



Center for Independent Living (CIL) Employment Program Readiness Assessment Tool

A Technical Resource for CILs

**Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center-2021-CIL-4
September 2021**

Overview

A critical first step in incorporating Employment Services into your CIL's operations is to evaluate your organization's current knowledge, skills, and activities. The Employment Program Readiness Assessment Tool (EPRAT) is designed for CILs to evaluate their current capacity to address the employment service needs of the individuals they serve. The tool draws on the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid, the Victory Program's Technical Assistance guide, and other industry-established assessment tools. The tool has been modified to focus on CIL's capacity for employment services.

The tool is divided into four (4) different categories, which cover your CIL's investment and support for employment services and your approach to delivering employment services to persons served. This assessment tool provides you with the opportunity to identify current areas of existing capacity and to prioritize areas of needed and desired capacity building regarding employment services. The prioritized areas will assist you in determining the capacity building activities, goals, and outcomes that can be a part of your work plan.

The scoring system ranges from 1 (no current capacity in place) to 5 (high level of capacity in place) and offers descriptions for the scores of 1, 3, and 5. You will note that several response options include a range of activities. In some instances, the capacity level may not exactly correspond to your CIL's activities or capacity. For each question, select the response that is the best fit; you have the opportunity to choose 2 and 4 if you believe your capacity falls between the descriptions provided for 1, 3 and 5. Your scores are designed as a "temperature check," not a rigid benchmarking scale.



Please rate the current capacity of your organization in each area on a scale of 1 to 5. Descriptions have been provided for the ratings of 1, 3 and 5 to assist with your assessment.

1 = No current capacity in place

2 = Beginning level of capacity in place

3 = Basic level of capacity in place

4 = Moderate level of capacity in place

5 = High level of capacity in place

Assessment Part 1: Organizational Investment in Employment Services

Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
1a	Agency board and leadership	Agency board and leadership do not see employment as a priority or core service for the agency.	Agency board and leadership are generally supportive of employment. Development of employment services comes from front line supervisors or direct staff.	Agency board and leadership are highly supportive and see employment as a priority. Agency board and leadership provide guidance and planning to grow and strengthen employment services.	
1b	Agency mission, vision, and goals	The value of employment and vocational services are not part of agency mission, vision, or goals.	The value of employment and vocational services are reflected indirectly in agency mission, vision, and goals.	The value of employment and vocational services are clearly stated and reflected in agency mission, vision, and goals including agency strategic planning.	
1c	Financial model	Employment services are not included in agency financial model or budget.	Employment services are included within budget. There are generally not active efforts to expand or re-purpose funds to support employment services.	Agency has dedicated funding to support employment services and actively works to expand and diversify funding streams.	
1d	Fundraising and development	Employment services are not included in agency fundraising or development and are not the recipient of funds raised or developed.	Employment services are part of fundraising and development and are occasional recipients of money raised. Employment services may have lower priority within agency for fundraising efforts.	Agency actively raises funds to support employment services. Development efforts include employment programs and outcomes to recruit funders and solicit donations.	

Assessment Part 1 total: _____



Assessment Part 2: Organizational Support for Employment Services within Social Service Programs

Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
2a	Client satisfaction	Employment services and needs are not included in satisfaction surveys. Agency does not offer a formal means for clients to express their satisfaction on agency response to employment.	Employment services are included in satisfaction surveys, but agency does not consistently use input to impact program design. Satisfaction with employment services carries a lower priority than other core services.	Agency includes employment services in satisfaction surveys and uses input to further improve services. Agency offers frequent and diverse opportunities to express satisfaction regarding agency response to employment need.	
2b	Outcome measurement	Agency does not collect basic employment data including services participation and outcomes.	Agency collects basic employment data including service participation and outcomes. Data collection is not routinely used to influence program services or design and there is no procedure to set or evaluate goals.	Agency has a clear outcomes measurement plan in place to collect and evaluate employment services and outcomes. Data collected is used to influence program design and services.	
2c	Employment is integrated across agency services and programs	Employment services and/or supporting consumer employment goals is not included in agency services and programs.	Employment services are primarily seen in those services which clearly address employment and education. Integration of employment in non-employment services relies on the efforts of individual staff.	Employment services are included across agency services and programs. All programs have shared responsibility to support consumer employment goals and efforts.	
2d	Employment is integrated into program procedures and operations	There is no mention or reference to employment in agency procedures, forms, or descriptions.	Employment services appear in program procedures directly related to employment. Job descriptions include general expectations for direct services staff related to employment services.	Employment services are included in program procedures and operations across the agency. Job descriptions for all direct service staff include expectations for providing and/or coordinating service to support employment.	

