

Discovery Profile

Profile Part II Guide

Section 1: This section targets the individual, family, home and neighborhood. It is an ideal area to begin both the process of discovery and the writing of the Discovery Profile. Be sure to focus on descriptiveness. The area that addresses typical routines may take as many as several pages to complete, depending upon the complexity of the routines.

1. *Participant and Family*

- a. **Brief summary based on Intake Interview:** *Compile a brief description -- 1 or 2 paragraphs -- of the individual based on the Intake Interview. Include the person's age, living situation, immediate family, employment status and other relevant information.*
- b. **Description of typical routines:** *This item describes what perhaps is the most defining aspect of people's lives -- what they do during a typical day. Look for information about what supports the individual needs, any specific strategies which the family uses to support the person to be more independent, and specific skills and contributions the individual may be demonstrating. You may want to have a weekend and week day description of routine and describe the activities that the person participates in including their free time. Questions or prompts such as "Tell me how this happens." or "Take me through a typical day from getting up to going to bed." will help you gather this information. This question is a crucial one to ask early on in the visit to the person's home because it will provide you with a gold mine of information and will provide insight about other questions to ask or identify other activities that you will want to observe at the house.*
- c. **Family (or staff, as appropriate) supports:** *This sections details the supports that various family members, including extended family and friends, provide to the individual in the course of daily living. Be specific across all domains of routine life activities. It is important to realize that this is not a plan for potential work related supports but rather a description of "what is" that will provide possibilities for future planning sessions.*
- d. **Family (Staff) and Personal Responsibilities:** *This section describes the realities and responsibilities that comprise the individual's and the family's lives. Pay particular attention to times that family members must leave for work or similar regular responsibilities as well as the routes they travel and whether they have others riding with them. Also, pay attention to various logistical chores and tasks performed, transportation schedules, family care responsibilities and other critically important aspects that must be accomplished.*
- e. **Physical and health related issues:** *Does the individual have any health factors that need to be considered in planning for employment? Are there any allergies? Does the person take meds at a specific time of day that make them drowsy? Are there any health restrictions to be considered when choosing future places of employment?*

Section 2: This section details the person's educational experiences and programming. It is not designed to be a comparative discussion in relation to other student's performance. Note that you will address items such as academics, community, and vocational topics that will be covered in other sections. Remember, this section addresses school, uniquely; the other sections address life outside of school.

2. Educational Experiences

- a. **Overall Educational Experiences:** *List the general academic experience the person had in school. Were they in an inclusive or in a self-contained class? Have they participated with the same class of students throughout school? Have they been served consistently by the same special education staff or has their education been disrupted by many moves from state to state and between school systems? List any relevant information about attendance. Were any particular accommodations that the individual used? This information can be obtained from school records, interview data and observations.*
- b. **Academic Programming:** *Describe specifics regarding course work, academic focus, areas of strengths and interests and other aspects of academic programming. Avoid a deficit-focused discussion but instead look for specific areas of success during the academic portion of the person's overall school experience.*
- c. **Community/Recreation Programming:** *What type of training or experiences did the person participate in re: community access? Describe the activity. Next describe how the person performed in these situations; what supports were provided; was there anything about their performance which indicated an interest, preference or dislike? Describe what you saw without making summary or judgment statements. If the person is learning to make purchases, describe what they purchased, how they communicate their choices and what supports are needed?*

What type of training or experiences did the person participate in regarding recreation or leisure activities? Describe the activities. Next describe how the person performed in these situations and what supports were provided. Was there anything about their performance which indicated an interest, preference or dislike? Describe what you saw without making summary or judgment statements.

- d. **Vocational Experiences and Programming:** *What type of vocational programming or instruction has the person participated in? "In his junior year of school he participated in a jobs class where a group of students with disabilities talked about social skills necessary to maintain employment." "During his last year of high school he rotated through 3 established job sites, lasting one week each, to gain more information about his preferences for work." "Once a week he went with a group of three other students to the Humane Society where they walked dogs with teacher supervision". Next describe how the person performed in these situations: What supports were provided? Was there anything about the person's performance which indicated an interest, preference or dislike? Describe what you saw without making summary or judgment statements. For example, don't say that he loved working with the animals; instead describe what you observed that lead you to make that assumption. Describe the environments where the person worked and describe the job tasks*

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they performed (Did anything about the job tasks, instruction, environment stand out as important? If so describe it. What did you learn about the person's contributions and skills (describe what you saw for performance). Were there conditions that seemed necessary or lead to the person being at their best in regard to routines or environments, the supports they needed? Describe the support the person did utilize such as a picture checklist to remind them to..., Describe the task/routine. Comment on how much support was provided and describe what was provided in terms of support? (Don't state that the person needed a 1:1, instead describe what the job coach or coworker needed to provide in terms of support.)

Section 3: This section is focused solely on work and employment activities, primarily focusing on experiences and describing the various situations from which potential job tasks are derived. Look closely at the distinctions provided among the various headings.

