



# INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE

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## Introduction

This administrator's guide provides information for employment professionals on how to use the *Individual Employment Plan with 84-Item Employability Assessment (IEP)*. It also explains the theoretical ideas that were used to create the *IEP*. Refer to the *IEP* as you read this administrator's guide.

The *Individual Employment Plan with 84-Item Employability Assessment* assists you in recording and analyzing the needs of your clients. It can be used to accomplish three major objectives:

- ◆ To complete information required by many educational and employment programs, welfare-to-work initiatives, internships, and other learning initiatives
- ◆ To identify a client's employability assets, liabilities, and potential
- ◆ To develop a training and services plan for improving a client's employability

The *IEP* is flexible and can be adapted to a wide variety of program objectives and activities. Specifically, it allows you to

- ◆ Record basic information about the individual
- ◆ Summarize assessment data that leads to training and development recommendations
- ◆ Identify major employability assets and liabilities
- ◆ Use a standard set of considerations for each individual reviewed
- ◆ Assess the potential for increasing an individual's employability
- ◆ Summarize and record information on one form
- ◆ Determine the priorities for moving a client toward employment and self-sufficiency
- ◆ Outline a plan focused on the competencies necessary to find and retain work
- ◆ Prescribe a training program and monitor the individual's progress
- ◆ Track the participant's progress through an initial interview and three subsequent reviews



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This administrator's guide explains each step of the *IEP*. This information is useful and, at times, necessary for taking full advantage of the *IEP*'s features and overall design.

To help an individual reach his or her employment goal, you must take a comprehensive view of the individual's work and personal situation, work with the client to identify career options, and clarify key issues. The *IEP* will assist you in these areas.

### The *IEP*'s Concepts

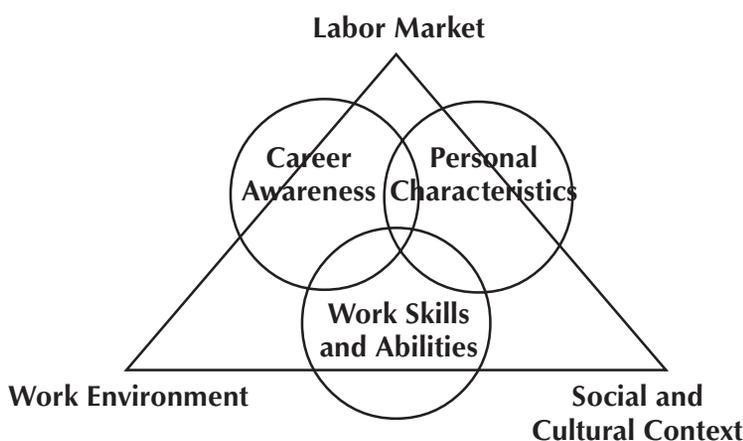
An individual employment strategy is a process of

- ◆ Addressing the needs and desires of individuals in your education, training, or employment program
- ◆ Documenting staff recommendations for helping individuals achieve their career objectives
- ◆ Gathering and recording pertinent data to be considered when prescribing an employment plan
- ◆ Describing and justifying the plan
- ◆ Documenting the strategy that you and your client agree should be followed to improve the client's employability

The *IEP* facilitates the individual employment strategy process by serving as a hands-on tool for

- ◆ Identifying the needs, capabilities, and potential of the individual
- ◆ Assessing employment issues, interests, aptitudes, stated desires, family situation, and steps to follow in achieving economic self-sufficiency
- ◆ Establishing short- and long-term goals that lead to employability
- ◆ Uncovering liabilities that must be overcome before the individual can reach the goals he or she has established

Research on employability issues serves as the basis for the model of employability that is illustrated below. The model demonstrates the basic concepts of employability. These concepts form the foundation on which the *Individual Employment Plan with 84-Item Employability Assessment* is based.



The model proposes that an individual's employability is affected by three environmental factors: labor market, work environment, and social and cultural context. These factors are represented by the three corners of the triangle. The individual cannot influence these three environmental factors but rather must acknowledge their impact on his or her life. The individual must develop a strategy for using these factors to become more employable.

