

Introducing the Customized Discovery Process

Customized Discovery (CD) is a service for assisting job candidates to find jobs that match their interests, skills, and conditions of employment while also meeting the needs of an employer. The CD process begins with learning about the individual, we take time to get to know the job candidate's skills and contributions, and how they best learn and are best supported. This information is used to identify vocational themes, or categories that represent an almost unlimited collection of various jobs, environments, skills, task sets, and interests, and then looks for businesses with these same themes who have needs that match the job candidate's contributions. Customized Discovery focuses on vocational themes vs. posted job openings because too often, job descriptions are narrow and limiting for both the individual and the person charged with managing the career search. Using vocational themes to guide job development and the information about skills and tasks that can potentially be taught/learned, as well as work environments and cultures that fit the person, a broader, richer palette of career opportunities emerge.

So, what should we expect? What does Customized Discovery look like?

Step 1: Home, Neighborhood, and Family: We want to get to know the job candidate where he/she/they are most comfortable, which is typically in the home and neighborhood. We'll talk to family, friends, and neighbors about what they see as strengths which helps to guide next steps. During a visit to the home, we hope to learn what is most important to the job candidate. We would ask questions such as "What are they good at?", "How do they learn best?", "What is special about them?"

Step 2: Try New Things: We want to know what the job candidate already knows how to do, and how they learn new things. This will be done by supporting them in a variety of activities, including familiar activities and trying new things. Activities will be based on the job candidate's interest and strengths and guided by them and their family/team. For example, if the job candidate is interested in photography, we might go to a nature trail to take photos, then learn new software to edit the photos together.

Step 3: Talk to People Who Work in the Areas of Interest: The first two steps help teach us about the job candidate's interests, strengths and needs. The third step helps us learn about paid opportunities that may match them. We would go together to local businesses and speak to the owners or managers to get information and advice about working in the areas or emerging themes of interest.

Step 4: Career Plan: After learning what the job candidate is good at, how they learn best, and about industries or themes of interest, we make a Career Plan. We meet with the team – family, friends, support providers, etc. – to make the plan. We’ll brainstorm a list of businesses in alignment with their themes and find out who on the team might have a connection to those businesses. For example, a friend of the family might know a photographer who needs an assistant and is open to teaching the job candidate.