EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT

# Target Assessment: Barriers & Assets Identification

## Reminders for Discussing a Member's Barriers and Assets to Employment

1. Explain to the member the purpose of the discussion is to better understand what is getting in the way of successful employment and what assets they bring to any job.

2. As in every stage of the process, the individual is in charge. Encourage the member to invite whomever they would like to attend these meetings and determine where the meetings will take place.

3. It is possible to proceed with conversations about the barriers and assets without the member being able to state a career of choice. If the employment goal has not been defined, it will be treated as a barrier and addressed through the career exploration process.

4. Become familiar with the questions provided, so you don't rely on the questions as a form or checklist. Let it be a guide to generate conversation and additional questions. Individualize and personalize the questions. All information should be gathered in the context of the barriers and assets identification. The most natural way to start the discussion on barriers is to ask the individual, "What barriers would you like to discuss first?"

5. Put the focus on conversation and relationship building and not on filling out forms. Individuals who rely on multiple service providers and systems are inundated with forms and procedures. Every time they apply for a new benefit or program, there's a form to complete.

6. Ask the member, "If you were offered a job tomorrow, would you be ready to start? If not, then why? What would stop you from going to work?" Another approach to initiating the discussion of barriers is to ask: "Imagine that you have accepted a job and are starting on Monday. What would need to be in place for you to be successful? What are some problems that might arise the first day, week, and month on the job?" If the member has worked since the onset of the disability, and it was not successful, ask if he/she is comfortable sharing details of that experience. "What happened to make it an unsuccessful attempt at work?"

7. The goal of the Barrier & Assets Identification meetings is for the member to share <u>their perceived</u> barriers and assets to employment. Their view may differ from that of other

people such as service providers, family members, or advocates. Avoid comments or questions that imply judgment. Every member's situation is unique.

8. It is imperative to understand how the impairment is a barrier to employment. Focus on the impairment and not the disability.

9. This is a <u>not a solution-driven meeting</u>(s). Gather information, and avoid the temptation to solve problems and/or discuss solutions. If you start to focus on the strategies, you are not listening to the person. Avoid discussions regarding strategies for managing, reducing, or eliminating barriers. If there is an emergency barrier that needs to be addressed, assist the member through that barrier. For example, if the individual is extremely anxious about his/her benefits situation and can't proceed until their fears have been addressed, provide the necessary information to the member.

10. The Barriers & Assets Identification process can take 2-3 meetings. The outcome of the meetings is an in-depth understanding of the barriers and assets to employment as perceived and explained by the individual.

11. The written Barriers & Assets report will be a <u>snapshot or temporary picture</u> of the member's current situation. Barriers do change and can change quickly. Resist the temptation to revisit barriers as they change during the Barriers & Assets meetings. A more appropriate time to revisit changing barriers would be during the upcoming SDEP meetings.