The interlocking circles on the model represent the tools an individual develops and uses in adapting to the three environmental factors. The tools are organized into three broad categories:

- ◆ **Career Awareness.** Individuals must have an understanding of the career planning process, a knowledge of possible careers, and the decision-making skills needed to effectively manage a career.
- ◆ **Personal Characteristics.** An individual's personal characteristics contribute to his or her flexibility and adaptability to conditions in the local job market. Personal characteristics contribute to how effectively the individual seeks work opportunities.
- ◆ **Work Skills and Abilities.** Individuals must develop their work skills based on the needs and demands of the local job market and on their occupational interests. They can develop the skills and abilities required for attaining their employment objectives.

The *IEP* aids you in implementing a practical application of this employability model. As you work with your client to develop an employment plan, use questions such as these to analyze where the client fits within the model:

- ◆ How motivated, adaptable, and interested is the individual in becoming self-sufficient?
- ◆ How interested is he or she in career progression?
- ◆ How aware is the client of career areas and the potential for development within his or her local community?
- ◆ How willing is he or she to develop new skills and to prepare for work that leads to self-sufficiency and personal satisfaction?

## Instructions for Completing the *IEP*

The *IEP* consists of eight panels. Begin with Step 1 on the front panel. Then, open the *IEP* like you would a book. Step 1 continues on the second panel, which is on the left after you open the *IEP*. Step 2 is also on the second panel, following Step 1.

When you finish Step 2, unfold the *IEP* to find Steps 3 and 4. Step 3 is at the top of the folded-out panels, and Step 4 is at the bottom.

When you finish Step 4, fold the *IEP* again. Step 5 is on the inside right panel, and Step 6 is on the back panel.

### **Step 1—Record Participant Information**

As stated above, Step 1 begins on the front panel of the *IEP*. When you finish the front panel, open the *IEP* like you would a book. Step 1 continues on the second panel, which is on the left after you open the *IEP*.

Step 1 provides a place for the basic data you need when providing advice and guidance to a client. After the information is recorded, it is accessible as the plan is being developed and monitored. Instead of referring to several files, you can refer to Step 1 for pertinent information that can be accessed quickly and easily. Step 1 has three sections:

**Personal Information.** This section of Step 1 primarily records information for contacting the participant. It also provides some basic data that is used for demographic and programmatic purposes. Space is provided for documenting that the participant was advised about nontraditional careers and about finances. As you complete this section, omit any information you feel is unnecessary.

**Work History.** This section of Step 1 can be used to identify the types of skills an individual possesses, and these current skills provide the starting point for developing a training strategy. The training strategy should be based on a knowledge of the skills the individual already has and the skills he or she needs to develop.

The information recorded in this section of Step 1 is also a useful reference for completing the Employability Assessment Checklist in Step 3.

Three skills categories are used in the Work History section of Step 1: adaptive skills, transferable skills, and job skills. For each of the individual's three most recent jobs, record the top three skills attained in each category.

- ◆ **Adaptive skills** could also be termed self-management or functional skills. These skills relate to how a person plans, implements, manages, changes, and evaluates activities in his or her life. Certain adaptive skills may seem to be simply personal traits or characteristics; however, these skills are actually learned at home, in the community, at school, or at work. A list of adaptive skills appears in the box below.
- ◆ **Transferable skills** are those that can be applied in a variety of occupations and jobs. Examples of transferable skills are listed in the box on the next page.
- ◆ **Job skills** are those that are specific to a particular occupation or cluster of occupations. These skills are more difficult to summarize in a list. The O\*NET is one resource that helps clients identify their job skills. You can access this information on the Internet at [www.onetcenter.org](http://www.onetcenter.org). The book *O\*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, published by JIST Publishing, provides the same information.

**Family Situation.** Use this section of Step 1 to record information about the individual's family situation. Research has shown that family issues have a direct impact on a person's employability. Interview the participant about each area in this section to ensure that these factors do not interfere with his or her training program.

