



Increasing Employment

Monterey/San Benito County
Continuum of Care

2019

Executive Order 13828 (4/10/2018)

- Title: **Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility**
- The policy of Federal Government is to reform the welfare system of the United States to empower people consistent with the Principles of Economic Mobility, which include (among others):
 - Improve employment outcomes and economic independence (including by strengthening existing work requirements for work-capable people and introducing new work requirements when legally permissible);
 - Promote strong social networks as a way of sustainably escaping poverty (including through work and marriage);
 - Address the challenges of populations that may particularly struggle to find and maintain employment (including single parents, formerly incarcerated individuals, the homeless, substance abusers, individuals with disabilities, and disconnected youth);
 - Etc.

HUD Priority #5

Increasing employment

- Employment provides people experiencing homelessness with income to afford housing.
- Employment also improves recovery outcomes for individuals with mental illness or addiction.
- CoCs and CoC-funded projects should work with local employment agencies and employers to prioritize training and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.
- CoC's should also promote partnerships with public and private organizations that promote employment.

Criteria for Scoring

- Demonstrate through a **written agreement a partnership with a state or local workforce development board** that includes prioritized access to employment opportunities or co-enrollment in workforce and homeless assistance programs for people experiencing homelessness;
- **Identify steps the CoC has taken to promote partnerships and access to employment opportunities with private employers and private employment organizations**, including steps such as holding job fairs, outreach to employers, and partnering with staffing agencies;
- Demonstrate through a **written agreement a partnership with a local education or training organization that includes prioritized access** to education and training opportunities for people experiencing homelessness;
- Demonstrate that the CoC is **working with public and private organizations to provide meaningful employment opportunities for residents of permanent supportive housing**; and
- Demonstrate that the CoC is **taking steps to increase employment opportunities and employment income among people experiencing homelessness**, e.g., training provider organizations on increasing employment or creating incentives for employment.

Steps CoCs Take to Promote Employment and Community Engagement

1. The CoC **TRAINS provider organization staff on connecting program participants and people experiencing homelessness with education and job training opportunities.**
2. The CoC **TRAINS provider organization staff on facilitating informal employment opportunities for program participants** and people experiencing homelessness (e.g., babysitting, housekeeping, food delivery).
3. The CoC **TRAINS provider organization staff on connecting program participants with formal employment opportunities.**
4. The CoC works with organizations to create volunteer opportunities for program participants.
5. The CoC works with community organizations to create opportunities for civic participation for people experiencing homelessness (e.g., townhall forums, meeting with public officials).
6. Provider organizations within the CoC have incentives for employment and volunteering.
7. The CoC **TRAINS provider organization staff on helping program participants budget and maximize their income to maintain stability in permanent housing.**

Connecting Program Participants and People Experiencing Homelessness With Education and Job Training Opportunities



Apply a "Housing First" Model to Employment

- Address employment right away
- Take a strengths-based approach
- Question assumptions
- Tailor assistance
- Ensure that case management is trauma-informed
- Cultivate relationships with employers and employment programs



Broaden Thinking on How Employment = Stability



What else?

Systematize Employment Assistance

Develop an agency-level process for helping people with employment

Create employment plans for each client

Create a centralized directory of resources and contacts

Track Outcomes



Navigating Benefits and Employment

- Be aware of the impact that work income can have on your client's eligibility for benefits, as well as the impact on the amount they may receive.
- BUT don't assume that someone receiving benefits can't work! There are ways to ensure that someone can both receive income and continue to receive benefits – be sure to consult with an expert.

