatible with the customer’s attributes. The information generated during the Career Mapping process is a starting point for customers and is utilized for creating their career plan. The group format is a preferred delivery method, but it can be applied in one-on-one settings as well.

**How having a Career Plan helps my customer?**

A Career Plan helps to identify clear and focused employment goals, identify and discuss possible challenges and lists resources that address those challenges, and celebrates customer’s accomplishments. The Next Steps section is designed to break down large goals into small and specific tasks to complete. It helps customers to stay on track and not to get overwhelmed and frustrated with the long-term goals that might look too complicated or even unrealistic to achieve at the beginning.

*Tip for coaches : don’t set up more than two- three steps at a time of coaching session. Do not forget to review tasks completions and celebrate their successful accomplishment with the customer.*

**How having a Career Plan helps a coach?**

The Career Plan development process helps build relationships with customers. The plan is also a good tool to keep coaches and customers accountable to following through. Celebrating customer’s accomplishments is motivational for coaches as well. It also allows to have all the most important information needed for client’s career goal development in one place.

The Next Steps section is useful for both the coach and the client. It can be used to set the agenda for each meeting, assist a coach with documenting case notes, and help to keep the plan moving forward. It also documents interactions with partners and resources needed and obtained. The career plan can also assist coaches in documenting a customer success story providing detailed dates, actions, partners and results.

**When and how to develop and maintain an active Career Plan?**

EOP career coaches have 90 days from customer enrollment date to develop a career plan. Plan development could take several coaching sessions to ensure a clear pathway towards goals created. Apply Assertive Engagement principles and the Trauma Informed Care approach to plan development. The Career Plan is a living document, a continuous process.

*Tip for coaches: the most effective and realistic practice is to work on the plan sections in a series of career coaching sessions. However, do not let a customer leave the first session without the goal and/or a step( s) to start moving towards that goal. Some like to start with a DREAM JOB goal first, some wish to start small.*

***Do not forget the customer owns the plan. They could continue the planning process in between coaching sessions ( homework). Best practices show that this strategy increases customer motivation and engagement with the program.***

Suggestions for customer homework:

* List personal resources available to you if you plan to start occupational training (e.g. family members support)
* Identify realistic timeframes/deadlines for next steps accomplishments
* Allow the customer to identify what Next Steps they think are needed to reach their goal. Provide nudges if they are stumped and/or intermediate steps where needed. This encourages ownership and fosters personal empowerment over their lives. You are there as a guide.
* Do basic career exploration and research occupations,trainings, and other activities

**What to do if a customer does not have a clear employment or career goal?**

If a customer has a difficult time identifying one career direction and has multiple interests, some additional research and career exploration may be needed. Prior to Plan development, appropriate assessments should be conducted to provide critical information on their previous live and work experiences, goals, likes and dislikes, interests, aptitudes, and personal strengths. Ask open-ended questions! For additional career exploration a customer could be referred to a Career Exploration workshop at WorkSource appropriate online career exploration tools (ONET, Quality info.org, careersnw.org, etc.), and encouraged to conduct informational interviews. Next Steps on Career Plan should reflect those additional steps.

Tip for the coaches: encourage your customer to do their research or do research with your customer. You do need to be an expert in every occupation, just know where to find information.

*Additional Resources:*

O\*NET Online <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Quality Info <https://www.qualityinfo.org/>

Oregon CIS <https://oregoncis.uoregon.edu/Portal.aspx>

User name: OED N Portland Password: ogre.laws

Careers NW <https://careersnw.org/>

Apprenticeships

<https://www.oregon.gov/boli/atd/pages/a_statewideopportunities.aspx>

<https://oregonapprenticeship.org/>

“Know Your market” workshop at WorkSource

**How to develop a career plan with a customer who has an occupation or career selected prior to enrollment?**

You can modify the Career Mapping workshop and Career Plan to focus on a customer ‘s strengths, educational level and knowledge of desired occupation or career, time and financial resources for training if needed ,additional supports, and steps to take to achieve employment goal.

*Tips for coaches, examples of next steps*

* *:Assess customer work readiness.*
* *Review Career Map “What Works, What doesn’t section” to ensure that their knowledge of occupation and employment expectations match their life situation and preferences*
* *networking, deepening their knowledge of the career*
* *starting to line up employment opportunities*
* *Research recertification requirement (for professionals)*
* *assist customer with connecting with pre-apprenticeship, work experience and other programs that can help upgrade their skills*

**How often should a customer and a coach review the Career Plan?**

The Career Coach and the customer should review the career plan as needed and desired, to help customer focused on their goals, at minimum:

* When a customer reached milestones, such as : short-term goals, completed training or work experience
* When a customer changes their employment or training goals
* Customer’s life circumstances changed
* Customer has a setback
* When Prosperity planner needs to updated
* Client gets employed

Tip for coaches: Make it a habit to refer to Career Plan and start your coaching session with a quick review of Career Plan sections that pertain to customer’s current situation.

**Is it useful to share a copy of a Career Plan with the customer?**

Sharing a copy of the Career Plan is not mandatory, but proven to be the best practice. It can help customers stay organized around their next steps, and keep track of the resources they may need to overcome challenges. It can be shared through email, a physical copy, whatever the customer prefers.

**Why and how to complete the Essential Workplace Skills section?**

This section is designed to remind both coaches and the customers about the importance of the soft/ essential workplace skills. The goal is to identify and address any existing gaps before the customer gets employed. Insufficient Essential workplace skills are often the reason why customers are not able to have a steady employment history or have difficulties advancing in their careers. This section may become a focus with the customer when they get employed and they start having challenges at work.

This section can be used in a variety of ways. First of all, it is a reminder for the coach to look for specific soft skills during their interactions with clients and address any gaps that they may observe in a supportive way. The list of the essential workplace skills may be used as a tool to start a discussion with a customer about their understanding of how they may demonstrate those skills in a workplace or their job search process. For example, what does it mean to you to be on time? Would you like to learn more about how to get along with a boss or co-workers? Would you like to talk about how to handle certain types of work related problems? Discussing specific challenging work situations that customers experienced in the past may be very informative as well.

Additional tools: *“Soft Skills” and “Interpersonal Skills” workshops offered by WorkSource*

*Soft Skills guide*

*Keeping The job you have*

*What I need to stay on the job*

*Workplace culture*