

Customized Employment Tools: The 30-Day Placement Plan

Introduction

A 30-Day Placement Plan is one tool that can be used during the customized employment process. Finding and getting a job of choice can involve many steps. Breaking the job search down into a series of small, well-defined activities gives the job seeker a sense of empowerment over the direction of the job search and a sense of accomplishment when each task is completed. Further, the 30-Day plan is an effective way to track progress towards the overall goal of customized employment.

What is a 30-Day Placement Plan?

A 30-Day Placement Plan is an individualized guide for finding employment that is updated in one-month increments. The plan includes tasks to be accomplished each month, due dates, and who is responsible for completing the tasks. Every thirty days, the plan is updated with new tasks for the upcoming month. The job seeker, anyone in his/her support network (i.e. family, friends, other professionals), and the primary employment support resource (e.g. employment specialist, One Stop navigator, job coach) should all be involved in the writing and implementation of the plan.

Why write a 30-Day Placement Plan?

Most agencies that provide employment supports for people with disabilities require all job seekers to have a written plan for finding a job. These plans have many different names, such as an Individual Service Plan, Individual Plan for Employment or Individual Placement Plan. This type of plan usually includes a general statement about what type of job the job seeker wants and some general steps on how the job placement will be accomplished. The plan typically does not give step-by-step directions towards finding a job where responsibilities are assigned and expected completion dates noted. As a result, this type of plan frequently focuses too heavily on the service that the agency will provide rather than the action steps needed to successfully complete the job search process.

The advantages of using a 30-day Placement Plan for job seekers include:

- Having the job seeker and his/her support network actively involved in the job search;
- Having the job seeker feel a sense of accomplishment each month, even if a job has not been found yet.
- Keeping everyone on track and focused on the job search;
- Making sure that tasks are accomplished each week towards finding a job;

Which job seekers benefit from the 30-Day Placement Plan?

Anyone who is looking for a job may benefit from using this strategy! Sometimes employment specialists feel that they have the primary responsibility for finding jobs, especially with individuals who have significant disabilities. The job seeker must be actively involved as much as possible in the job placement process and must share the responsibility for finding employment. A 30-Day Placement Plan is one way to ensure

that this individual is in agreement with all aspects of the job search. The more involvement the job seeker has in every aspect of the job search, the greater the investment she/he will have in finding the right job.

Since the majority of people find jobs through networking, writing a 30-day plan is a team effort. The job seeker, her/his support network, and the employment specialist can all be involved in writing and implementing the plan. If the only people involved in the plan are the job seeker and the employment specialist, the potential contribution of the support network is lost and a longer time may be needed to accomplish the main goal of finding a job.

Involving the support network in the plan does not mean that everyone needs to participate in a formal meeting, however. Each time the plan is updated, the job seeker can identify people who may be able to help accomplish the tasks outlined for that month. For example, a job seeker might ask a sibling to assist in writing a resume or in driving them around their neighborhood to identify businesses in their area.

When is a 30-Day Placement Plan prepared?

The plan should be written during the initial meetings between an employment specialist and the job seeker. Early development of the plan can create the expectation of a team effort from the start of the placement process. The plan should be updated every 30 days, and more often when necessary, until the job seeker is stable in his/her new position. Even once a job seeker starts a job, the plan should include at least one more 30-day plan to make sure that the transition to the new position goes smoothly. Some job seekers will need ongoing support on the job. Updating a 30-day plan each month will help to identify and track the on-going supports needed for the individual to successfully maintain employment.

How is the 30-Day Plan developed?

All job seekers should be in control of their own job search, regardless of the nature of their disability. A 30-day placement plan that is driven by the job seeker helps that person become empowered in the process of finding the right job.

Begin the plan by setting short and long-term goals. A long-term career goal should be written so that it is clear to everyone involved. Additionally, the job seeker's skills and strengths related to employment should also be described in the plan.

The **first step** in writing the plan is identifying a **list of tasks** to be accomplished. Every plan will have different tasks that need to be completed each month depending on where the job seeker is in the job search process. For example, if the job seeker is unclear of his/her career interests and desires, developing a plan to help them identify a career goal is very useful. The job seeker and employment specialist can work together to explore career options, such as going on informational interviews, using interest inventories, looking on the internet, job shadowing, completing situational assessments and researching career opportunities, all of which can be tasks on the placement plan.