<b>Adaptive Skills List</b>		
accepts supervision	gets along with coworkers	perfectionist
accurate	gets things done on time	persistent
adventurous	good-natured	personable
ambitious	hardworking	persuasive
artistic	has good attendance	physically fit
assertive	has sense of humor	physically strong
capable	helpful	practical
challenging	honest	productive
cheerful	humble	rational
civic-minded	imaginative	responsible
committed	independent	responsive
communicative	industrious	self-assured
compassionate	informal	self-controlled
competent	ingenious	self-starting
completes assignments	inquisitive	sensitive
confident	intelligent	sincere
conscientious	intuitive	social
coordinated	kind	solves problems
creative thinker	learns quickly	spontaneous
curious	levelheaded	stable
dedicated	logical	steady
dependable	loyal	strong
discreet	mature	tactful
eager	methodical	takes pride in doing a good job
efficient	modest	takes risks
emotional	motivated	tenacious
energetic	natural	thrifty
entertaining	observant	tolerant
enthusiastic	open-minded	trustworthy
exhibits a good attitude	optimistic	understanding
expressive	original	versatile
flexible	outgoing	well organized
formal	patient	willing to learn new things
friendly	people-oriented	

<b>Transferable Skills List</b>		
<p><b>COMMUNICATING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>articulate</li> <li>correspond</li> <li>edit</li> <li>facilitate</li> <li>listen</li> <li>manage conflict</li> <li>market</li> <li>mediate</li> <li>negotiate</li> <li>present ideas</li> <li>promote</li> <li>relate to customers</li> <li>sell</li> <li>serve customers</li> <li>speak in public</li> <li>write</li> </ul> <p><b>WORKING WITH PEOPLE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>administer first aid</li> <li>administer CPR</li> <li>assess performance</li> <li>assign tasks</li> <li>be diplomatic</li> <li>build team spirit</li> <li>care for others</li> <li>coach</li> <li>confront others</li> <li>counsel</li> <li>demonstrate</li> <li>develop people</li> <li>handle complaints</li> <li>help others</li> <li>instruct others</li> <li>interview people</li> <li>mentor</li> <li>motivate others</li> <li>set priorities</li> <li>supervise</li> <li>train</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEALING WITH DATA AND IDEAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyze data</li> <li>audit records</li> <li>be detail oriented</li> <li>budget</li> <li>calculate/compute</li> <li>catalog</li> <li>check for accuracy</li> <li>classify things</li> <li>compare</li> <li>compile</li> <li>conceptualize</li> <li>count</li> <li>create new ideas</li> <li>design</li> <li>develop ideas</li> <li>develop strategy</li> <li>do library research</li> <li>evaluate</li> <li>form ideas logically</li> <li>invent</li> <li>investigate</li> <li>judge quality</li> <li>keep financial records</li> <li>locate answers/information</li> <li>measure</li> <li>manage money</li> <li>price</li> <li>promote</li> <li>observe/inspect</li> <li>record facts</li> <li>remember information</li> <li>report</li> <li>research</li> <li>schedule</li> <li>set standards</li> <li>survey</li> <li>synthesize</li> <li>take inventory</li> </ul>	<p><b>BEING CREATIVE/ARTISTIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carve</li> <li>communicate expressively</li> <li>dance/do body movement</li> <li>design</li> <li>draw</li> <li>paint</li> <li>perform/act</li> <li>present artistic ideas</li> <li>sculpt</li> </ul> <p><b>LEADING/DIRECTING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advise</li> <li>arrange social functions</li> <li>communicate approval</li> <li>delegate</li> <li>develop policy</li> <li>direct others</li> <li>effect change</li> <li>explain things to others</li> <li>interpret policy</li> <li>influence others</li> <li>make decisions</li> <li>manage projects</li> <li>manage tasks</li> <li>plan</li> <li>run meetings</li> <li>show approval</li> <li>solve problems</li> </ul> <p><b>WORKING WITH THINGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assemble</li> <li>build</li> <li>drive</li> <li>operate computer</li> <li>operate copy machine</li> <li>use e-mail</li> <li>use emergency equipment</li> <li>use safety equipment</li> <li>use telephone systems</li> </ul>

## **Step 2—Assess Employability and Make Recommendations**

When you finish Step 1, continue with Step 2 on the same panel.

