

THE INSTITUTE BRIEF

The 30-Day Job Development Action Plan

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Introduction

Finding and landing the right job can be a long and complex endeavor. Many job seekers have found that breaking the job search down into a series of small, workable tasks makes this challenging process much more manageable. This approach gives the job seeker agency 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 Job Development Action Plan.

What is it?

A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan is a month-long action plan geared toward finding a job. It includes tasks to accomplish in that month, due dates for each task, and the names of people who are responsible for completing those tasks. Every 30 days, job seekers and their supporters review and update the plan together. The job seeker, their employment specialist, and others in their support network (including family, friends, and other support professionals) can all be involved in writing, reviewing, and implementing the 30-Day Job Development Action Plan.

In this brief, you will learn to:

- ▶ Break down the job search process into a series of workable tasks
- ▶ Develop a plan for employment that is driven by the job seeker
- ▶ Include the job seeker’s personal and professional networks in the job search

Why write one?

Many employment agencies require the job seekers they support to have a plan for finding a job. This is also true of agencies that support

people with disabilities. Usually, the required plan has a long-term focus. It may include a general statement about what type of position the job seeker wants and some basic steps for how to find that kind of work. 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 they can sometimes focus too much on the services that the agency provides rather than on the steps the job seeker can take toward their job goal. A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan fills in these gaps.

Here are some advantages of using a **30-Day Job Development Action Plan**:

- ▶ All job seekers, with and without disabilities, should be in control of their own job search. The job seeker should drive the plan, and the process should be empowering for them. A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan is one way to help accomplish this.
- ▶ The plan keeps everyone on track and focused on the job search.
- ▶ It ensures that specific job-search tasks are accomplished each week.
- ▶ The job seeker and their support network become more 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 been found.
- ▶ You can use the 30-Day Job Development Action Plan as a part of a required monthly summary of individual services for state agency staff, families, and/or other support professionals.

Who is it for?

A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan is useful for anyone who is looking for a job. Some employment specialists feel solely responsible for finding a job for the people they are working with—especially if those job seekers have more complex disabilities. But each job seeker must also be responsible for their job search to be successful. When the job seeker participates as much as possible and is involved in all aspects of their job search, they will take ownership, feel better about the search, and will be more likely to find a good job match.

Since most people find jobs through networking, writing a 30-Day Job Development Action Plan is a team effort. The job seeker, their support network, and their employment specialist can all be involved in writing, reviewing, and implementing the plan. If the only people involved are the job seeker and the employment specialist, it will take much longer to find a well-matched job.

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 tasks outlined for that month. For example, a job seeker might ask a sibling to help write a resume or to drive them around the neighborhood to see what types of businesses are in the area.

When do you do it?

A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan is most effective when it's created during the first few meetings between an employment specialist and a job seeker. That way, everyone can understand that this is a team effort. You can update the plan as often as necessary, but at a minimum you should update the plan every 30 days until the job seeker has settled into their new job. Even after a job seeker starts a job, it is important to write at least one more 30-Day Job Development Action 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?

A 30-Day Job Development Action Plan addresses both short- and long-term goals. Before writing the plan, you and the job seeker should write a long-term career goal at the top of the page, so it is clear to everyone what the job seeker is striving for. Together, you can also describe the job seeker's skills and strengths at the top of the page. Then, you can discuss overall goals and smaller tasks and set time frames to complete these steps.

As we go through each step, let's take a look at a case example about a job seeker "Chris". This is Chris's first 30-Day Job Development Action Plan, which is focused on career exploration.

30-Day Job Development Action Plans and Customized Employment

Workforce and disability professionals may use a set of strategies called *Customized Employment*. This process involves matching a specific job seeker's strength(s) with a particular employer's needs. You can use a 30-Day Job Development Action Plan as a tool when using Customized Employment to promote independence and help job seekers find jobs they want. For more information on Customized Employment, check out the National Center on Workforce and Disability at www.onestops.info.

Case Example: 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 his speech 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 find a paid part-time job as an assistant coach in baseball, football, or soccer. Chris and Sue weren't sure what types of opportunities were available in this area, so they made a 30-Day Job Development Action Plan to manage the career exploration activities.

