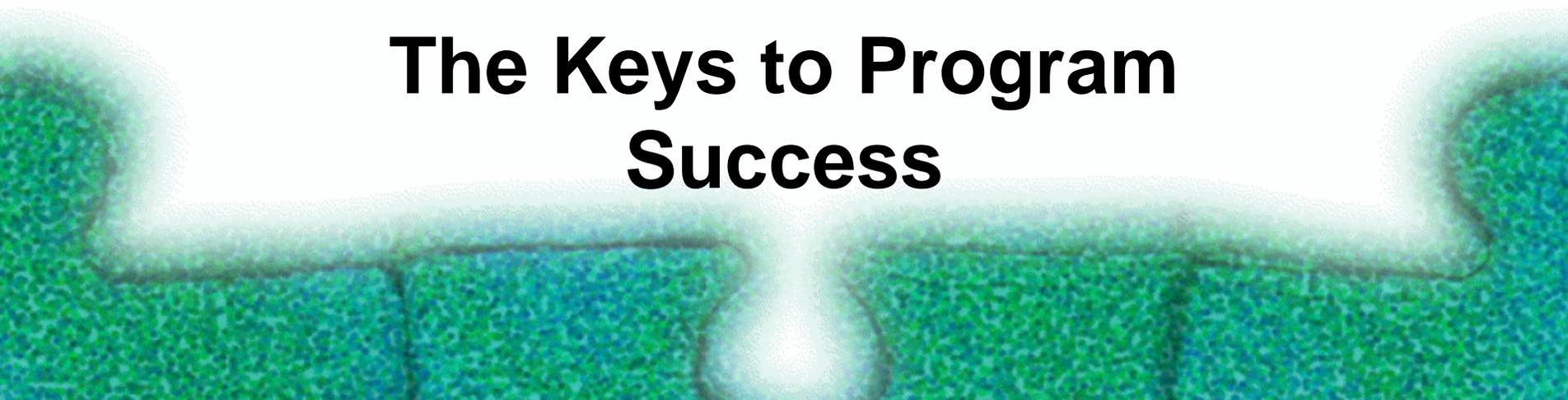


PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS and INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

**The Keys to Program
Success**



PART I: THE PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Strategies for Obtaining
and Using
Essential Information

The Assessment Process

- A 4-step process to help participants clarify and reach their goals
 - Initial Assessment
 - Individual Employment Plans
 - Progress steps and reviews/action plans
 - Follow-ups

SCSEP REGULATIONS REQUIRE:

- Participants be assessed to determine the most suitable employment and community service assignment
 - Individuals are applicants until assigned to CS
- Using assessments and reassessments to develop and amend IEPs
 - Update every 6 months

- Initial assessment provides the information to determine how SCSEP can benefit the participant
 - Host Agency Placement
- Changes when the participant completes any training or certification
- Updated when significant changes in any of the elements in the initial assessment
 - Minimum every 6 months

Assessment

- **An open-ended process that lasts throughout a participant's enrollment**
- **Provides information on:**
 - Interests
 - Skills
 - Education/training
 - Work experience
 - Real and perceived barriers to employment

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BEGINS AT INTAKE

- YOUR CHANCE TO START THINGS RIGHT
 - Welcoming the applicant & establishing rapport (begin where the applicant is most comfortable)
 - This is the time for both parties to determine if this program is the appropriate fit
 - Getting the information you need
 - Observations and facts collected during intake are the beginning of the assessment process

A good Assessment is crucial - the IEP foundation

- Some come to the program thinking they are getting a part-time job
- For the assessment process to have validity, participants need to be clear about what is expected of them.
- Be sure to ask the question: “What do you expect from the program?”

Some things to consider before you start:

- Many participants are uncomfortable with and will resist answering questions about their backgrounds
- The lack of adequate information will affect IEPs and host agency assignments
- Give thought and preparation to how you will handle the assessment interview

Assessment versus IEP

- Information-gathering versus decision-making
- The assessment process helps you:
 - ask the right questions
 - collect the right information
 - provide the right guidance to help the participant create, decide upon and implement their IEP

Minimum Requirements

DoL OW Bulletin 96-1

- Made in partnership w/each participant
- Consider skills, talents, training, work history, and capabilities
- Identify appropriate training & employment objectives
- Identify needed supportive services
- Must be the basis for the IEP
- Must be the basis for host agency assignment
- Should be signed by participant & PD

What to address in the information-gathering stage

- Skills & talent
- Interests
- Preferences
- Physical capabilities
- Aptitudes
- Training needs
- Barriers
- Need for support services
- Potential for unsubsidized placement
- Potential for host agency performance
- Reason for applying /expectations
- Work history
- Transportation

Don't be in a hurry to complete the assessment process

Or, consider splitting the assessment into 2 parts

1. Adequate information to make a valid host agency assignment
2. Before beginning at the host agency, bring participant in for a more in-depth assessment

- First interview may not initially reveal enough information to match host agency w/participant interests/skills
- Testing may benefit some (math, language)
- Knowledge of local job market makes it easier to aide those long out of the market

Purpose of the Assessment Interview

- Discover participant's expectations
 - Ask what the participant expects from the program
 - Clarify your purpose
- Seek early clues about where the participant wants to go
 - Uncertainty about job preferences
 - Strong preference for job/work environment
- Learn what the participant has done/will do to secure employment
- Discover & explore skills, abilities, limitations

- Find out why the participant has come to the program
 - Probe for perceived needs (expectations of you and the program)
 - Find out the most urgent need/pressing problem ... handle first
- Look for strengths and barriers
 - transportation, family situation, friendship support system, health status, confidence and self-esteem
- Look for patterns in the information you gather

Remember: you are having a conversation ... listening ... not filling out a form

- Establish an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, and support
- Be always aware of your facial expressions and posture [read the participant's as well]
- Communicate with warmth and genuineness
- Recognize strengths and positives



- Identify with the participant's feelings and concerns
- Reflect back what you've heard to be certain you understand what was said

what I hear you saying...

you feel...

it sounds as if...

in your experience...

I get the impression that...

- Do much less than 50% of the talking
- Do your best to elicit responses
 - Tell me about ...
 - Help me understand ...
 - Interesting, please tell me more ...
 - How did you feel about that ...
- Frequently check if you are understanding accurately
 - Repeat or summarize
 - Ask if you heard correctly

- Listen carefully. Does the participant:
 - Give direct, responsive answers
 - Appear confident
 - Have recent job search experience
 - Appear motivated
- Learn areas of high interest
 - Ask about “favorite job” or “dream job” ...
 - Look for:
 - display of excitement
 - smiles
 - short response time
 - other positive nonverbal clues
 - negative nonverbal clues (acting wary or fidgeting)

More Formal Assessment Procedures

- Paper & Pencil/standardized measures should be used when there is:
 - participant lack of direction
 - question of the validity of participant's self-perception
 - concern about realistic perception of the participant
- Take care that standardized assessment tools are appropriate instruments for older workers
 - consider criterion-based rather than norm-based tests