Step 2 of the *IEP* has three sections. The Assessment Methods section provides a place for quickly noting all sources used in collecting assessment data about the participant. The Assessment Outcomes section contains space for recording the results of the various assessment methods. As you work through these two sections, you can identify services a participant needs in addition to training and job search assistance. Record this information in the Recommended Services section.

**Assessment Methods.** Before the individual's employment plan is developed, complete a careful, objective assessment of the participant. This assessment should make use of tools and approaches that are relevant to the participant's situation. In other words, it should be client-centered. In addition, it should identify assets and liabilities (including occupational skills, basic skills, interests, aptitudes, and behavioral patterns) that affect the participant's employability. The assessment should also provide clues to the individual's attitude toward work and self-sufficiency and should indicate what services might support the individual in a training or employment program.

Several methods can be used to conduct the assessment. The *IEP* lists the following methods:

- ◆ Structured interview
- ◆ Behavioral observation
- ◆ Aptitude/Abilities
- ◆ Personality type
- ◆ Attitude survey
- ◆ Basic skills
- ◆ Job skills
- ◆ Career interest inventory
- ◆ Other

Other assessment methods that are not specifically listed on the *IEP* but that might be useful include observations, diagnostic interviews, simulated work programs, performance centers, feedback reports, and supportive work environment.

**Assessment Outcomes.** Space is provided in the *IEP* to record notes and results for each method used. You can also record impressions of the participant's assessment. Here are some guidelines for conducting an assessment:

- ◆ An assessment should be purposeful.
- ◆ Assessment instruments and tests should be appropriate for the specific individual and situation.
- ◆ An assessment should contribute to a plan based on the information that is gathered.
- ◆ An assessment should involve self-discovery for the individual.
- ◆ Assessment results should be shared with the individual.
- ◆ The individual should be allowed to give feedback into the assessment process and results.

**Recommended Services.** Use this section to detail the services you recommend for the client, based on what you learn through assessment, review of the individual's work history, and the interview process. Issues that are important to some individuals may not relate at all to other individuals. Some employability issues are sensitive to discuss. For example, consider the following questions:

- ◆ Does the participant have problems or considerations that might impede employment?
- ◆ Does the participant have a criminal record that could surface during a job interview?
- ◆ Is the participant currently on probation or parole? Could this affect participation in an employment or training program? Is the person abiding by the terms of his or her parole or probation? Will the parole officer write a letter on behalf of the participant?
- ◆ Did the individual complete any training or skill development while serving time in a correctional facility?
- ◆ Has the participant's driver's license been suspended? If so, can he or she have driving privileges to and from work?
- ◆ Could pending litigation against the individual cause him or her to be absent from work?
- ◆ Will the individual's wages be garnisheed?
- ◆ Does the participant have the necessary support to participate in a program and accept employment?
- ◆ Does the participant have adequate income for training or job search?
- ◆ Does the participant have adequate food, housing, and medical and dental care?
- ◆ Has the individual made necessary provisions for childcare or adult care?
- ◆ Does the individual have transportation to and from work or training?

All of these matters are likely to concern an employer. Consider how important these considerations are and identify resources that can assist the individual in minimizing or eliminating any liabilities. Without proper support, the individual may not be able to take advantage of the service strategy the two of you outline or, ultimately, to become self-sufficient.

Not all of these issues relate to every individual. They are presented here for you to consider when appropriate. Some questions cannot be asked in an employment interview; however, thinking about the answers to the questions can assist the client in overcoming potential employability liabilities. Your organization should develop policies about how to treat a person's responses to these questions. None of these items should be used to discriminate against a participant or to prevent him or her from receiving training or services. The questions help individuals decide which strategies to pursue to achieve their employment goals.

### **Step 3—Complete the Employability Assessment Checklist**

When you finish Step 2, unfold the *IEP* to find Steps 3 and 4. Begin with Step 3 at the top of the folded-out panels. Complete each row from left to right across the page.

The Employability Assessment Checklist in Step 3 is a list of 84 characteristics that affect an individual's employability. These characteristics are divided into seven categories. Characteristics the person has are considered assets. Characteristics he or she does not have are considered liabilities.