Useful Tool: Calculator created by the VA to determine how employment income can impact the receipt of SSI and SSDI

<https://soarworks.prainc.com/article/income-benefits-calculator>

Checklist

Job Search Support



- Resume writing
- Give computer access to search
- Review postings together
- Interview preparation
- What else?**

Connections to Programs & People



- Vocational training programs
- Academic programs
- Internships
- Mentors
- What else?**

Financial Assistance



- Clothing for interview and work
- Transportation
- Childcare
- What else?**

Help Addressing Barriers



- Lack of ID
- Criminal record
- Immigration status
- Maintaining benefits
- Accommodations for disabilities
- Access to behavioral health services
- What else?**

Program Models for Connecting Program Participants With Formal and Informal Employment Opportunities



Some Program Models to Consider

- **Adult education bridge programs** connect participants to post-secondary education and training programs by equipping them with basic academic and English language skills. Bridge programs are condensed to make learning as efficient as possible and are flexibly scheduled to meet individual needs.
- **Alternative staffing organizations (ASOs)** broker temporary entry-level job placements for individuals with diverse barriers to employment-- including individuals at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, individuals with criminal backgrounds, and individuals with a disabling condition. ASOs aim to develop a quality ready-to-work labor force for employers while helping jobseekers learn workplace skills, build experience and confidence, earn an employment record, and leverage temporary placements to permanent jobs.
- **Contextualized instruction and curriculum development** are practices in the field of adult literacy and adult basic education that involve designing academic skills lessons using illustrations and materials that are relevant in the context of an adult learner's interests, employment goals, and everyday life. Learner confidence and persistence may increase when literacy and numeracy instruction is relevant to learners' practical goals, and when students are given the opportunity to apply what they learn.

Some Program Models to Consider (cont.)

- **Customized employment (CE)** is a person-centered process for opening employment opportunities by tailoring job positions to the participant's strengths and abilities that also meet an employer's needs. CE helps participants take the lead in placements and customization options, foster exploration and discovery of employment options. Furthermore, CE provides a range of supportive services such as benefits counseling.
- **Earn and learn opportunities** offer work-based learning opportunities with employers as training paths to employment. While classroom time can be important, individuals can quickly learn skills where hands-on experience in a work environment is integrated with classroom learning. Job-driven training programs aim to include work-based learning opportunities that best suit their participants. These can include paid internships, pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.
- **Supported employment, known as Individualized Placement Support (IPS)**, is the standard evidence-based model for helping individuals with a mental illness find and keep a regular paid job in the competitive labor market with at least a minimum wage. IPS holds that the best way to support self-sufficiency for people with a mental illness is to support rapid entry to the competitive labor market integrated with support services as soon as the participant feels ready.

Some Program Models to Consider (cont.)

- **Navigators** (direct client services or staff support/ombudsman models) this innovation's goal is to grant individuals and families experiencing homelessness to better access benefits and training. The direct client service model utilizes specialized case managers, called Navigators, to provide individualized guidance to individuals experiencing homelessness that bridges the cultural divide among service systems, helps clients articulate their needs, and provides a means to self-sufficiency. In addition, Navigators play an advocacy role for their clients within homeless, workforce, and other systems. The staff support/ombudsman model focuses on developing new and ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive, and integrated access to services, creating systemic change, and expanding the workforce development system's capacity to serve customers with disabilities and employers.
- **Sector based training and employment strategies** engage multiple employers and other industry leaders in the development of industry-specific training programs linked to employment opportunities and workforce needs in a sector. This approach offers participants education and hands-on training to match in-demand job openings in a specific occupation or industry sector.
- **Social enterprises (SEs)** are businesses that intentionally hire individuals who face barriers to employment, while maintaining financial viability. They seek to improve the earnings of people they employ and, as appropriate, graduate from certain government benefits and services. By developing workers' skills and providing them with resume-building experience, SEs prepare workers to move into permanent long-term employment.

Some Program Models to Consider (cont.)

- **Subsidized employment** provides an employer with a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing an individual. The participant is paid wages and receives the same benefits as any other employee doing similar work. Generally subsidized employment is a transitional approach that provides immediate earned income and real work experience with public, private, and non-profit employers.
- **Transitional Jobs (TJ)** seek to overcome employment obstacles by using time-limited, wage-paying jobs that combine real work, skill development, and supportive services in order to transition participants successfully into the labor market. TJ provides stability and a stepping-stone to unsubsidized employment for people facing barriers to employment.
- **Work-First** is based on an overall philosophy that any job is a good job and that the best way to succeed in the labor market is by developing work habits and skills on the job rather than in a classroom. Work First programs seek to move people into unsubsidized jobs as quickly as possible, and generally begin with a job search for most participants, using the labor market itself as the test of employability. For those who are not able to find jobs right away, Work First provides additional activities geared toward addressing those factors which impeded employment. These activities might include education, training, or other options. These activities are generally short term, closely monitored, and either combined with or immediately followed by additional job search.