3. *Employment and Related Activity*

- a. Informal work performed at home and for others:** *Describe activities that the person just initiates on their own, that no one expects or asks them to perform. Again describe their actions in a way that allows the reader to visualize the person's performance. This category primarily gets at self-initiation and personal responsibility. This area is particularly important in that work performed with outside expectations is seen as a reliable indicator of work interests.*

Regarding work performed for others, these are activities that the individual initiates doing for people outside of the house. They may happen in a public place, be something they do for a neighbor, or something they tend to voluntarily do at school. For example, "After he finishes lunch with his classmates, Adam returns to Mrs. Barringer's classroom and empties the dishwasher. He consistently puts all the utensils, cups and plates in the appropriate locations. This task was something he learned in the classroom 2 years ago but it has not been expected of him since that time. About six months ago he began initiating this activity and has performed it daily throughout the school year."

- b. Formal chores and responsibilities:** *This section addresses the explicit expectations that the individual has from family, roommates, or program based supervisors in relation to household and/or programmatic chores and tasks as well as specific activities that the individual is expected to participate in such as attending church, music lessons, etc. The key point here is to detail the tasks/activities in relation to the expectation by the family or program.*
- c. Entrepreneurial activities:** *This section addresses the range of ways the person earns money outside of wage employment. Include informal activities such as occasional lawn mowing, baby sitting, pet sitting, etc. Also describe any more formal entrepreneurial efforts that the person has engaged in.*

- d. Internships, structured work experiences, sheltered work, volunteering:** *The focus of this section addresses all the formal experiences of the individual that were designed to provide preparation for employment, including sheltered employment and volunteer work. Describe in detail the tasks a person performed at various work experiences and the person's performance. Include information about the length of time they were at the placement, how many days a week and how long each day. Describe the supports that worked or didn't work for them. Use descriptive not judgmental language. If there are particular interests, skills, support needs or necessary conditions of work that became apparent during these experiences mention them as you describe the individual's performance.*
- e. Wage employment:** *Address in the same as "d", above, but in reference to tasks that an individual was paid by an employer, neighbor, friend or family member to perform. Fully describe the duties, supports needed and relevance to the individual.*
- f. General areas of previous work interest:** *This category describes the individual's reflections of all the forms of employment that have previously been performed in relation to areas found to be most interesting. This is not a question of, "What would you like to do?" but, rather, a question of, "What areas of work that you have performed have been the most interesting to you?"*

Section4: This section focuses on the individual's life activities and the relationships, skills, supports and implied interests that are embedded in them. Look closely at activities shared with family and friends. Also note those activities that the person does without being expected to do so by others. This is rich area for determining interests.

4. Life Activities and Experiences

- a. Friends and social group(s):** *Ask questions about who the individual socializes with at school, at home, in the community. Again you are looking to identify connections to the person; people who could be interviewed to provide additional information about the job seeker (with their permission), a connection to employment, or a resource who may provide expertise about an area of employment with which the job developer is unfamiliar.*
- b. Personal activities, including hobbies, performed at home:** *Focus on activities that the individual performs that do not require organized cooperation with others. Note if an individual plays a computer game without being asked by parents. Describe games, hobbies and other pastimes that the individual participates in while alone.*
- c. Family/friend activities, including hobbies, performed at home:** *This section captures activities that the individual participates in with others that are organized, typically with rules and expectations. Look for card games, board games, festive occasions, religious rites and other organized activities.*

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- d. **Personal activities, including hobbies, performed in the community:** *Ask about the array of community activities (outside the individual's immediate home) that the individual participates in that are not structured, but that occur on a spontaneous, regular basis. Note whether the individual shops at a local convenience store, takes walks around the neighborhood, visits a nearby park and other similar activities.*
- e. **Family/friend activities, including hobbies, performed in the community:** *Focus here on the activities that are performed in the community with others in an organized manner. Examples might include attending art classes, going to church, family outings to a sports event and participating in a bowling league.*
- f. **Specific events and activities that are of critical importance:** *This section identifies traditions, holidays, events and other activities that occur during the year that are of particular importance to the individual. Include festivals, holidays, vacations and other activities important to the person. Also, determine those activities performed both at home and in the community that are the most important to the individual. Note reasons or conditions that seem to make the activities particularly important to the individual. Occasionally, individuals have done activities in the past that they no longer get to do. Note reasons or conditions that seem to explain why the activities are no longer performed.*

Section V: This section comprises the “heart” of the profile. For each item be sure to focus primarily on skills first. Remember, this is not a deficit or barrier-focused report but, rather, a description of the individual's strengths. If the person indicates an interest either verbally, behaviorally or based on the opinion of others, be sure to describe the interests shown. If there are certain supports or environmental conditions that are necessary to make the skill/task possible, note them. This aspect of the profile should be the most robust in terms of description.

