

# FAQs

## What is Customized Employment?

Customized Employment is an employment strategy that individualizes the employment relationship between a job seeker and an employer in a way that meets the needs and interests of both. This process leads to a customized outcome or a position for the job seeker. The job seeker does not compete for a specific job opening, but rather offers his/her skills and contributions to meet identified and unmet work needs of the employer.

## Why is Customized Employment needed?

The traditional job seeking approach is often not effective for individuals with significant challenges because they may not meet the “whole package” of job requirements. The customized approach defines job tasks around both what the job seeker is capable of and what the employer needs completed.

## How does it work?

Following are the essential components of the Customized Employment process:

### Discovery

The process begins with an in-depth, qualitative discovery process with the purpose of uncovering the job seekers skills, interests and conditions for success in employment. The information gained from discovery is organized into a profile that provides a comprehensive, realistic, and positive picture of the job seeker.

### Job Search Planning

A planning meeting is held which includes the individual job seeker, job developer, relevant family members, service professionals, and others who know the individual well. A customized plan is developed which includes conditions for success and a specific task list in the desired job area.

## Be an Advocate!

*Tips for getting the most out of your Customized Employment services:*

**Be Active!** When talking to the employment service provider ask them to describe their customized employment program and some of the successful positions they have negotiated for individuals.

Ask what type of training the staff has received in customized employment.

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*The Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC) is a partnership that provides training and technical assistance to promote employment and full community participation for people with disabilities through cutting edge technologies, evidence-based practice and research.*

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## Frequently Asked Questions Customized Employment

Then a visual resume or portfolio is developed that introduces the job seeker to employers. This alternative approach to a traditional resume helps job seekers emphasize their assets and reduce concerns about limited work experience or specific work challenges. See related resources for an example of a visual resume.

### **Job Development and Negotiation**

Next, a job developer calls on a potential employer. A presentation is made describing both the benefits of customized employment and the contributions of the job seeker being represented. The job developer offers to identify unmet work needs that match the job seeker's contributions. If there are, the job developer begins negotiations with the employer for a customized job description on behalf of the job seeker. The employer then meets with the job seeker to discuss a customized position. During these negotiations, it is determined what, if any, supports the job seeker may need and who will provide them. If agreements are reached, the job seeker is hired. If the situation is not a good fit, another potential employer is approached.

### **Follow-up Services**

Finally, follow-up services are provided as necessary to ensure the customized employment relationship is working for the new employee and the employer.

### **Who provides services?**

Customized Employment services can be provided by supported employment agencies, community rehabilitation programs, or independent employment specialists.

### **Where can I access services?**

Contact your State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency or long-term care provider for more information. In Wisconsin, the Aging and Disability Resource Centers can also provide information and assistance about employment service providers.

### **Resources**

#### **Department of Labor, Office of Disability and Employment Policy**

More Customized Employment questions and answers.

[www.dol.gov/odep/tech/employ.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/tech/employ.htm)

#### **Visual Resume Tool**

A great tool for building and sharing your online resume.

[www.visualcv.com](http://www.visualcv.com)

#### **Publications by Michael Callahan from Marc Gold & Associates**

*Check out writings and resources by Michael Callahan, a pioneer in the development and evolution of the customized employment process.*

[www.marcgold.com/Publications](http://www.marcgold.com/Publications)

### **PERC Related Materials**

Materials related to this topic can be found on the PERC website - these materials include free trainings, resources, and the latest research.

[www.percthinkwork.org](http://www.percthinkwork.org)

### **Comments? Suggestions?**

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