

5.1 Introduction

Under W-2, assessment is the process of gathering the needed information to develop an Employability Plan customized for the participant that will result in either a successful employment outcome which starts the individual on a career path; or, if appropriate, a path to eligibility for SSI and/or SSDI benefits.

Certain types of assessment are required for all W-2 applicants and participants, including:

- Informal Assessment; ([see 5.2](#))and
- Educational Needs Assessment; ([see 5.3](#)) and
- Career Assessment. ([see 5.4](#))

The information gathered through these required processes will assist the FEP in identifying whether additional Formal Assessments are needed to develop the participant's EP.

No change to remainder of 5.1

5.1.1 Assessment at Application

During the application process and prior to placing the individual in a W-2 placement, the W-2 agency:

- Must work with the applicant to complete an informal assessment ([see 5.2](#));
- Must work with the applicant to complete an educational needs assessment ([see 5.3](#));
and
- Must work with the applicant to start the process of career assessment; ([see 5.4](#)) and
- Must obtain the results of any career assessments, vocational evaluation/assessments, or formal assessments if available from prior W-2 episodes ([see 4.6.3](#)).

Using the assessment information gathered at the application, the worker may require the applicant to participate in up-front job search activities as a condition of eligibility ([see 2.9.2](#)).

No change to remainder of 5.1.1

5.4 Career Assessment (New Section)

5.4.1 Career Assessment Overview

Career assessment is a broad spectrum of assessment tools that W-2 agencies, applicants, and participants use to obtain greater awareness about an individual's work styles, skills, and interests. Results can be used to define a career path, assign meaningful activities, highlight strengths, identify training needs, and match the individual to employment opportunities.

More than one tool may be required to capture the three required elements:

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- *Work styles* – Refers to an individual's patterns of action or conduct, such as attendance, punctuality, appropriate appearance, ability to work with others, obeying rules, following directions, and completing tasks. Work style-focused career assessments can demonstrate the individual's attitudes and job readiness.
- *Skills* – Refers to an individual's skills or understanding of specific tasks related to employment, like cooking or computer programming. Skills-focused career assessments can include knowledge, aptitude, and ability. Skills can relate to a particular occupation, as typically listed in a job announcement to describe the tasks of a position.
- *Interests* – Refers to an individual's likes of particular objects, activities, and values using the theory that people with the same career tend to have the same interests. Interest-focused career assessments help individuals identify work-related interests and find the types of careers that match. The results can be used to help individuals learn which careers they are most likely to enjoy.

Do not use educational needs assessment tools in place of career assessment tools. Use educational needs assessment tools in tandem with career assessment tools to identify the education and training needed to allow individuals to obtain employment that fits their work styles, skills, and interests. The results of both assessments complement each other and inform the EP development and assignment of meaningful activities. (See [5.1.2](#))

5.4.2 Career Assessment at Application

FEPs must use informal assessment information when determining the initial placement for W-2 applicants. (See [7.1](#)) While career assessment is a component of the informal assessment, FEPs are required to develop career goals with all W-2 participants using the information available at initial placement.

Career assessment must be offered to all applicants and assigned as an activity on the initial EP. If an applicant is new to W-2 or is re-applying and does not have a career assessment documented, a career assessment must be scheduled within 30 days of application and completed within 30 days of placement. If an applicant is not ready to identify a specific career field when the EP is initially developed, the focus of the program employment goal may be broadened to a field of interest or an industry sector. (See [6.1.1](#))

Because career assessment is not an eligibility requirement, the FEP must never delay eligibility determination and initial placement pending completion of a career assessment tool. The placement decision must be made using the best available information during the application timeframe. (See [1.4.4](#)) The EP and W-2 placement may be adjusted later, if needed, when the career assessment results are received.

If an applicant has completed a career assessment that identifies work styles, skills, and interests, and wants to remain on the career path indicated by that assessment, or is already working in a career field available in the local labor market, another career assessment does not need to be done.

5.4.3 Using and Documenting Career Assessment Results

Career assessments and career exploration tools are used to help identify sectors, career pathways, training needs, and family-sustaining employment goals that match the results of the assessed work styles, skills, and interests. Career assessment tools can be administered throughout ongoing case management as an individual's skills, goals, and work readiness may change.

As an EP is developed, it is important to consider how the program employment goals fit into the applicant's or participant's longer-term career plan. Many industries have career pathways that enable employees to start in lower-skilled jobs and progress into increasingly higher paying jobs through training. The EP should identify any goals that are part of the individual's longer-term career plan. (See [6.1.1](#))

If a current participant does not have a career assessment documented, the career assessment must be scheduled within 30 days of an EP review and completed before the next six-month EP review.

Assign Career Assessment as a component activity in CARES on screen WPCS. (See [6.4.1](#))

- Assign Activity Code UC (Up-front Career Planning) for applicants who receive up-front career planning services geared toward assessment of their career interests and guidance in the career planning process. This activity must be ended at time of W-2 placement.
- Assign Activity Code CE (Career Planning & Counseling) for participants who receive career planning and counseling services geared towards assessment of their career interests and guidance in the career planning process.
- Assign Activity Code OC (Occupational Testing) for participants engaged in occupational testing related to employment. For example, some employers may require a typing test for a clerical position.

The FEP must discuss career assessment results with the individual and document on CARES screens WPJS (EP-1) and WPAS (EP-2). Individuals must be given the opportunity to provide input on their W-2 placement and the activities that are assigned as part of the EP.

PIN-level comments must reflect discussion of career assessment results with the applicant or participant. At a minimum, the FEP must document: assessment type and results, including identified work styles, skills and interests; career fields for the individual to pursue; and any training that might be needed to match the individual to employment opportunities in the identified career field.

Scan assessment results into the participant's Electronic Case File (ECF) using code WVAS.