In all cases, these tasks need to be:

- able to be accomplished within the 30 day time frame;
- specific so everyone knows exactly what they are supposed to do;
- divided out between the job seeker, employment specialist and others; and
- measurable, so that it is clear whether or not the tasks are achieved.

The **second step** is assigning a **person who will be responsible** for completing each task. The job seeker must be responsible for completing some tasks each month. The job seeker may need support to complete these tasks and should choose someone to work with on the tasks. It is equally as important that the employment specialist not be the only person helping the job seeker. The job seeker's network may provide useful assistance and information in the job search process. The employment specialist should be used as a guide to steer the process and help the team come up with action steps that can be accomplished within the 30-day time frame. Everyone on the team should be assigned an action item. The completion of some tasks might require the involvement of two or more people. In these cases, choose a "primary" person to be responsible and then include the additional names on the form.

The **third step** is establish a **due date** for each task. At the very least, one task should be scheduled for completion each week. Make sure that everyone agrees on the amount of time necessary to complete the task and the chosen due date. A very important step that can be easily overlooked is to follow-up on the tasks once the due date has arrived. If due dates pass without follow-up, those tasks may not be completed.

The **last step** is having everyone **sign the plan** and then **giving everyone a copy**. Having people sign the plan can help to make them take the plan seriously. It is also a chance to make sure that everyone understands what he or she need to do each month. Some job seekers may find it helpful to highlight the tasks that they are assigned to track what they need to accomplish. Also, the employment specialist may need to work with the job seeker to break down the task and write smaller action steps in a date book. For example, if a goal is to make four employer contacts, the employment specialist can write down that the job seeker will go to an interview on each of four days so that the overall task is not overwhelming.

Examples of activities that job seekers can do:

- Bring in a copy of the local paper when meeting with their employment specialist.
- Talk to friends / family members about their careers.
- Bring in a list of jobs they have done to help write their resume.
- Cut out 5 ads from the help wanted section that look interesting.
- Pick up job applications at places they would like to work.
- Research a company on the Internet.
- Make a list of 3-5 references.
- Call people they listed as references to ask if they would be willing to be a reference.
- Give copies of their resume to people who are acting as references for them.
- Talk to friends and family members about their ideas for jobs.

- Take pictures of places in their community they might like to work using a disposable camera.
- Take a tour of a business in a field of interest.
- Go on an informational interview.
- Make a list of questions to ask on an interview.

Examples of activities other support people can do:

- Contact employers they have relationships with on behalf of the job seeker in the fields that he/she identifies.
- Help the job seeker create a cover letter and resume.
- Assist the job seeker to identify specific employers to target.
- Keep the team on track with each action item.
- Proof-read job seeker's resume.
- Assist the job seeker in reading job postings, Internet employment sites, etc.
- Use their own connections to network on behalf of the job seeker.
- Assist the job seeker in identifying businesses in the job seeker's neighborhood.
- Practice interview skills with the job seeker.

Case study: Jane

Jane is a forty-five year old woman with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and a cognitive disability. She had been working in a local supermarket as a bagger and cart retriever for 8 years. She wanted different work that would be interesting and less physical, so she got back in touch with her employment specialist, Emily. Together, Emily and Jane came up with several work possibilities, such as a job in customer service or working at a Veterinary Hospital. Since Jane wanted to be as independent as possible with her job search, Emily suggested that it might be helpful for Jane to visit her local One-Stop Career Center.

They looked on the Internet at www.servicelocator.org and found the One-Stop closest to Jane's home. They also put together a 30-day placement plan for Jane that outlined some concrete tasks they could do this month toward Jane finding a new job.

Job Seeker: Jane

Plan Dates: 2/1/04 – 3/1/04

Job Goal: Customer Service or Veterinary Assistant

Skills and Strengths: loves animals, particularly cats; likes to assist customers; friendly; experienced caring for her own cat.

