



2026 Discovery Fidelity Scale

Quick Reference Guide to Changes from DFS v3

Introduction

The 2026 Discovery Fidelity Scale has been updated to present fidelity criteria in a format that is simpler, clearer, and easier to follow. Changes to layout and structure were made to improve usability and consistency across tenets. In some cases, language has been streamlined for clarity; however, the underlying criteria and expectations for high-quality Discovery practice remain consistent with prior versions.

This revision was developed collaboratively by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA) and Marc Gold & Associates (MGA) to ensure that the terminology used in the scale reflects the breadth of approaches within Customized Employment. While the practices described in earlier versions aligned with established best practices, some terminology was more narrowly defined than intended. The updated language is designed to be more inclusive while preserving the integrity of the original standards.

One area where best-practice guidance has not reached full consensus is the use of interviews with businesses during Discovery. As a result, Tenet 2.7 (Informational Interviews) will be scored only for practitioners who incorporate interviews as part of their Discovery process. Practitioners whose training and mentoring do not include informational interviews during Discovery will not be scored on this tenet.

In addition, a new tenet—**2.7B: Enhanced Discovery Activities**—has been added to reflect that, for some individuals, Discovery may appropriately include expanded opportunities for observation and participation. These may include brief work experiences, job shadowing, internships, or similar activities. This tenet will be scored only when such opportunities occur.

This Quick Reference Guide highlights changes to the Discovery services tenets only. The Discovery systems tenets have not been changed.

What Changed at a Glance

Tenet	Status	Change Summary
2.1 – 2.2 The Home Visit	Reorganized	Criteria redistributed for clearer flow; no substantive scoring changes.
2.3 Neighborhood/Community Exploration	Revised	Expanded to include active mapping of social capital. Criteria redistributed.
2.4 Conversations with Important People	Refined	Personal connection requirement reduced to 1.
2.5 Familiar Discovery Activities	Refined	Added focus on richest activities and community connections.
2.6 Unfamiliar Discovery Activities	Refined	Scores +2 and +3 revised. Community settings required.
2.7 Informational Interviews	Refined	Language broadened. No substantive changes.
2.7B Enhanced Discovery Activities	New ★	New tenet for extended work-based experiences.
2.8 Vocational Profile (1)	Reorganized	Criteria redistributed for clearer flow. No substantive changes.
2.9 Vocational Profile (2)	Reorganized	Criteria redistributed for clearer flow. No substantive changes.
2.10 Employment Plan	Refined	Criteria redistributed, language broadened. No substantive changes.
Discovery Timeliness Score #1	No change	—
Discovery Timeliness Score #2	No change	—

Detailed Change Notes

Only updated score criteria are listed below. Scores not shown remain unchanged from DFS v3.



Tenets 2.1 & 2.2: The Home Visit

Reorganized to separate visit logistics (2.1) from information gathering (2.2). Criteria and scoring remain substantively unchanged. Language refined for clarity and consistency.

2.1 now covers: visit location, scheduling around important people, and identifying contacts for follow-up.

2.2 now covers: weekly schedule, activities, hobbies, possessions, interests, and valued connections.

Note: Capturing quotes or examples is no longer listed as a standalone scoring requirement.



Tenet 2.3: Neighborhood/Community Exploration

Emphasis shifted from identifying businesses to active mapping, social capital, and connecting with community members. All score levels revised.

- 0** No mapping or mapping only includes big box references.
- +1** Touring, observation, and mapping of local and preferred communities, including types of industry or specific local businesses.
- +2** Mapping includes social capital of the employment seeker and team members.
- +3** ES and person connect with at least one strong community leader or connector.

Score 0 unchanged.



Tenet 2.4: Conversations with Important People

Clarified emphasis on gathering new insights. Reduced required personal connections to at least one.

- +1** 3 conversations, at least 1 with a personal connection, that reveal positive new insights.
- +2** Conversations include 3 personal connections.

Scores 0 and +3 unchanged.



Tenet 2.5: Familiar Discovery Activities

Higher scores now focus on the richest interests, skills, and connections with others.

- +2** Discovery activities built around the richest opportunities (highest interests and skills/strengths, include people, etc.).
- +3** At least 1 familiar activity includes a community or industry connector/expert.

Scores 0 and +1 unchanged.



Tenet 2.6: Unfamiliar Discovery Activities

Strengthened focus on including interaction with others in real community or business settings.

- +2** At least 2 unfamiliar activities include other community members/connections.
- +3** At least 1 activity in a community business.

Scores 0 and +1 unchanged.



Tenet 2.7: Informational Interviews

Scored only when practitioner training includes informational interviews.

Scores remain substantively unchanged.



Tenet 2.7B: Enhanced Discovery Activities — New

New tenet for extended work-based experiences, including job shadowing, internships, and brief work experiences. Scored only when such opportunities occur during Discovery.

- 0** Activity is not connected to exploring the individual's work characteristics (e.g., a generic or standard experience).
- +1** Create opportunity for extended activity to explore ideal work characteristics, confirm conditions, clarify interests, or demonstrate/build tasks, skills, and/or connections.
- +2** Capture/document the experience through photos or videos. Incorporate into visual resume.
- +3** Develop an interest area/industry connection or mentor.



Tenet 2.8: Vocational Profile (1)

Reorganized to separate content (2.8) from narrative quality (2.9). Discrete job tasks added at +1, financial goals moved to +2, social capital replaces documentation of changes at +3.

- +1 List of necessary components expanded to include discrete tasks or potential job tasks.
- +2 Identifies financial goals and preferred work hours/schedule, and confirms referral to benefits planner (as needed).
- +3 Identifies new social capital or community connectors made through Discovery.

Score 0 unchanged.



Tenet 2.9: Vocational Profile (2)


Supporting evidence and media expectations redistributed between score levels: examples required at +2, photos/videos at +3.

Scores 0 and +1 unchanged.



Tenet 2.10: Employment Plan

Reorganized and refined language. No substantive changes.



Discovery Timeliness Scores #1 and #2: No changes from DFS v3. Criteria and scoring remain the same.