**Customized Discovery (CD) is an Alternative to Assessments and Evaluations**

Implementing Customized Discovery (CD) with fidelity means using CD as an alternative to evaluating someone to determine feasibility for a particular kind of work. CD does not result in a prediction of what sort of job should be sought based only on the person’s current work skills. CD is a thorough description of a job seeker to better determine how to proceed with the next step, Customized Job Development. CD is never used to assess what the employment seeker can and cannot do before deciding whether to authorize more services. CD assumes employability with needed supports and is not to be used to determine whether someone is employable or designated as “unemployable.”

**Essential Features of Customized Discovery**

* An employment seeker cannot “fail” CD.
* Each person is unique and has specific contributions of value in the labor market.
* The employment seeker is the leader of his or her own Discovery process.
* CD begins with engaging the employment seeker’s family, friends, and community supports.
* In CD, those who assist the employment seeker achieve a much greater understanding of the employment seeker.
* CD customizes employment around someone’s life, not the other way around.
* CD reveals the person at his or her best and leads the individual to paid employment, working at his or her best.
* CD is about learning what’s important about school, about work, and about income needed for financial stability.
* CD shows what the employment seeker can do, likes to do, and needs help doing.
* CD observations are always written objectively in descriptive sentences, reporting what is seen and heard in a positive manner.
* CD assists in getting to know someone “where the person is most who she or he is.” (Michael Callahan)
* CD does not evaluate whether someone can work. Discovery helps determine how best to proceed to ensure employment success.
* CD does not assess or evaluate the employment seeker’s readiness.
* CD should never be used to determine which work experiences the employment seeker should try out to become “more ready” for employment.
* CD determines the employment seeker’s support needs in various kinds of work.
* No portion of Discovery, including the process of informational interviewing within CD, is Customized Job Development. Customized Job Development is the phase that immediately follows CD.
* CD is not determining whether the employment seeker is motivated to work or to discover his or her motivators.
* “Try outs” are not acceptable next steps following CD. Real employment is.
* Customized Job Development begins immediately after CD because a paid employment outcome in a real job in the community is the only purpose of CD.