- ▶ **Job Seeker:** Chris
- ▶ **Plan Dates:** February 1 — March 1
- ▶ **Career 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

STEP 1: Make a list of tasks.

The first step in writing the plan is coming up with a list of tasks to complete. These tasks should be:

- ▶ Things that can be completed within the 30-day timeframe
- ▶ Very specific, so everyone knows exactly what they agreed to do
- ▶ Divided up among the job seeker, employment specialist, and others
- ▶ Measurable, so that it is clear whether they have been achieved

Task
Make a list of the schools in Chris's neighborhood that he can get to and any contacts he has there.
Call people on the list Chris develops to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches (not necessarily so that they will hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist).
Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in their athletic departments.
Talk to football, soccer, and baseball coaches at Matt's school about assistant coach positions and let Chris know the results.

“Mapping out the community where your job seeker is interested in working is a great strategy for identifying potential employers, and ensures you target employers that the job seeker can get to more easily”

STEP 2: Assign a person to each task.

The second step in writing the plan is assigning a person who will be responsible for each task.

The job seeker must be responsible for completing some tasks each month. If they need support with a task, they should choose someone from their network to work on the tasks with them. The employment specialist should not be the only person helping the job seeker with their job search.

The employment specialist can guide the job seeker and their team to come up with steps to accomplish within the 30-day time frame.

Each task should have a person assigned to complete it. This person should be assigned based on their ability and time available to assist in getting that task done. Some tasks may need more than one person assigned to them. In those cases, choose a primary person to be responsible for each task and list the names of others involved.

Task	Who is Responsible?
Make a list of the schools in Chris's neighborhood that he can get to and any contacts he has there	Chris (with help/input from parents)
Call people on the list Chris develops to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches (not necessarily so that they will hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist)	Sue and Chris
Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in their athletic departments	Sue
Talk to football, soccer, and baseball coaches at Matt's school about assistant coach positions and let Chris know the results	Matt (Chris's brother)

STEP 3: Assign due dates to each task.

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. 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.

Task	Who is Responsible?	Due Date
Make a list of the schools in Chris's neighborhood that he can get to and any contacts he has there	Chris (with help/input from parents)	Feb. 8
Call people on the list Chris develops to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches (not necessarily so that they will hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist)	Sue and Chris	Feb. 15
Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in their athletic departments	Sue	Feb. 21
Talk to football, soccer, and baseball coaches at Matt's school about assistant coach positions and let Chris know the results	Matt (Chris's brother)	Feb. 21

STEP 4: Sign and share the plan.

The fourth and 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 it seriously. It is also a chance to make sure that everyone really understands what they need to do that month.

Some job seekers find it is helpful to highlight their tasks to make them easier to track. The employment specialist may need to work with the job seeker to break down a task and write smaller steps in their date book. For example, if a job seeker needs to call contacts from the schools in the area to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches, the employment specialist may break it down to one phone call per day, so it is not overwhelming.

Task	Who is Responsible?	Due Date
Make a list of the schools in Chris's neighborhood that he can get to and any contacts he has there	Chris (with help/input from parents)	Feb. 8
Call people on the list Chris develops to see if they ever hire paid assistant coaches (not necessarily so that they will hire Chris, but just to see if the positions even exist)	Sue and Chris	Feb. 15
Contact local colleges to see what types of jobs they hire for in their athletic departments	Sue	Feb. 21
Talk to football, soccer, and baseball coaches at Matt's school about assistant coach positions and let Chris know the results	Matt (Chris's brother)	Feb. 21

Signatures:

Job Seeker: Chris

Employment Specialist: Sue

Parents: Samantha (Mom), Linda (Mom)

Brother: Matt

“Consistent and frequent communication with team members, including family helps everyone stay up to date on the progress of the job search and enables them to help when it is appropriate”

Here are some other ideas for tasks that each team member might do:

Tasks Job Seekers can do

- ▶ Talk to friends and family members about their career goals and interests
- ▶ Email interesting job leads to their employment specialist
- ▶ Prepare to write a resume by bringing in a list of past jobs and dates of employment
- ▶ Find five online job listings that look interesting
- ▶ Ask about the application process and available positions at places they would like to work
- ▶ Research a company online
- ▶ Make a list of 3-5 people who might be willing to serve as personal or professional references, and call them to ask if they would be willing to speak on their behalf
- ▶ Give copies of their resume to people who are acting as references
- ▶ Call three employers of interest and ask for a business tour or informational interview
- ▶ Take a tour of a business
- ▶ Make a list of questions to ask on an informational interview
- ▶ Go on an informational interview with pre-planned questions for the employer