Some Program Practices to Consider

- **Co-location of workforce staff at homeless assistance programs** and vice versa can be used to ensure that vulnerable families and adults are connected to the full array of assistance they need to achieve self-sufficiency. Developing mechanisms to share client-level data can help both systems evaluate their performance in minimizing homelessness, increasing self-sufficiency, refining interventions, and improving the targeting of scarce resources. Local WIA providers can co-locate employment services within homeless service systems as well as seek opportunities to cross-train workforce and homelessness staff.
- **Intensive supports** with individualized services are often needed, especially early in the transition out of homelessness and initial employment. While individual needs vary greatly across the spectrum of those who experience or are at-risk of homelessness, it is important to be able to provide intensive supports as needed and in a timely manner.
- **Client-centered and trauma informed care** approaches focus on tailoring services and staff behavior to the needs of trauma survivors. Many individuals, especially women, experience homelessness after physical or sexual abuse. The experience of losing one's home or living in a shelter can be traumatizing. Individuals who have experienced trauma may have hidden psychological or physical triggers that may pose challenges to program participation and gaining employment. A trauma informed or focused approach to service delivery can help programs effectively meet the needs of vulnerable individuals.

Some Program Practices to Consider (cont.)

- **Engaged and supportive employers** are essential to the success of employment programs serving people experiencing homelessness. Strong partnerships among the public workforce system, education providers, and employers in key sectors appear to be critical for improving employment and earnings outcomes for workers. Employment programs serving individuals experiencing homelessness ensure the employer and participants needs are met, often coaching both about how to be successful in their respective roles.
- **Holistic programs** meet the comprehensive needs of participants by providing direct services and an interaction with multiple public systems including income supports and food security, Veteran services, homeless services, and others. Case managers ensure participants' needs are met in a timely and comprehensive manner.
- **Providing flexible funds for training, licensure, testing, transportation, rent, etc.** is a key component of successful models for employment and training of job seekers who experience homelessness. Costs related to entry into employment that are not covered by any benefits program, can add up to more than a family living on a very limited budget can afford. Programs need to be able to access a pool of flexible funds to quickly address these needs.

Some Program Practices to Consider (cont.)

- **Integration of employment services with housing and human services is important.** Coordination and integration of employment within the homeless assistance program will achieve better results than stand-alone employment and training programs. This occurs both during the planning phase and during service delivery.
- **Reducing requirements** for multiple visits and compression of services sequencing will significantly improve program completion and employment results. People experiencing homelessness have limited transportation resources so multiple visits to complete intake, assessment and enrollment processes are infeasible. Reducing the number of steps and adjusting the documentation requirements also allows homeless individuals to spend more time in job search and training.

Diverse Barriers to Employment

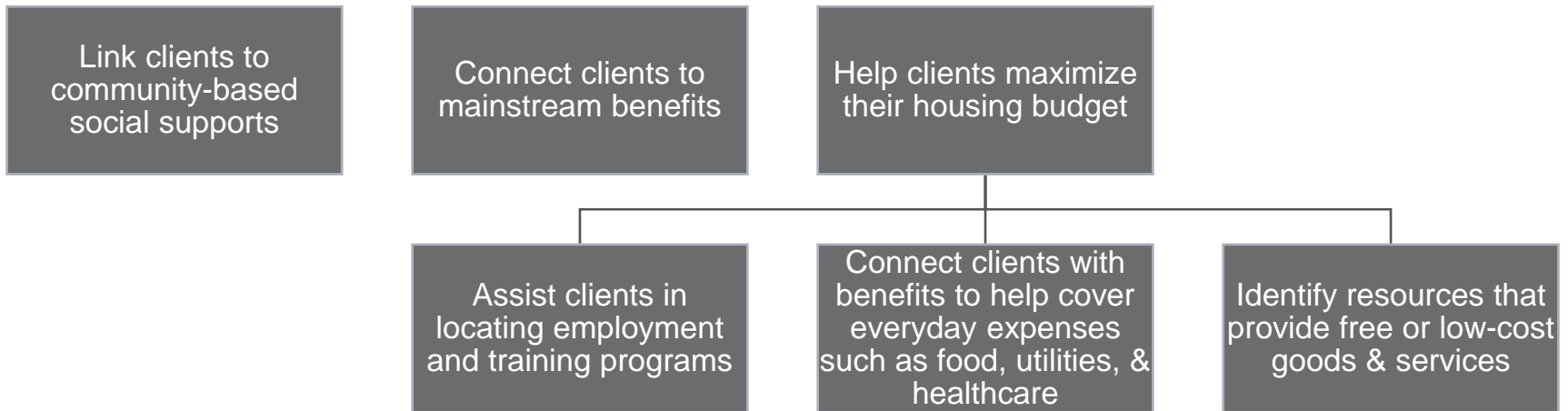
(by target population)