Participation in an education or training program should improve a person's employability; therefore, the *IEP* is designed for periodic updates. Four colors are used for the boxes in this Step 3 and in Steps 4 and 6—one color for the initial interview, one for the first review, another for the second review, and another for the third review.

The categories are organized in a hierarchy and should be considered as they appear when you read left to right across the page. The categories are listed here in their hierarchy order:

- ◆ Personal Issues and Considerations
- ◆ Health and Physical Considerations
- ◆ Work Orientation
- ◆ Career and Life Planning Skills
- ◆ Job Seeking Skills
- ◆ Job Adaptation Skills
- ◆ Education and Training

While the hierarchy should not be considered absolute, it suggests what liabilities must be overcome first to promote successful program participation and employability. For example, liabilities in the first two categories, Personal Issues and Considerations and Health and Physical Considerations, must be eliminated or adequately addressed before liabilities in the third category, Work Orientation, can be successfully addressed.

Characteristics in the first four categories—Personal Issues and Considerations, Health and Physical Considerations, Work Orientation, and Career and Life Planning Skills—serve as a foundation for life and work. The next three—Job Seeking Skills, Job Adaptation Skills, and Education and Training—indicate how well an individual can obtain and retain work. Some individuals are interested in work that provides for the basic needs of life. Others are interested in growth and development, with an emphasis on satisfaction. The Employability Assessment Checklist in Step 3 clarifies an individual's goals. It also identifies assets and liabilities that either help or hinder the individual in achieving his or her goals.

As you and the participant complete Step 3, refer to the skills information you recorded in the Work History section of Step 1. Thinking about previous jobs and about skills acquired will help the participant evaluate his or her employability assets and liabilities.

Place a check mark after each attribute on the Employability Assessment Checklist, indicating whether it is an asset, liability, or critical liability. If an attribute is not a liability, mark it as an asset. Checking the critical liability box alerts you and other staff members to specific needs that are high priorities in planning the person's

job training program. Total the number of assets, the number of liabilities, and the number of critical liabilities for each category of attributes. Use these totals when charting the results of the Employability Assessment in Step 4. For assets, the best score is 12. For liabilities, the best score is 0.

The determination of whether an attribute is an asset or liability is based on what competencies are required for the individual's employment goals. Each category of attributes is described below, with an explanation of why it is included in the assessment.

**Personal Issues and Considerations.** An examination of personal issues and considerations can help determine if a person is likely to succeed in reaching his or her job goal. Until these issues are resolved, they can seriously impede an individual's progress in reaching the goal. The longer these issues remain unresolved the more likely the person is to quit a job training program.

Intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics are important in assessing employability. The participant's interactions with other people (interpersonal) are critical to his or her preparing for, seeking, and keeping a job. These interactions are related to intrapersonal attributes such as self-esteem. Self-esteem affects a person's confidence, his or her ability to appropriately express opinions and concerns, and many other behaviors critical to employability. Sometimes people who lack self-esteem need further education or counseling before they can begin a job training program. A person must understand how to present him- or herself in a positive manner to other people. For example, slouching, avoiding eye contact, and mumbling are likely to impede a person's ability to get and keep a job. Individuals should also know how to conduct themselves in a business-like manner. This includes keeping appointments, following up on commitments, and dressing appropriately.

A person's readiness to look for work is also important. An individual who has recently become unemployed may not be ready to begin an employment and training program. The person should have a positive attitude about participating in the program and not feel forced.

The Personal Issues and Considerations category also examines individuals' financial needs and their plans for their work/life transition. If a person does not have money, a phone, a car, adequate housing, or dependent care, his or her participation in an employment and job training program is hindered. These liabilities must be assessed, and a strategy must be developed for overcoming them.

**Health and Physical Considerations.** Many of the items addressed in this category are designed to identify services the person needs if he or she is to attain an adequate level of health care. Health care is often vital to successful completion of an employment and training program as well as to the achievement of an employment goal.

