

## What's Customized About It?

Customized Employment (CE) represents a specific set of techniques and strategies that differentiate it from other forms of community employment. CE is based on the fundamental elements of Supported Employment, but differs in

important ways. CE is not "better" than other approaches, but there are circumstances when CE is a preferred option, especially when an individual faces multiple and/or complex barriers to attaining meaningful work. In order to identify

correctly where Customized Employment is used, one or more of the following Best or Emerging Practices should be utilized. These indicators are not from policy but emerged from our approach to CE. These may not align with other state or federal guidelines.

### IT'S CUSTOMIZED

Vocational Profiles, Career Plans, and Job Development all stem from the findings of Discovery or Discovering Personal Genius (DPG). Care is taken not to jump to employment solutions. DPG is not Person-Centered Planning but owes much to that groundbreaking approach. DPG is much more focused on work, skills, tasks, Vocational Themes, and economic development.

Discovery/DPG begins in the person's home and neighborhood. Specific activities are conducted that reveal Vocational Themes, tasks/skills and interests; interviews with family, friends, and business people refine potential contributions. DPG isn't a casual conversation over a Coke. DPG is a time-limited, team-based, activity-driven process leading to jobs that match the person and provide opportunities to learn and advance. If you are going to the Humane Society, the Mall, or the Movie Theater you are not breaking the surface of opportunity. Ask this question: "Has this been routinely done by people before?" If so, go where others have not gone. Even in the smallest towns, the breadth of DPG activities has not been exhausted.

There are unlimited ways to make a living in this world. There's no excuse for developing more jobs bagging groceries, shredding paper, or cleaning toilets (all noble work) UNLESS these jobs match the vocational profile (and they rarely do). Many of these stereotypical jobs are high turnover and lack natural support. Avoid them. Avoid retail and box stores. Seek out artisanal small businesses, where skilled workers do unique work. Self-Employment is an option, too.

Job Development circumvents traditional approaches. Use connections, networking, creative research and employer engagement, to establish the potential value of an individual's work and their fit with the company and to create a job. During DPG, interview others with careers & businesses that match the emerging Vocational Themes. Follow their Supply and Customer Chains to discover a hidden world of people making novel products, delivering unique services, using interesting technology & tools. Don't suggest you "aren't creative;" let the process take you to job creation opportunities. Explore the options of amalgamated funding, SSA Work Incentives, microloans, et al. to create & stabilize solid jobs.

Informational Interviewing and job analyses clarify how a new employee addresses a company's unmet needs. Interest-based negotiation brings the employer & employee together. Arrange to have the employment seeker perform some tasks if there's an emerging job match. Engage the natural trainer and use Systematic Instruction to show how competent the individual, and you, are. Don't allow people to look incompetent. Copyright GHA 2015