Assessment Part 2 total: _____



Assessment Part 3: Organizational Approach to Employment Services

Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
3a	Employment services model	Agency does not have a model for addressing employment services. Agency does not offer direct services or refer to local partners.	Agency is aware of basic service models (supported employment, transitional jobs, career pathways) and addresses employment services with a combination of referral options and direct services. Direct service staff may incorporate employment into case management services based on consumer need. Agency model or approach does not consistently make available a full range of services.	Agency has a clear model that addresses consumer employment needs through a combination of direct services and referrals to local partners. A full continuum of services is available to consumers provided either by the agency or via partnership. Agency can connect consumers to a variety of options (supported employment, transitional jobs, career pathways).	
3b	Collaboration with local, state, and federal mainstream employment systems (State VR; Ticket to Work; TANF, WIA; VA, One-Stop)ⁱ	Agency does not collaborate with local employment systems. Agency is not informed about mainstream services systems.	Agency has a general awareness of local mainstream employment systems. Agency can match most clients to appropriate service. Relationships, referral agreements, and partnerships related to employment programs and/or services exist but are limited.	Agency understands mainstream employment services and has employment related relationships, referral agreements, and partnerships in place. Consumers are able to access mainstream services and are matched to the correct service.	
3c	Partnerships with employment programs and/or services	Agency does not maintain partnerships or referral agreements with any local employment programs or service providers.	Agency is aware of local employment programs and/or services. A few referral agreements related to employment (formal and/or informal) are in place. Agency can meet the service needs of most consumers via referral but not all.	Agency maintains a full range of referral agreements and partnerships including point of contact or liaisons (including written agreements). Agency can meet a diverse range of consumer service needs through referral relationships.	
3d	Local labor market and workforce needs	Agency is not aware of the local labor market and workforce needs.	Agency has basic awareness of the local labor market and employment opportunities for consumers. There are some efforts to connect consumers with services that match with the local workforce needs.	Agency has up to date awareness of the local labor market and employment opportunities for consumers. Agency makes on-going efforts to connect consumers with services that match with the local workforce needs.	

Assessment Part 3 total: _____



Assessment Part 4: Organizational Delivery of Employment Services

Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
4a	Vocational and career planning	No vocational or career planning services offered. Referral options have not been developed.	Staff have some training on vocational and career pathway planning. Staff have option to refer to partner agency for service. Staff have some skill in working with consumers on their career development and assist to create career plans that reflect consumers' needs, interests, and capabilities.	Agency has formal process to assist with career planning. Options to refer to partner agency are available, and well-coordinated employment plans are integrated over all services. Staff are trained on career pathway planning. Plans reflect consumers' needs, interests, and capabilities.	
4b	Access to GED, occupational training, and post-secondary education	Agency does not have any relationships with organizations providing occupational training and/or post-secondary education for consumers.	Agency maintains a few referral relationships with local training and education programs. Individual staff help consumers make employment related connections and referrals.	Agency maintains a broad range of referral relationships with local training and education programs. Staff actively help consumers make a connection to the assistance they need and follow up.	
4c	Employment preparation and/or job readiness services	No employment preparation or job readiness services offered. There are no referral agreements in place to assist with employment prep or job readiness services.	Job readiness services are provided directly or via referral as a part of general direct services. Life and soft skills training are offered. Staff work with consumers to resolve obstacles to prepare for employment. Consumer service plans may include goals and strategies to improve job readiness skills.	Job readiness services provided directly and via referral. Life and soft skills training are offered. Staff work with consumers to resolve obstacles to prepare for job placement. Services are clearly linked to placement services. Consumer service plans include goals and strategies to improve job readiness skills.	
4d	Job search or placement services	No job search or placement services offered. There are no referral agreements in place to assist with job search or placement services.	Agency provides access directly or via referrals to computer lab to assist with job search. Individual staff may provide occasional job referrals, assistance, or job listings. Staff may offer interview preparation services.	Agency provides access or refers consumers to computer lab, resume software, and online job posting for job search. Staff provide job referrals and listings and offer interview preparation services.	
4e	Employer partnerships, job development and marketing to business community	Agency does not have partnerships with employers. The agency has not identified staff or allocated time to partner with employers.	Job development and engaging employer partnerships occurs via referral to another agency. Agency staff may have some relationships built with employers however no clear staff time is allocated to these activities.	Employer partnerships is a priority for the agency. Staff are identified and trained for employer engagement effort and staff time is allocated to activities.	



Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
4f	Job retention and support	No job retention services offered; no referral agreements are available for these services.	Job retention included in regular direct services. Classes/groups are available via referral and/or by agency. Individual staff assist consumers with transition into job and to offer ongoing support.	Agency provides both individual job retention and classes/groups; staff assist clients with transition into job and offer ongoing support; retention efforts are integrated across services.	

Assessment Part 4 total: _____

Assessment Part 5: Organizational Approach to Benefit Access and Planning

Criteria Number	Criteria	1 (No current capacity in place)	3 (Basic level of capacity in place)	5 (High level of capacity in place)	Score (1-5)
5a	Partnerships with state and federal agencies offering benefits and entitlements	Agency has no or very limited relationships with partners who provide benefits and entitlement programs. Staff never or rarely communicate with agencies that offer benefits and entitlement programs.	A relationship is in place with agencies that offer benefits and entitlement programs but communication is sporadic and relies heavily on individual relationships.	Agency has partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies offering public benefits. Relationships are in place with benefits partners, which leads to effective communication between the organization and these partners to assist consumers.	
5b	Knowledge of work incentives and the impact of paid employment on benefits and/or entitlements	Program staff are minimally aware of work incentives and the impact of paid employment on benefits and entitlements. Agency does not provide staff training on the topic and does not have relationships with partners who provide benefits counseling.	Program staff have a general knowledge of work incentives and benefits counseling. Partnerships with agencies that provide benefits counseling are evident, but communication is sporadic. Agency makes training on public benefits available on occasion.	Program staff has a thorough knowledge of work incentives and can offer benefit counseling and/or refer to local experts for assistance. Agency has opportunities for ongoing training, and it is included within job description.	
5c	Benefit planning and/or asset building	Program staff are not aware of benefit planning or asset building strategies. These services are not seen as a priority within the agency.	Program staff have a general knowledge of benefit planning or asset building. Staff rely primarily on experts in the field and can make referrals to increase consumer self-sufficiency and increased financial stability.	Program staff are trained and knowledgeable regarding benefit planning and asset building strategies and opportunities. Staff use these strategies to increase consumer self-sufficiency and financial stability.	

Assessment Part 5 total: _____



Assessment Total Score

Section Number	Assessment Section Name	Total Score
1	Organizational Investment in Employment Services	
2	Organizational Support for Employment Services within Social Service Programs	
3	Organizational Approach to Employment Services	
4	Organizational Delivery of Employment Services	
5	Organizational Approach to Benefit Access and Planning	

Assessment total score: _____

Additional Notes

Existing Capacity: List out the areas where you have the highest level of capacity related to employment services.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Capacity Building: Select up to six priority areas essential to increasing your agency's capacity in the area of employment services.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.



Completion

Name	Title	Organization

ⁱ Abbreviations refer to: State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Ticket to Work, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Veterans Affairs (VA), and CareerOneStop.