Person Responsible	Task	Due Date
Jane and Emily	Visit the local One-Stop Career Center and attend an Orientation.	2/2

Jane and Career Center Staff	Attend resume development class at One-Stop.	2/9
Jane and Emily	Work on updating resume and put it on the computer.	2/15
Emily	Contact local veterinarians about what types of jobs they typically hire for.	2/17
Jane	Contact Jane's veterinarian to learn more about possible openings.	2/17
Jane's friend and Jane	Write cover letter to veterinarian that Jane knows.	2/21
Jane	Hand deliver resume and cover letter to Jane's veterinarian.	2/23
Jane and Career Center staff	Attend interviewing workshop at One-Stop to get practice and feedback.	3/1

Case Study: Chris

Chris is a twenty-eight year old man with cerebral palsy who uses a motorized wheelchair. Chris loves sports and has had the opportunity to hold several different volunteer coaching positions at the local high school. When he began working with his employment specialist, Sue, his first goal was to receive a paid part time job working in sports related environment involving baseball, football or soccer. Chris and Sue were not sure of all the opportunities available in their community, so they made a plan to research options.

Job Seeker: Chris **Plan Dates:** 2/1/04 – 3/1/04

Job Goal: Part-time employment in a sports related occupation (Paid)

Skills and Strengths: Loves sports; very knowledgeable about rules of baseball, football and soccer; very social; great around children and teens

Person Responsible	Task	Due Date
Chris (with help/input from parents)	Make a list of the schools in Chris' neighborhood that he could get to and any contacts he has there.	2/8/04
Sue and Chris	Call people on the list that Chris develops to see if they ever hire in sports occupations (not necessarily to hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist).	2/15/04
Sue	Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in the athletic departments.	2/21/04
Matt (Chris'	Talk to football, soccer and baseball coaches at his	2/21/04

brother)	school about positions and let Chris know the results.	
----------	--	--

After contacting many schools, Chris and Sue found out that most did not have funding available to pay for additional positions. Sue started to talk to Chris about other avenues for employment, and asked him specifically what he liked about sports. He said that he enjoyed all team sports, interacting with people and giving advice and assistance to people. Together they generated a list of employers that incorporated the aspects he liked (for example YMCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, after school programs, camps, gyms, etc.) and decided that a job at the front desk or working with people around athletic pursuits would be great. Together they devised a plan for looking for employment in these areas.

Job Seeker: Chris

Plan Dates: 3/1/04 – 4/1/04

Job Goal: Front Desk at Sports related Company or Working with People around Athletic Pursuits

Skills and Strengths: Loves sports; very knowledgeable about rules of baseball, football and soccer; very social; great around children and teens; likes to give advice

Person Responsible	Task	Due Date
Chris (with help/input from parents)	Make a list of the health clubs, after school programs and sports related businesses in Chris' neighborhood that he could get to and any contacts he knows there.	3/7/04
Matt (Chris's brother)	Get the name and phone number of the manager of the health club he belongs to and information on the YMCA that he plays basketball at.	3/10/04
Chris and Sue	Call the people on the list that Chris develops and the contacts that Matt gives Chris.	3/14/04
Chris (with either Sue or other support person)	Visit four places that he is interested in working and see if they are accessible for Chris.	3/21/04
Sue	Re-contact some of the athletic departments she talked to last month about after school programs and to set up informational interviews.	3/21/04

30-Day Placement Plan

Job Seeker: _____ **Plan Dates:** _____

Career Goal: _____

Skills and Strengths: _____

Person Responsible	Task	Due Date

Signatures:

Job Seeker

Employment Specialist

Other

Other

Plan will be updated on _____ (30 days from when the plan was created)

Resources-- Where To Get More Information

[Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers.](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/to14.pdf)

<http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/to14.pdf>

Tools for Inclusion, July 2002, V. 10 #1. Boston: Institute for Community Inclusion, U. of Massachusetts Boston. Available at:

[Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search.](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/networking2.pdf)

<http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/networking2.pdf>

Tools for Inclusion, January 1999, V. 7 #1. Boston: Institute for Community Inclusion, U. of Massachusetts Boston. Available at:

[More Than Just a Job: Person-Centered Career Planning.](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/ib16.pdf)

<http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/ib16.pdf>

Institute Brief, Oct. 2003, V. 12 #1. Boston: Institute for Community Inclusion, U. of Massachusetts Boston. Available at:

Information for this fact sheet came from T-TAP: Training and Technical Assistance for Providers. Contributors for this issue include Colleen Condon, T-TAP Technical Assistance Specialist; and Amy Gelb and Joy Gould from the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston. For additional information on customized employment, contact ODEP at (202) 693-7880 or T-TAP - Dr. Katherine Inge, Project Director, kinge@atlas.vcu.edu or (804) 828-5956. For more information on T-TAP, please visit <http://www.t-tap.org>.