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# **Employment First Discovery Tool**

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**January 10, 2024**

# Employment First Discovery Tool (Form 8401)

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- The Employment First Discovery Tool is used to help an individual explore their employment goals so those goals can be used to inform the person-centered service plan.
- The tool must be completed by the individual's case manager or service coordinator.
- The tool includes the following sections:
  - Engage
  - Plan
  - Finding Work
  - Creating an Individual Employment Plan



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# Impacted Programs

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The following 1915(c) and 1115 waiver programs must use this tool to document information about individuals who express a desire to work:

- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Program
- Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Program
- Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Program
- STAR+PLUS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Program
- Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Program



# The Job Discovery Process

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- The Employment First Discovery Tool is intended to help the individual think about what they like and their interests, and how those things might lead to a job or career.
- The questions in the tool are not intended to be all-inclusive.
- It is meant to be a conversation starter as a person begins to think about and plan for a potential job or career.



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# Why Do People Work?

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- Employment is a normal part of everyday life for most adults.
- Employment allows people to earn money to support themselves financially and buy things they want.
- Other benefits of employment:
  - Opportunity to build friendships and grow social networks
  - People can learn new things
  - Provides a sense of purpose, accomplishment, competence, and pride
  - Adds structure to a person's day





# Barriers to Individuals Seeking Employment

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- Unsure of what kind of job they are looking for
- Lack of skills or work experience needed for a particular job
- Lack of transportation options
- Lack of necessary accommodations
- Low expectations of the individual, family or other supporters



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# Foundations of Conversations About Work

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- **Conditions:** what your client must have in order to apply for or accept a job.
- **Preferences:** what your client would like to have in a job
  - Conditions and preferences could include salary, schedule, benefits, environment, job tasks, or dress code.
- **Support Needs:** what will help your client become successful getting and keeping a job.
  - Support needs could include a particular learning style, job accommodations, or transportation.



# Guiding the Conversation

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These questions can help an individual identify important considerations for their employment journey.

- What do people like and admire about them? What are their strengths, talents, and positive qualities?
- What's important to them? This could include people, places, interests, hobbies, possessions, routines, as well what's important related to work.
- What do they value the most?
- How do they want to be supported?



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# When to Use the Employment First Discovery Tool

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- When the person's initial, annual, or revision Person-Centered Plan (PCP) or Person-Directed Plan (PDP) indicates the person has an interest in pursuing employment.
- The service coordinator or case manager must document in the individual's service plan how the individual answered when asked about their desire to work.
- If the individual answers "yes", the service coordinator or case manager must complete the Employment First Discovery Tool and maintain it in the person's records.
- If a person is not interested in working or is currently employed, then the form is not required.



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# When to Use the Employment First Discovery Tool (cont.)



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Program	When completing the...
Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Program	Individual Program Plan Addendum (Form 3629)
Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Program	Individual Program Plan (Form 6501)
STAR+PLUS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Program	Individual Service Plan (ISP) Addendum (form H1700-2)
Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Program	Service Coordination Assessment (Form 8647)
Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Program	Service Coordination Assessment (Form 8647)
State Supported Living Centers (SSLC)	Community Living Discharge Planning process



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# Section-by-Section Instructions

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# Section A: Engage

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- Section A includes questions 1-6.
- These questions help to identify a person's core interests and develop a plan that informs future actions to help the person get employment.
- The service coordinator or case manager should guide the conversation to promote discussion about finding employment.



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## Section B: Plan

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- Section B includes questions 7-12.
- These questions help define the person's overall work goals that align with their strengths, interests, talents, and conditions for success.
- When completing these questions, the service coordinator or case manager should include any conditions needed to apply for or accept a job, including preferences and supports needed for the person to be successful.



## Section C: Finding Work

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- Section C includes questions 13-19.
- The answers to these questions should be the result of a conversation designed to help a person find and get settled into a job that meets their strengths, interests and conditions for employment.
- The service coordinator or case manager should focus on learning what the person is good at, what they like, what they want to accomplish and what's needed to reach their goals.



# Section D: Creating an Individual's Employment Plan

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- Section D includes questions 20-25.
- The answers to questions 20-25 should be the result of a plan that outlines a person's employment goals and the services needed to accomplish them.
- The service coordinator or case manager identifies current supports and sources for more supports, including employment services available through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or the waiver program the person is enrolled in.