Some participants have disabilities that must be considered. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has affected the policies of many employers toward individuals with disabilities. Employers covered by the ADA are expected to make reasonable accommodations for a person's disabilities. The items in this category in Step 3 help identify what areas must be addressed to help the participant take advantage of the ADA policies. However, not all employers are affected by the ADA; therefore, you must determine how clients with disabilities can most effectively achieve their employment goals.

Consider these key, health-related questions as they relate to each client:

- ◆ How does the individual manage overall wellness?
- ◆ How proactive is the person in obtaining health and dental exams?
- ◆ How does the individual manage stress?
- ◆ Is the individual aware that lifestyle affects work and the ability to be productive?
- ◆ What issues or needs should be considered when designing a training plan?

Certain issues must be addressed before goals, including long-term employment, can be reached. As you consider occupations, note whether the participant has any limitations or difficulties in standing, sitting, bending, or lifting that might affect his or her suitability for a particular occupation. This information may be helpful in counseling a participant on occupational choices and in recommending service strategies.

**Work Orientation.** The items in this category relate to the individual's motivation to work. Motivation is a psychological phenomenon that can be effectively measured only by observing the behavior of an individual.

Research has shown that items in this category are the most useful in assessing a person's motivation to obtain and retain work.

Most employers consider attitude and adaptability when hiring an individual. In assessing the employability of an individual, think about these questions:

- ◆ Does the individual express a desire to work?
- ◆ Has this desire to work been demonstrated in the individual's work history, in an interview, or by an employer?
- ◆ Is the individual enthusiastic about work?
- ◆ Is this enthusiasm evident in the way the individual presents himself or herself?
- ◆ Does the individual have recommendations that confirm his or her enthusiasm?

Consider these questions when assessing the individual's ability to be self-directed:

- ◆ How has the individual demonstrated self-direction at work?
- ◆ Is the individual motivated to work, to improve at work, and to do the very best that he or she can?
- ◆ Is the person interested in personal development?
- ◆ Is the individual interested in improving his or her self-understanding?
- ◆ Is the individual interested in improving his or her ability to succeed at home and at work?

The following questions help determine whether the individual is committed to a training program:

- ◆ Does the individual believe he or she will benefit from participating in an employability program?
- ◆ Has the individual demonstrated an interest in becoming self-sufficient and reducing his or her dependency on subsidized programs?
- ◆ Does the participant have a realistic expectation about salary or wage, benefits, working conditions, and relationships with coworkers and supervisors?
- ◆ Does the individual have a sense of economic responsibility for him- or herself and for any dependents?

While some of these characteristics are difficult to measure, they are important in determining whether the individual will be successful in an employability program or when employed. The individual's responses during interviews, follow-through with assigned tasks, and prior work history help determine whether each characteristic is an asset or a liability.

Finally, determine if the individual has the necessary emotional support for adjusting to an employment or training program. Consider whether the individual has family members, friends, or community members who can provide support and serve as role models. While participants can be successful on their own, research indicates that the support of friends, family, and members of the community greatly increases the chance for success.

**Career and Life Planning Skills.** Responses in the Career and Life Planning Skills category indicate whether the individual is prepared for career planning and whether he or she is being realistic about an employment goal and about subsequent steps toward self-sufficiency. Individuals who are weak in this area can certainly establish employment goals, but they often require considerable guidance from a professional.

Educate participants on the elements of career planning and provide them with a context for making choices. By doing so, you provide them with relevant information they will use throughout their lifetime. Consider these questions:

- ◆ Is the person aware of his or her individual needs and desires?
- ◆ Has the person selected an occupation that is available and realistic based on his or her skills and abilities, including consideration of nontraditional opportunities?
- ◆ Is the individual working toward educational goals that are realistic based on his or her interests, aptitudes, and the local labor market conditions?
- ◆ Are the individual's goals for job advancement feasible?

A person's employment objective must be realistic given local labor market conditions. Consider the following questions:

- ◆ Does the wage or salary requirement seem reasonable for the geographic area?
- ◆ Is the person willing to be flexible on wage requirements, shift preferences, and job duties?