5. *Description of Skills, Interests and Conditions in Life Activities*

- a. **Domestic/Home skills:** *Based on the visits to the individual's home you likely saw a variety of skills and activities. Choose 2-4 areas for focus that provide the richest information about the person, their skills and abilities, and their support needs. You might describe performance in relation to cooking, cleaning, home maintenance and other tasks that are strengths of the individual.*
- b. **Community participation skills:** *This section is based upon what you discovered while participating in familiar and unfamiliar activities with the person. How did the person perform at a restaurant, how did they communicate what they wanted to order, what assistance did they need in ordering, what support did someone who knew them well (or you) provide to them to assist them to participate in the activity? Were they safety conscious while crossing streets? (Comment on their performance -describe what they did- rather than stating that they “demonstrated safe traffic behavior”.) While in the community did you learn about particular interests of the person? Describe what you saw that led you to believe it was an interest. Did the person see people they knew? Would these people be potential job connections? Should they be interviewed to gather more information about the person or should they be invited to the employment planning meeting?*

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- c. **Recreation/leisure skills:** *What does the person do in their free time? This may provide information about interests, preferences, and skills. Avoid making statements such as “she likes movies”. Instead describe what the person does that leads you to make that statement.*
- d. **Academic skills:** *Note functional academic skills that relate to life performance in areas such as reading, math, time, money, etc. Instead of including information on results of standardized tests, describe how the person gets these functions done or describe their performance in relation to these concepts. For example, “When Carley doesn’t understand a word, she will initiate copying the word letter by letter into her touch talker and then press the speak button. The device then reads to word to her.” or, “To review her bank balance Emily obtains her ATM card from her wallet, performs a search on her computer for the bank, copies the name of the bank from the card and inputs it into the computer. When the computer prompts for the account number she again copies the information from her bank card and then hits enter to view the balances of her accounts.”*
- e. **Physical fitness skills:** *Focus here on strengths and skills related to the person’s overall degree of physical fitness. Be careful not to focus on deficits but, rather, on the best aspects of the individual’s fitness, stamina, strength, coordination, speed, etc.*
- f. **Arts and Talents:** *This section is designed for description of the person’s unique artistic abilities, talents and “knacks” that might be used to provide direction for future employment. Rather than evaluating the outcomes in this area, quote the comments of people who know and work with the individual and who are appreciative of their talent.*
- g. **Communication skills:** *How does the person communicate their needs and have conversations? Is there anything particular about their communication style or needs that would influence the ideal conditions of an employment setting or supports? Be careful to avoid making summary, evaluative statements here; rather describe the person’s performance regarding communication and the supports and accommodations needed by the individual.*
- h. **Social interaction skills:** *Describe the manner in which the person interacts with others. Are there factors that you will need to plan supports around in a job? Are there specific contributions that you recognize in this area? Describe performance in regard to these areas. Instead of using evaluative comments such as “outgoing”, describe the behavior that you feel is outgoing.*
- i. **Mobility skills:** *Describe the person’s strengths in the area of personal mobility – walking, moving in a wheelchair, running, etc. If a person’s disability impacts them physically, describe how in this section. Again write using descriptive language rather than using jargon or disability labels unless that assists the reader in understanding the impact of disability. Describe supports or strategies the individual uses to enhance their performance. For example, “Chase uses his right hand predominately but will use his left to stabilize or hold something. When typing on a standard keyboard, Chase will scan the key board with his right hand holding his left until he finds the left control key. He then stations his left*

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index finger on the control key and uses his right hand to depress the letters he want to type in capital letters.”

- j. Sensory skills: (sight, hearing, smell, touch)** *Is there any particular information that is relevant to employment in regard to the individual's hearing? Sight? Taste? Sense of smell? Are there any particular supports or accommodations that the person uses to compensate for deficits in their hearing or vision? Are there fragrances/odors to be avoided?*
- k. Vocational skills:** *List the person's vocational skills here and describe their performance on various tasks. Particularly note those task and work contexts that the individual seems to enjoy. These tasks will be used, later, in the planning meeting that directs job development efforts.*

Section VI: This final section of the Discovery Profile targets potential connections that might exist for purposes of establishing leads for potential employment. It is often the most challenging and sparse aspect of most profiles. We advise that this area be addressed later in discovery and assure the person and family members that we are not asking for “hot job leads” but, rather, for relationships and connections that might be used to enhance the job search.

6. Connections for Employment:

- a. Potential connectors in family (or staff, as appropriate):** *Does anyone in the family have strong employer connections in the community? Are they members of community organizations that might provide connections to employers. Do various family members know lots of people? Does any family member have their own business?*
- b. Potential connectors among friends/neighbors and work colleagues:** *Ask the same questions as in (a), above, but in relation to the friends and neighbors of the person and family.*
- c. Potential connection sites in community relationships:** *Does the individual live near certain businesses with whom the family has a customer relationship? Are there community organizations within the neighborhood? Is there a neighborhood association from which connections might be obtained?*
- d. Potential connections through clubs, organizations, or groups (such as church or school):**
List all clubs, churches, regular events (such as bingo, bowling, etc.) and all other situations that involve a form of membership or association for the individual and family members. Get names of those closest to the individual or family member.
- e. List of local employers (determined by proximity, relationships, interest areas)**
Provide a general description of the employer community in the area in which the person lives. Do a web search of the community or if the location is particularly large, the area of town that the person lives in for an overview of business types, number of businesses, etc. List businesses that are particularly close in proximity to the individual.