# **Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

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**LTSS Program Specialist**



# Texas Workforce Solutions - Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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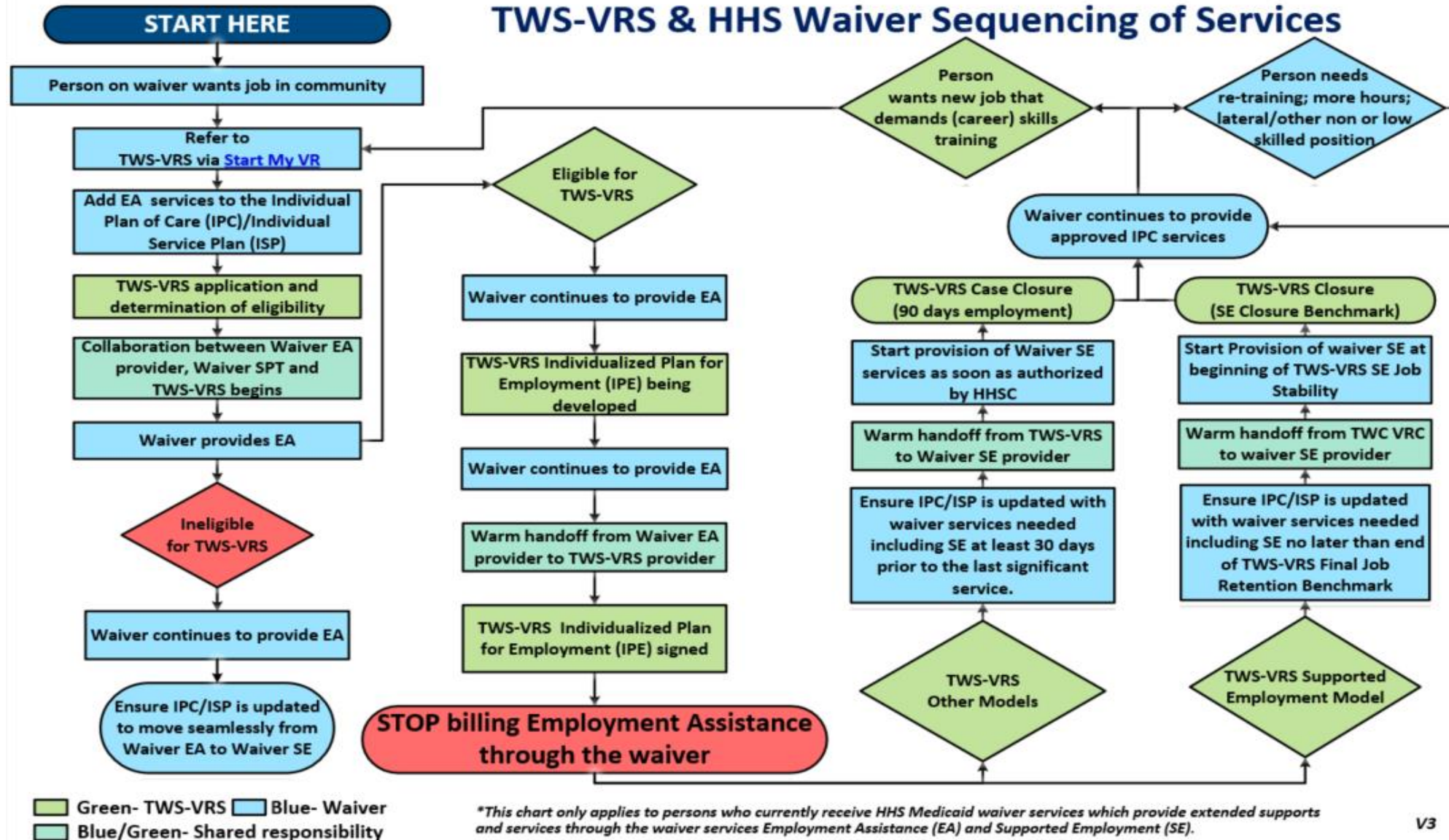
- After an individual indicates an interest in working, the Employment First Discovery Tool is completed.
- The Service Coordinator/Case Manager would then go to the Texas Workforce Commission – Vocational Rehabilitation Services ([TWC-VRS website](#)) and click on 'Start My VR'.
  - The 'Start My VR' process is a short form which requires personal information to be entered about the person to initiate a referral for services.
- Once completed, the service coordinator/case manager will receive a confirmation email which must be retained in the individual's case records.
- Provide TWC with a copy of the Employment First Discovery Tool when applicable.



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## TWS-VRS & HHS Waiver Sequencing of Services







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## Start My VR

Start My VR is an online self-referral form that offers a convenient way for Texans with disabilities to take the first step toward obtaining, retaining or advancing in employment. Follow the three steps listed here to get started. From there you will be connected with a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff member to learn more about VR Services. Use your mobile phone to scan the QR code to access Start My VR.

1



Go online to the *Start My VR* portal and enter your information

2



Receive a confirmation Request Number

3



VR will contact you to discuss how VR services can benefit you

Questions? Contact us:  
twc.texas.gov/VRNearMe  
VR.office.locator@twc.texas.gov  
512.936.6400

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### Start My VR



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# Helpful Resources

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[Information Letter No. 2023-41 - Employment First Discovery Tool](#)

[Competitive and Integrated Employment Initiative for Certain Medicaid Recipients TAC Rules](#)

[Form 8401, Employment First Discovery Tool](#)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Services Career Counseling Workbook](#)



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# Thank You

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