

THE 30-DAY PLACEMENT PLAN: A ROAD MAP TO EMPLOYMENT

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INTRODUCTION

There are many steps to finding and getting the right job. This process can sometimes be challenging. Many job seekers have found that breaking the job search down into a series of small, workable tasks makes the process much more manageable. It also 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. One way to keep tasks in order is to create a *30-Day Placement Plan*.

WHAT IS IT?

A 30-Day Placement Plan is a month-long plan geared towards finding a job. It includes tasks to be accomplished that month, due dates for each task, and the names of people who are responsible for completing those tasks. Every 30 days the plan is updated with new tasks for the upcoming month. The job seeker, their employment specialist, and anyone in their support network (for instance, family, friends, or other professionals) should all be involved in writing and implementing the plan.

IN THIS BRIEF, YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- Break the job search process down into a series of tasks that will lead to employment
- Develop a plan for employment that is driven by the job seeker
- Include the job seeker's personal as well as professional support networks in the job search process

WHY WRITE ONE?

Most agencies that help people with disabilities find employment require all job seekers to have some sort of a plan for finding a job. Usually this is a long-term plan that includes a general statement about what type of job the job seeker wants and some basic steps for how to accomplish that. These plans can have many different names, including **Individual Service Plan, Individual Work Rehabilitation Plan, Individual Plan for Employment, and Placement Plan**. Typically, these plans are very broad and can sometimes focus too heavily on the services that the agency will provide rather than focusing on the action steps needed to get a job of choice. A 30-Day Placement Plan fills in these gaps.

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

- The plan keeps everyone on track and focused on the job search
- It makes sure that tasks towards finding a job are accomplished each week
- The job seeker and their support network become invested in the job search
- Both the job seeker and employment specialist can feel a sense of accomplishment each month, even if a job has not yet been found

All job seekers should be in control of their own job search, regardless of their disability. The job seeker should drive the plan, and the process should be empowering for them.

WHO IS IT FOR?

A 30-Day Placement Plan is useful for anyone who is looking for a job! Sometimes employment specialists feel that it is their responsibility to find a job for the job seekers they are working with, especially if the job seeker has a severe disability. Though it is the employment specialist's job to **assist** people in finding employment, the job seeker must take a lot of responsibility in finding a job. It is important that the job seeker participate as much as possible and be involved in all aspects of their job search, and a 30-Day Placement Plan is one way to ensure this. The more involvement the job seeker has in every aspect of their job search, the better they will feel about finding a job.

30-Day Placement Plans and the Customized Employment Process

Workforce and disability professionals are beginning to use a set of strategies called **Customized Employment**. This process individualizes the employment relationship between job seekers and employers to meet the needs of both by matching a job seeker's strengths with an employer's needs. A 30-Day Placement Plan can be used as a Customized Employment technique to promote independence and help job seekers find a job they want. It is a good tool to use as it creates action steps and tracks progress along the way. For more information on Customized Employment, check out the resources from the National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult at www.onestops.info.

Since the majority of people find jobs through networking, writing a 30-Day Placement Plan is a team effort. The job seeker, their support network, and their 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 their employment specialist, it will take much longer to find a job. The more people who are involved, the less time it will take.

This does not mean that everyone needs to participate in a formal meeting. Each time the plan is updated, the job seeker can suggest certain people who may be able to help accomplish those tasks outlined for that month. For example, a job seeker might ask a sibling to help write a resume or drive them around their neighborhood to see what types of businesses are in their area.

WHEN DO YOU DO IT?

It is good to write a 30-Day Placement Plan during the first few meetings between an employment specialist and a job seeker so the expectation of a team effort is in place from the start. The plan can be updated as often as necessary, but at a minimum it needs to be updated every 30 days until the job seeker has settled into their new position. Even after a job seeker starts a job, it is important to write at least one more 30-Day Placement Plan to make sure that the transition to the new position goes smoothly. Some people will need ongoing support on the job, and updating the plan each month will help to track those needs.

HOW DO YOU WRITE ONE?

It is important to set both short- and long-term goals within the 30-Day Placement Plan. Before writing the actual plan, a long-term career goal should be written at the top of the page so it is clear to everyone what the job seeker is striving for. Additionally, the job seeker's skills and strengths related to employment should be described at the top of the page. The job seeker and employment specialist should then discuss the overall goals and smaller tasks, and set time frames to complete these steps.



The **first step** in writing the plan is coming up with a **list of tasks** to be completed. 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 about their career interests and desires, developing steps to help them identify a career goal is very useful. The job seeker and employment specialist can work together on exploring career options, going on informational interviews, using interest inventories, looking on the internet, job shadowing, undertaking situational assessments, and researching career opportunities, all of which can be tasks on their plan.

In all cases, these tasks need to be:

- Things that can be completed within the 30-day timeframe
- Very specific, so everyone knows exactly what they have to do
- Divided out among the job seeker, employment specialist, and others
- Measurable, so that it is clear whether or not they have been achieved



The **second step in writing the plan** is assigning a **person who will be responsible** for each task. It is important that the job seeker be responsible for completing some tasks each month, no matter how severe their disability. The job seeker may need to do these tasks with the support of others and should choose someone—not always the employment specialist—to work on the tasks with them. It is important that the employment specialist not be the only person helping the job seeker.

