

Work Services Handbook

Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Public Assistance

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Special Note on Work Activities:

Please refer to the [Alaska Work Verification Plan](#) for detailed definition of Work Search and other activities, and rules on counting, verifying, supervising and monitoring hours of client participation in activities.

2.1. Overview

2.1.1. What is Work Search?

Work Search is putting Work First in action. It includes all those activities that staff and clients do to help the client get a job. Work Search starts when the client first comes into a DPA office, and continues until the client is employed.

A Work First approach requires that clients are engaged in Work Search as soon as possible. Initial Work Services consists of an intensive up-front Work Search after application for Temporary Assistance benefits. For clients still unemployed after intensive Work Search, Work Search activities can be combined with other tools and techniques to improve the client's employment potential while continuing to look for a job during Extended Work Services.

2.1.2. Who needs to Work Search?

Everyone! Temporary Assistance is a program that has a lifetime limit of 60 months for people who need help and provides financial support to people while the individual finds ways to support their family. Assisting families to find and keep a job is the primary way that Work Services staff can help people end their need for Temporary Assistance. Once a family's Temporary Assistance benefits run out, Work Services supports and staff will no longer be available to assist them in Work Search.

Some Temporary Assistance recipients are more likely to get hired right away than others. Some have problems that may seem to make them 'unemployable,' but it is just as important for these individuals to Work Search as those that are 'job ready.' Not everyone who Work Searches gets a job right away, but the only way to get hired is to Work Search. Some people who appear 'unemployable' get a job right away and exit Temporary Assistance.

The basic premise of Work Search is that no one is unemployable. Research shows that staff experience and extensive assessment instruments CANNOT accurately predict who will or won't succeed in the labor market. It isn't possible to know for certain ahead of time what the results of Work Search will be. **Testing the labor market is the first best test of employability.**

It's important for Work Services staff to remember:

- Clients are expected to become employed as quickly as possible;
- For some clients, the first job they obtain will allow the family to exit Temporary Assistance;
- For others, the first job may be a stepping-stone to a better job; and
- Even minimum wage and low-skilled positions can provide clients with positive job references and prepare them for success at the next, better job.

Although a Work Search may not result in a job, the client has moved towards employment by gaining Work Search experience. Learning from the experience is the key to making the next Work Search successful.

Even if the individual is already employed, Work Search can lead to a job with more hours, higher wages, and more benefits. Only those clients who are excused from any

participation in Work and Work Readiness activities may not Work Search through Initial Work Services. The Work Services staff may identify Work Search or other work activities or offer referrals and assistance to support the individual to address the challenges which originally necessitated the excuse from participation. There are many things a client can do to be ready for an active and successful Work Search as soon as they are able to participate full-time.

For information on exemptions from participation see [Alaska Temporary Assistance Program Manual](#) Section 730-2.

Note on Work Search for families in areas with high unemployment: Clients living in areas of with high unemployment may need to engage in a modified or limited Individual Work Search (see below). Work Search activities, and all assigned work activities, should be realistically achievable by the client given their geographic location, available resources and capacity.

2.1.3. Different ways to Work Search

Clients can Work Search in different ways--Work Services defines two types of Work Search: Structured and Individual.

Structured Work Search (JAS Work Activity Code J3 or X1)

When a client Work Searches with guidance from Work Services, contracted Work Search providers, or other community resources. Work Services staff help clients:

- Evaluate their best opportunities for employment;
- Identify preferences, skills, abilities and challenges that help staff to provide in-depth job matching services;
- Prepare to answer interview questions; and,
- Discuss workplace expectations and Work Search best practices.

Work Services may refer structured work search clients to the following Resources:

- Job clubs;
- Resume workshops;
- Employment counselors;
- Job coaches; and,
- Other Work Search services provided by vendors.

Individual Work Search (JAS Work Activity Code J1 or X1)

When a client does more independent Work Search. Work Services staff help the client by providing direct job referrals, referring to Work Search resources such as Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Security Specialists, internet sites such as Alaska's Job Bank or Workplace Alaska, or job fairs.

While the client has primary responsibility for managing this type of Work Search, and may have the skills to Work Search independently, the client's case manager monitors progress. Lessons learned about client strengths and challenges allow the case manager and client to effectively plan for self-sufficiency through employment.

Individual Work Search may be appropriate for new clients who have not arranged for needed child care yet, or have part-time work during the times local Job Clubs meet. It is also appropriate as a concurrent activity for Extended Work Services clients who have a job and are looking for a better one, those in short-term Work Readiness activities that support success in paid employment, or clients in areas that do not have a Job Club.

For more on Work Search resources, see [Section 2.4, “Resources Quick Reference”](#).

2.1.4. When do clients Work Search?

From the moment a person comes into a DPA office to apply for Temporary Assistance, they are helped to find a job. Clients Work Search during Initial and Extended Work Services.