The items in the Career and Life Planning Skills category reflect personal preferences and indicate how competitive the participant will be in reaching the employment goal. Helping individuals recognize the relationship between personal preferences and being competitive in the job market is a key part of their employability planning. A failure to match personal preferences to the local labor market may mean that the individual will have to consider modifying his or her objective or move to a labor market where expectations can be fulfilled.

**Job Seeking Skills.** Clients must have job seeking skills if they are to achieve their stated employment goals. These skills are important throughout a person's work life.

Job seeking skills fit into the employability hierarchy in two ways:

- ◆ They are needed prior to job attainment.
- ◆ They are needed after educational and employment programs have been completed.

The *Individual Employment Plan* includes steps that prepare an individual for an eventual job search. To successfully search for work, people must understand themselves and the job market. An individual must develop the ability to find work opportunities that fit his or her skills, interests, and personal attributes. Individuals should understand the types of questions that might be asked during a job interview and should have a work history that supports the employment goal.

**Job Adaptation Skills.** In today's work environment, job adaptation skills are critical. These are skills that allow a person to adapt to the unique requirements of a particular work situation. Job adaptation skills are the key to success and advancement on the job. Evidence of adaptability is found in a person's previous work history, through interview questions, or by observation of the individual at work or on the training site. References from previous employers or teachers also document an individual's job adaptation skills. Pertinent questions for you and your client include

- ◆ Is the individual's work or school attendance positive?
- ◆ Is the individual punctual on the job or at school?
- ◆ Are the quantity and quality of the individual's work on the job or at school acceptable?
- ◆ Does the individual work well with other people?
- ◆ Does the person follow instructions and accept responsibility?
- ◆ Is the individual dependable in following through and completing assigned tasks?
- ◆ Does the individual know how to advance on the job?

All of these factors point to a person's ability to adapt to changing situations. A person may have the skills needed to get a job but still not be able to keep the job. Such a person often cycles through the offices of career management professionals. The cycle can only be broken when the person is taught job adaptation skills. Responses to questions in the Job Adaptation Skills category of the *IEP* provide information that focuses on areas of weakness and improves the person's employability.

**Education and Training.** In the employability hierarchy, education and training credentials are considered last because they can be completed as the individual progresses through other levels of the hierarchy. Education and training credentials are not always critical to the individual's finding work; however, they do affect the type of job an individual obtains. For example, a person can get a job as a food server at a fast-food restaurant with little education or training, but he or she needs more education and training to get a job as a restaurant manager. Individuals must examine both their current skills and the skills they will need for achieving their long-term employment goals.

The characteristics in the Education and Training category appear in a specific order. The first six items assess basic skills needed to acquire advanced job training. The next three items apply to the educational credentials the person needs for achieving his or her job goal. The next two items relate to the person's motivation to acquire the skills needed to get and keep a job. The last item indicates whether the person has the licensing required to attain his or her job goal.

Certain skills are basic to all learning and education. An individual must be able to read, solve mathematical problems, write, and use a computer. The presence or absence of these abilities determines whether a career goal is realistic for an individual. The person may need remedial help. Use this category of the Employability Assessment Checklist to assess the individual's ability to study, take advantage of available resources, learn new information, and develop additional skills. An individual must have the basic skills assessed in the first six items in this category before he or she can pursue a job skills training program.

Education credentials are often needed for specific jobs. Consider the following questions in determining whether these educational requirements are met:

- ◆ Does the job require a high school diploma?
- ◆ Is technical training a desired and attainable goal for this person?
- ◆ Is college training or professional education desired and realistic for this person?
- ◆ Is on-the-job training an option the person should explore?
- ◆ Where can the individual acquire the skills he or she needs?
- ◆ Has the individual completed an apprenticeship program related to the job goal?

Individuals must be willing to acquire the education and skills they need to retain the job goal they have established. The following questions help assess this motivation:

- ◆ Is the person interested in improving employability through additional training?
- ◆ Does the individual comprehend the importance of lifelong learning for remaining employable?

Some occupations require licensing, which a person receives by passing an exam or meeting other requirements in addition to formal training. Many health occupations require licenses, as do some professional jobs that require working with the public, such as certified public accounting. A person should be aware of and make the necessary arrangements to obtain any required licensing.