- **Families with Children** – provide access to affordable childcare, family management training, occupational skills training, and flexible employment options, in addition to income and housing supports
- **Youth** – help develop leadership skills, engage in positive relationships with adults and practice appropriate workplace behavior, and choose a career pathway that works best for them
- **Older Adults** – help them understand their employment potential, and tailor training and employment options to their needs
- **Veterans** – draw from their previous military work experience and the occupational training, teamwork, and leadership skills they attained there, help manage trauma and the transition back to the civilian workforce
- **Individuals with a Criminal Record and People Leaving Prison** – help participants navigate legal obstacles, tailor job search activities and consider employer incentives, and provide follow-along supports
- **Individuals with Disabling Conditions, Substance Abuse Issues, and Health Issues** – provide streamlined access to permanent supportive housing, quality health care, and benefits counseling, provide the necessary accommodations in both the employment program and the workplace, assist with anti-discrimination efforts, help participants navigate the demands of both work and health, integrate employment services with a treatment regimen including collaboration with addiction counselors and drug testing, foster social support, and work with participants to overcome substance use issues on the job.

Helping Program Participants Budget and Maximize Their Income to Maintain Stability In Permanent Housing



How Can You Support Client Housing Stability?



Building Your Client's Support Network

Mainstream Resources

- Benefits advocates & enrollment assistance
- Legal aid to assist with pending legal issues
- Food assistance programs
- Employment/workforce development
- Subsidized mass transit program
- Free community college, literacy, GED, & ESL programs
- Credit restoration programs

Community-Based Supports

- Faith community if religious affiliation
- Identity-based community (LGBTQ, ethnic-based CBOs, & social groups)
- Programs for households with aging adults (adult day care, senior centers, in-home supportive services)
- Programs for households with children & youth (child care, after-school programs, tutoring)
- Nutrition education & counseling programs
- Support groups (single parenting, loss/grief, recovery)

Tips for Linking Clients to Resources



Develop list of resources for different household types, continue to add new resources developed through work with clients, & identify resource gaps



Assess eligibility & barriers to enrollment at initial intake/case management meeting



Use online applications, whenever possible



Accompany client to first appointments



Invite eligibility workers for multiple programs to hold on-site sessions, monthly enrollment nights, drop in hours, etc.

Action Planning

- **Short-term:** What steps can you take in the next month? Think about changes you can make, questions you can ask, and planning you can begin.
- **Long-term:** What steps can your program take over the next 6-12 months?
- **Do you need support to accomplish these action steps?**

Resources

USICH Handout: Effective Practices and Program Models for Employment and Training

- https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Partnership_Summit_Effective_Practices.pdf

Working to End Homelessness Toolkit (focus on employment)

- <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives/field-building/weh-toolkit/>

Strengthening Public Workforce & Homeless Service Systems Collaboration

- <https://nationalinitiatives.issuelab.org/resource/systems-work-better-together-strengthening-public-workforce-homeless-service-systems-collaboration.html>

NAEH “Overcoming Employment Barriers”

- <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/overcoming-employment-barriers/>