The job seeker's network should be used to support them in the job search process. The employment specialist should act 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. Two or more people may be involved in completing many tasks; in these cases, choose a primary person to be responsible and then include the additional names on the form.

step 3

The **third step** in writing the plan is establishing a **due date** for each task. At the very least, you will want to have one task due each week. Make sure that everyone agrees on the amount of time necessary to complete the task and the 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 you set due dates without following up, then those tasks might not get accomplished.

step 4

The **last step** is to have everyone **sign the plan** and then **take a copy** of it. Having people sign the plan can help them take the plan seriously. It is also a chance to make sure that everyone really understands what they need to do that month. It can be helpful for some job seekers to highlight their tasks so it will be easier for them 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 their date book. For example, if a job seeker needs to make four phone calls in a week, the employment specialist may break it down to one phone call per day so it is not overwhelming.

Tasks Job Seekers Can Do

- Bring in a copy of their local paper when meeting with their employment specialist
- Talk to friends and family members about their careers
- Bring in a list of jobs they have done in order to write a resume
- Cut out five ads from the help wanted section that look interesting to them
- Pick up job applications at places they would like to work
- Research a company on the internet
- Make a list of three to five 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
- Call three employers that they are interested in working for
- 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 they are interested in working in
- Go on an informational interview
- Make a list of questions to ask on an interview

Tasks Employment Specialists Can Do

- Contact employers they already have relationships with on behalf of the job seeker
- Call the job seeker's references to see what they will say to an employer
- Update the job seeker's resume
- 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

Tasks Other Support People Can Do

- Contact people in their network who work in the field that interests the job seeker
- Proofread the 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: Chris

(Plan 1: Career Exploration)

Chris is a 28-year-old man with cerebral palsy who uses a motorized wheelchair. He has difficulty expressing himself quickly and at times can be difficult to understand. Chris loves sports and has held several volunteer coaching positions. When he began working with his employment specialist, Sue, his first goal was to receive a paid part-time job as an assistant coach in baseball, football, or soccer. Chris and Sue were not sure what types of opportunities were available in this area, so they made a 30-Day Placement Plan to research it.

Job Seeker: Chris

Plan Dates: 2/1/04 – 3/1/04

Job Goal: Part-time assistant coach (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's neighborhood that he could get to and any contacts he has there.	2/8
Sue and Chris	Call people on the list that Chris develops to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches (not necessarily to hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist).	2/15
Sue	Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in the athletic departments.	2/21
Matt (Chris's brother)	Talk to football, soccer, and baseball coaches at his school about assistant coach positions and let Chris know the results.	2/21

Case Study: Chris

(Plan 2: Employer Outreach)

After contacting many schools, Chris and Sue found out that most did not have funding available to pay for an assistant coach and those that did had very high requirements for the position. One school only hired assistant coaches who were currently enrolled in a graduate program at the school, and another had a policy of only hiring former players.

Sue started to talk to Chris about other avenues for employment, and asked him specifically what he liked about being an assistant coach. He said that he enjoyed all team sports, interacting with people, and giving advice and assistance. Together they generated a list of employers that incorporated the aspects he liked about coaching (e.g., YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, after-school programs, camps, gyms) and decided that a job at the front desk or working with people around athletic pursuits would be great. Together they devised a plan to look 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 a job working with people around athletic pursuits.

Skills and Strengths: Loves sports; very knowledgeable about rules of baseball and football; 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's neighborhood that he could get to, and any contacts he knows there.	3/7
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 where he plays basketball.	3/10
Chris and Sue	Call the people on the list that Chris develops and the contacts that Matt gives Chris.	3/14
Chris (with either Sue or other support person)	Visit four places where Chris is interested in working and see if they are accessible for him.	3/21

Case Study: Jane

Jane is a 45-year-old woman with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and a developmental disability. After working in a local supermarket as a bagger and cart retriever for eight years, she wanted work that would be more 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 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 that month towards 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 in 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 One-Stop staff	Attend resume development class at the One-Stop.	2/9
Jane and Emily	Start updating resume and put it on the computer.	2/15
Emily	Contact local veterinarians about what types of job openings they typically have.	2/17
Jane	Contact Jane's cat's veterinarian to learn more about possible openings at the clinic.	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 One-Stop staff	Attend interviewing workshop at One-Stop to get practice and feedback.	3/1

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)

CONCLUSION

By breaking the job search into a series of small steps, a 30-Day Placement Plan makes finding a job much more manageable. It also creates a team-based approach that supports the job seeker while keeping them in charge of their own career goals. Finally, it creates a tool for tracking progress in the job search process.

RESOURCES—WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Career Development and Job Search Books

- Your Job Search Journal. Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers, *www.etrcc.com form 1799CC, revised 2003.*
- Demystifying Job Development: Field-Based Approaches to Job Development for People with Disabilities. *David Hoff, Cecilia Gandolfo, Marty Gold, & Melanie Jordan. 2000, TRN, Inc.*
- What Color Is Your Parachute: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers. *Richard N. Bolles, 2002, Ten Speed Press. Updated annually.*
- Job Search Handbook for People with Disabilities. *Dr. Daniel J. Ryan. 2000, Jist Publishing.*
- What Should I Do with My Life? The True Story of People Who Answered the Ultimate Question. *Po Bronson. 2003, Simon & Schuster.*

ICI Publications, Available at www.communityinclusion.org

- Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers. *Tools for Inclusion, July 2002, Order #TO14.*
- Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search. *Tools for Inclusion, January 1999, Order #TO7.*
- More Than Just a Job: Person-Centered Career Planning. *Institute Brief, Oct. 2003, Order #IB16.*

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