### **Step 4—Complete the Employability Assessment Summary Chart**

When you finish Step 3, continue with Step 4, which is at the bottom of the folded-out panels inside the *IEP*.

The Employability Assessment Summary Chart provides a visual representation of the individual's employability assets and liabilities. Each of the seven categories is listed across the top of the chart, on the left side and again on the right side. The left side of the chart has space for charting assets; the right side, for charting liabilities. The chart has four colored rows. These are for recording information from the initial interview and three subsequent reviews. The colors are the same as those used in Step 3.

Refer to the totals you recorded in Step 3. The total assets for each category should be marked by checking the box next to the corresponding number. For example, if the person has 10 assets in the Personal Issues and Considerations category, they will check the box next to the number 10. When the value for each category in the assets section has been recorded, draw a line connecting the boxes to create a graph.

To chart liabilities, repeat this process on the right side of the page.

At the end of each row is space for writing additional comments, which can include notes about critical liabilities. Information written in this space alerts staff to major challenges the participant may encounter.

### **Step 5—Develop a Training and Services Plan**

When you finish Step 4, fold the *IEP* again. Continue with Step 5, which is on the inside right panel after you have refolded the *IEP*.

Step 5 is the proactive section of the *IEP*. It organizes data collected in the previous steps to help individuals create a plan for utilizing their assets and overcoming their liabilities.

The top section of Step 5 is a chart for recording specific steps participants will take to reach their employment goals. Here is an explanation of the columns on the chart:

- ◆ **Achievement Goal.** List three primary achievement goals (objectives) the individual must reach in order to obtain his or her employment objective. Space is provided for only three goals, because it is very difficult for an individual to remember and actively work on more than three goals at a time.
- ◆ **Action Required.** Record the action or actions required to achieve each goal. Achieving a goal may require a series of actions, so space is provided for up to five action steps.
- ◆ **Provider Organization Responsible.** A service provider must coordinate the actions required for the client to achieve a goal. Stipulate who is responsible for assisting the participant in each action step. This may be a staff member within your organization or from another organization.
- ◆ **Number of Weeks.** Enter the estimated number of weeks it will take for the individual to accomplish each action step.
- ◆ **Start Date and Stop Date.** Record the projected start and stop dates for each action.
- ◆ **Justification.** Enter a justification, explanation, or comment about the goal, action step, and timetable.
- ◆ **Date Completed.** Enter the date the action step is accomplished. Doing so helps monitor the participant's progress.
- ◆ **Staff Initials.** The staff member who records the completion date of an action step should put his or her initials in this column.

The bottom section of Step 5 is titled Employment Leading to Self-Sufficiency. It records information about the individual's job search strategy and encourages both the staff and individual to support an effective job search approach.

Enter information about the employment goal, the type of organization in which the participant would prefer to work, wages required, number of hours, hours preferred, transportation, and child- and adult-care requirements. Check which techniques the individual will use to find work. Ideally, the person should use all techniques. Enter comments about difficulties the individual is likely to encounter and about a strategy for overcoming these problems.

You and your clients must develop an understanding of why and how they plan to accomplish their goals. The signatures and corresponding dates acknowledge the involvement of both parties in this planning process and commit each person to implementing the actions set out in the *IEP*.

## **Step 6—Summarize Participant's Progress**

When you finish Step 5, turn the *IEP* over to the back panel and continue with Step 6.

A summary is included in the assessment device to enable you and the client to update the plan in light of the client's progress. There are four sections: one for the initial interview with the participant and three for subsequent reviews. The colors used in each section are the same as those used in Steps 3 and 4.

In this section, indicate how well the individual has progressed by certain dates. Four items should be evaluated for each review. These include progress toward goal, progress in acquiring basic skills, progress in acquiring occupational skills, and adequacy of support services. Each of these four items is rated on a scale of 1 (inadequate) to 5 (excellent). Space is provided for comments about each of the four items. If the participant has achieved a goal, note this in the comment section.

## **Summary**

The *Individual Employment Plan* enhances a partnership between the individual and the professional. The tool assesses a person's employability and monitors progress in improving employability.