Tasks Employment Specialists can do

- ▶ Contact appropriate employers they already have relationships with or on behalf of the job seeker (keeping job seeker's interests, skills, and preferences in mind)
- ▶ Call the job seeker's references (with permission) to see what they will say to an employer if called for a reference
- ▶ Help update the job seeker's resume and discuss different resume options (functional, chronological, video/visual)
- ▶ Help the job seeker create a cover letter, and discuss how to customize it for different positions
- ▶ Help the job seeker identify specific employers to target
- ▶ Look at local labor market information to gain insight into hiring trends, emerging businesses, and industry information
- ▶ Keep team members on track with assigned tasks in the 30-Day Job Development Action Plan
- ▶ Review the 30-Day Job Development Action Plan and revise with new/adjusted activities/tasks

Tasks Other Support People can do

- ▶ Use their own personal and professional connections to network on behalf of the job seeker
- ▶ Proofread the job seeker's resume, and make suggestions for improvement
- ▶ Assist the job seeker in reading online job postings to see if they would be a good fit
- ▶ Help the job seeker identify local businesses that might be a good fit for them
- ▶ Practice interviewing with the job seeker
- ▶ Accompany the job seeker on a shopping trip to buy interview attire and accessories
- ▶ Practice traveling in/around the community

Chris and his supporters learned a lot in the first 30 days. Now, Chris is ready to work on his next 30-Day Job Development Action Plan. This plan is focused on employer outreach.

Case Example: 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 employment avenues. She 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 Chris liked about coaching (e.g., YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, after-school programs, camps, gyms). They decided that a job at the front desk of a sports-related business or working with people around athletic pursuits would be great. Together, Chris and Sue devised a plan to look for employment in these areas.

- **Job Seeker:** Chris
- **Plan Dates:** March 1 — April 1
- **Career 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, football, and soccer; very social; great around children and teens; likes to give advice

Task	Who is Responsible?	Due Date
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	Chris (with help/input from parents)	Mar. 7
Get the name and phone number of the manager of the health club Matt belongs to and information on the YMCA where he plays basketball	Matt (Chris's brother)	Mar. 10
Call the people on the list of businesses Chris develops and call the contacts that Matt gives Chris	Chris and Sue	Mar. 14
Visit 4 places where Chris is interested in working and see if they are accessible for him	Chris (with Sue or other support person)	Mar. 21
Re-contact some of the athletic departments Sue talked to the previous month to set up an informational interview for Chris	Sue	Mar. 21

Here is a template you can use to create a 30-Day Job Development Action Plan with your team.

► Job Seeker:

► Plan Dates:

► Career Goal:

► Skills and Strengths:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Due Date

Signatures:

Job Seeker: _____

Employment Specialist: _____

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 Job Development Action Plan makes the process much more manageable. It also creates a team 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.

Resources

Person-Centered Planning

[Charting the LifeCourse Daily Life and Employment Tools](#)

Fosters person-centered and holistic approach to planning and goal setting for employment

[Developing a Positive Personal Profile](#)

Comprehensive inventory of job seekers attributes that can be used to support job exploration, career development and successful employment

[National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems \(NCAPPS\)](#)

Offers resources including education and awareness, and technical assistance and training to build provider capacity for providing person-centered practices

Job Development

[Assisting Job Seekers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Guide for Employment Consultants. Bringing Employment First to Scale, Issue No. 14](#)

[Employment and Employment Supports: A Guide to Ensuring Informed Choice for Individuals with Disabilities. Tools for Inclusion, Issue No. 31](#)

[ThinkWork](#)

Hub offering wide range of resources related to employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

[American Job-Centers](#)

Provide wide range of assistance to job seekers including training, career counseling, and employment-related services

[Association of People Supporting Employment First \(APSE\)](#)

National membership organization supporting Employment First. Offers wide range of professional development opportunities for employment specialists, job developers and coaches

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