Career Action Plan Manual

Career and Employment Services

Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration

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Career Action Plan Background

The Career Action Plan is based on the principle that planning for successful transitions will result in improved outcomes and experiences for the job seeker.

This document will define each part of the Career Action Plan and establish minimum content requirements. The Career Action Plan specifies the action planning process and the necessary components of an action plan to create a common understanding for individual clients, career practitioners and other stakeholders.

This common understanding will:

1. Guide individuals to identify and achieve milestones in the path to their career goal;

2. Support funding decisions based on strong, individual Career Action Plans.

3. Contribute to timely, coordinated and effective transitions to employment and/or training;

The Career Action Plan is intended to be a tool used by the client, Career and Employment Services (CES) staff and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to establish a clear, concise and outcome-focused plan to effectively assist the individual through the career transition process. This document will provide consistency with the Career Development Framework and encourage CES staff, communities and clients to work towards long-term career goals when completing the Career Action Plan.

Career Action Plan Content

A systematic identification of a goal, skills/strengths and barriers to success are required before a Career Action Plan can be implemented. The more specific the plan, the more effective the plan will be in supporting the achievement of the career goal. It is important that the client and CES/CBO staff work together to build the Career Action Plan.

A Career Action Plan outlines and tracks the steps (milestones) an individual will need to take to obtain his/her career goal. The individual has ownership over their Career Action Plan. Plans should be realistic, active and stated in a positive language.

Career Goal Statement:

- This section is used to identify what the individual is working toward over the long term.
- The career goal is driven by the individual and must be realistic, specific and meaningful.
- An ideal career goal aligns with the individual's skills, competencies, values, and interests in order to support lasting employment, good productivity and engagement in the workplace.
- The career goal offers a sense of purpose, direction and meaning to the individual. Steps forward should be consistent with movement toward this career goal.
- The career goal must be clear and concise.
- The stated goal belongs to the individual.
- Over time, the counselor can help the individual to develop a more specific, realistic or achievable career goal through a process of increased awareness and analysis.
- It is important for the goal statement to be updated to remain current.
- In some cases the career goal is undecided and the goal becomes a series of steps to aid in the development of a career goal.

  Examples:

  a) To secure full time employment as a laborer in the construction industry.
  b) To obtain a nursing degree and work full time as a nurse.
  c) To work around airplanes.

Education or Employment Milestone(s):

- Milestones are the action steps required to help the individual get where he/she wants to be.
- This section is used to record the milestones/action steps that will become a roadmap leading to the ultimate career goal. These steps are typically the subject of the intervention or a funding application.
- Each of the milestones should be small, manageable pieces that allow the individual to move toward their career goal. Each milestone must be clearly tied to the career goal.
- Each milestone must have a timeframe identified to create focus and to make the plan measurable. Alternative or back-up plans need to be discussed and listed, where appropriate.
- The individual may identify more than one milestone:
  - Short term — achievable within 6 months.
  - Intermediate — achievable within 6-18 months
  - Long term — achievable in greater than 18 months
- There may be many intermediate milestones needed to reach one short term objective.

- The planning, reviewing, revising, and recommending each step in the action plan is recorded.

  Examples:

  a) Steve will update his resume by the end of May, 2011.
  b) Laura will contact the employer by January 15th, 2010 at (phone number) to arrange an informational interview to answer the following questions...
  c) Individual will register by March 31, 2011 to write safety tickets at (training provider).
  d) Individual will attend a follow-up meeting with an employment counselor at (location) on February 12th, 2011 to report on actions.

Analysis of Client Situation:

- This section is used to identify skills, strengths and barriers that may impact the achievement of milestones.

<u>Skills/Strengths:</u>

- A skill or strength is a demonstrable ability to do something well.
- The individual will identify skills and strengths that have been acknowledged in prior experiences.
- Include a list of their credentials such as Business Admin diploma, 6 years experience as a cashier at Sears, valid class 5 driver's license, etc.
- Wherever possible, skills should be qualified and quantified, such as keyboarding at 45 wpm.
- Skills and strengths can be grouped into personal, transferable and work-related.
- Identification of skills and strengths may be difficult and not immediately evident. Example: Amy is at home with 5 children and has never worked for pay. With some analysis, it is identified that managing a household is a significant responsibility and requires her to have effective time management, budgeting, food planning, and preparation—all skills that are transferable.
- Strengths may include things like financial resources and supportive family/friends, the more specific these are, the more meaningful they will be to the individual.
- If possible, there should be a demonstrated relationship between identified skills and strengths and the career goal.

  Examples:

  1. Mike has 3 years work experience as a 2nd year apprenticed commercial plumber including one year of residential plumbing experience installing dishwashers, sinks and showers.
  2. Laura has 5 years experience working as a folk festival volunteer developing work schedules, ordering supplies and dealing with tight deadlines.
  3. Trudy has 2 years experience working with the public as a receptionist dealing with people in person and by phone, including multi-lines with approximately 50 calls per day and has experience dealing with difficult people and understands the importance of confidentiality.

Barriers:

- Barriers are things identified and described by the individual that might get in the way of achieving his/her career goal or pursuing the action steps in the career path.
- The aim of this section is for the counselor and individual to work together to validate the individual's experience and assist with detailed planning to minimize the impact of the barrier(s).
- A discussion about barriers will help to identify the support that may be required in order to achieve the milestones or career goal.
- Constraints should be documented so that issues are clearly identified—a constraint statement such as "I cannot… because…" may be used.
- It is important not only to identify the barrier but the specific impact it has on the action step(s) and/or career goal.
- Barriers can be personal—lack of confidence, small children responsibilities, no transportation, or health issues, for example. They can also be external—the economy, family, labor market, location, bias (age, race, gender etc), or the working environment are examples.
- Keep in mind that what may be considered a barrier by some may not be a barrier for others.

Examples:

1. Lack of formal education
2. Trevor completed his Grade 12 GED successfully but has difficulty with reading and writing—appears to be functioning at a lower grade level.
3. Based on information given, Melanie has the education and credentials needed to pursue work in the field of computer science but has no paid experience or contacts in the field-needs to make contact with employers who employ workers with similar skills.

Best Practices

- The Career Action Plan is to be signed and dated and the client keeps a copy for his/her record.
- CES staff and CBOs must be timely with completion of the Career Action Plan (within one week of the first individual counseling session).
- The Career Action Plan is developmental and includes elements that are responsive to the demands of any change or life transition.
- The Career Action Plan includes action steps that enable analysis, personal reflection and the celebration of success.
- The Career Action Plan is written in a professional format using the correct spelling, grammar, upper and lower case, and avoids using abbreviations as much as possible.