

Guide for the Intake & Assessment Toolkit

A Resource for Practitioners

As is identified in promising practices and supported by sound [research](#), a comprehensive intake, assessment and orientation process is an important aspect of welcoming individuals to your agency. This allows for explanation of benefits, culture and expectations of various programs, and introduction to the world of work in a way that is engaging, realistic and meaningful. Many practitioners find it helpful to begin by reviewing the [training framework](#) since it provides an overview of the components of employability skills instruction and the basis from which effective lesson planning and curriculum development may begin.

As you explore the Intake Toolkit, you will find that it outlines **5 distinct phases** of a comprehensive intake and assessment process. Phase 5 includes a full program orientation with its own guide and toolkit of resources (described below). Both toolkits are a collection of activities, links, and resources for use by practitioners in the field of adult literacy and workforce development. Practitioners may be program directors & coordinators, literacy & vocational skills instructors, student support & case management staff, and job coaches & employment development staff. The Orientation Toolkit contains a variety of reflective and empowering activities and self-assessments for individuals, ice-breakers and interactive group exercises, and engaging pre & post surveys and checklists.

Each phase involves specific **data collection** and **decision-making** by practitioners beginning with initial contact when individuals call, e-mail, or walk-in (Phase 1). During initial contact, the decision to begin intake should be based on **one essential question**: Can we effectively serve this individual and meet his/her specific interests and needs? If the answer to the essential question is “yes” the primary objectives during intake & assessment are: a) to welcome the individual and start them on a journey of self-discovery, and b) to collect the data that will inform instruction and other service needs (Phase 2). Subsequent enrollment and all other decisions should continue to focus on the essential question.

If the answer to the essential question is not a clear and confident “yes” there is no need to schedule an intake appointment. Instead, this is the point at which a referral should be made to another program or agency that will serve them more effectively. Or a discussion might occur regarding the possibility of addressing certain underlying needs and/or barriers so the individual may be differently engaged in some limited way as another alternative. If this is the decision, staff may begin strategies to help individuals gradually become more *program-ready* and able to enroll at a later time and benefit more completely. These *pre-enrollment services* can and should be provided in collaboration with partner agencies.

Duration of the entire process could reach **20-30 hours** and spread across 1– 2 weeks depending on the daily schedule. As you can see, detailed instructions are embedded in the Intake Toolkit with step-by-step instructions, for developing and/or expanding your own process, making decisions, and conducting appropriate assessments during each phase. Enrollment is the point at which “placement data” is collected (Phases 3 & 4). Once intake, assessment, enrollment, and placement are complete it is time to engage learners in a full Orientation and goal-setting experience (Phase 5). This comprehensive intake model represents the ideal beginning of a great learning and skills-building experience with emphasis on goal-setting and long-term career planning. It should not be compromised or minimized.

A separate [Orientation](#) Toolkit is provided for Phase 5 with detailed instructions for the best possible learner and program outcomes. The entire process should be led and co-facilitated by case management/ support services staff and job coaching /job development staff. Other practitioners should “stop-in” during Orientation to offer a brief welcome, introduce themselves, and describe their role in assisting to achieve goals, particularly literacy instructors. The activities are adaptable for easy implementation and a successful transition into employment. Both toolkits can align with various curricula or used to develop one which is program-specific and, more importantly, learner-centered as is clearly identified as a priority in [WIOA](#).