



April 6, 2021

To: Employment First stakeholders
From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator
Re: [Employment First](#): New Discovery Profile and tools
(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

In 2014, the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) added Discovery as an outcome-based employment service for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Discovery is about finding and highlighting a person's passions, talents and skills and helping people achieve their employment goals.

From 2017-2019, ODDS convened a stakeholder group that consisted of self-advocates, ODDS employment providers, VR Counselors (VRCs), Services Coordinators/Personal Agents (SC/PAs) and education professionals to discuss what we had learned since implementing this service and to make program improvements.

I am excited to announce that after a significant amount of time and effort from many stakeholders, ODDS is releasing its new Discovery profile and policy to begin September 1, 2021. This delayed implementation is to allow providers, SC/PAs, VRCs, and others, time to take the new Discovery trainings, review the policy and learn to use the new profile tool.

The new Discovery tools and policies includes:

- [Transmittal AR 20-18](#) outlining all the elements of Discovery
- [Discovery Experiential Components Worker Guide](#) (required starting Sept. 2021)
- [Discovery Worker Guide](#) for Services Coordinators, Personal Agents, Discovery Providers
- [Discovery Profile 2021](#) (required to be used starting Sept. 2021)
- [Pre-Discovery Check List](#)
- [Discovery Employment Tour Ideas](#) (provided by Abilitree)

- [Discovery Home Visit Sample](#) (provided by Abilitree)

In addition to the current Discovery training requirements, all employment specialists who deliver Discovery (including Independent Contractors/Providers) must take the four new on-demand Discovery Trainings. Details are in the [Worker Guide: Discovery Guidelines for Service Coordinators/Personal Agents and Discovery Providers](#). This training counts as part of the required 12 hours of ongoing continuing education for employment specialists.

The modules include:

Module 1: [Introduction to Discovery](#)

Module 2: [Community Based Experiences](#)

Module 3: [Approval Criteria](#)

Module 4: [Career Development Plan and Individual Plan for Employment](#)

We want to thank all stakeholders who participated in redesigning Discovery – whether it was being part of the stakeholder meetings, helping to design the new profile, participating in the Discovery pilot or submitting comments. Oregon has a long history of innovation – from being the first state in 1980 to get a federal waiver to use Medicaid money to develop alternatives to institutional living to being a pioneer in supported employment as one of the first states to adopt an Employment First policy. The strength, commitment and values of Oregon stakeholders have always been powerful catalysts for progress. Our stakeholders brought their experience and insight to the redesign of Discovery.

Thanks as always for your support in serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon.

Acacia