The central tenet of Work Services is Work First, that employment is the best way to become self-sufficient, and the labor market is the first best assessment of whether a client will be successful at work. This means that first, clients Work Search with basic Work Search referrals and resources, then receive additional help as indicated by their experience with Work Search and at work.

Work First means each client gets as much assistance as needed to become employed. It also means that Initial Work Services activities clients engage in are work and those other activities, like Work Search, which directly lead to work. Most clients start with a Structured Work Search. Job Clubs, which meet often, provide immediate job referrals and access to Work Search resources, often on a daily basis. Based on their success in initial Work Search, Work Services staff help identify if more in depth Work Search assistance, concurrent supporting Work Readiness activities, or Family Support activities to remediate challenges to employment are appropriate as the client transitions into Extended Work Services.

For more on Work Search during Initial Work Services see, [Section 2.2, “Initial Work Services Work Search”](#), for more on Work Search during Extended Work Services, see [Section 2.3, “Extended Work Services Work Search”](#).

2.1.5. The Basics of Job Match and Work referral

Job match and work referral can be the key to a client finding paid employment or better employment to become sufficient. A good job placement helps insure job retention. One of the most important things Work Services staff can do is to review job opening information daily and match clients with jobs.

To do a good job match, Work Services staff consider a client's:

- Employment goal;
- Intermediate goals;
- Past job experience;
- Personal experiences that demonstrate job skills;
- Strengths; and,
- Limitations and restrictions.

Work Services staff also need to know what jobs are available in the community and the kind of employees potential employers want. The accuracy (and amount) of client

information and understanding of the local labor market affects the quality of the referrals Work Services staff are able to make.

Once matched, clients are referred to the positions. The rest of this section discusses how to effectively match and refer clients to jobs.

2.1.6. How to conduct a job match

To ensure clients are referred to jobs that they are suited to and meet minimum qualifications for, match the client's knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job specifications.

Work Services staff:

- Identify the client's strengths by asking job-specific questions and reviewing client work history;
- Compare the employer's qualifications with the client's work experience and goals;
- Identify the best elements of a client's experience, training, education or other transferable skills to compare to the job's minimum and requested qualifications;
- Make sure the client understands and can fit the conditions of the job including location, shift, number of hours, etc.
- Make sure the client is able to get items required for the job -- drivers license, tools, clothing, etc.

A good job match requires Work Services staff to:

- Gather and compare information about the job and the client.
- Think of everyone as employable and focus on client strengths.
- Remember that most employers are willing to train someone who has the right attitude and aptitude. In some cases the client or staff may need to call the employer and ask if they can be flexible on some requirements.
- Never refer a candidate that is not qualified or that the employer has not agreed to interview.

Work Referral and Interactive De-briefing:

- Refer in writing: When possible give the client a copy of the work referral in writing in addition to talking to them about the job.
- Plan: Discuss what the client can expect in the application process and interview.
- Document what jobs you've referred them to and important information you've discussed.
- Link the client to supports or tools they need to be successful in Work Search, such as child care, transportation assistance, or interview clothing.
- Monitor & Verify: Ask them when they dropped off the application, when their interview is, if they still think they'd like to work there. Review job logs and speak to employers about client application and success at interviewing as appropriate.
- Assess with the client what they've learned from their Work Search experience, identify strengths, challenges and needs; use that information to support the client in being successful.

2.1.7. Work Referral Resources

An important part of matching and referring clients to jobs is knowing the labor market and what jobs are available. Information about job openings is available from many different places. Some offices circulate current Alaska Job Bank job orders to employees on a weekly or daily basis. DPA Job Developers, Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN) resources, local news classifieds and the Internet are good places to start when researching local job opportunities.

These same resources are also available to clients, along with job fairs and on-site recruiting at some Job Centers. Other ideas on where clients can look for jobs are: going to local businesses and asking if they are hiring, calling businesses listed in the phone book, and networking--asking their friends, family and acquaintances if they know of any positions and to keep an eye out for them.

For more on Work Search resources see [Section 2.4, "Resources Quick Reference"](#).

2.1.8. Making Work Referrals

Once clients are matched to job openings a referral is made. Job referrals entail informing the client about the position available, the business location and phone number, and explaining if the business has a preferred method of application (certain times or days they accept applications and if they should fill out company application in person, if a resume is required, if phone calls are accepted, if the application is accepted on-line only, etc.). Clients are more likely to be successful when making informed decisions.

Once the client receives the work referral, Work Services staff make sure the client understands the job requirements and schedule, or is prepared to discuss job expectations with the employer.

A good work referral is one that:

- Meets both client and employer expectations;
- Matches the client's resume and/or application to the required qualifications for the job;
- Includes information for the client on any extra documentation or steps they will need to complete during the interview process; and,
- The client has the resources to follow up on--transportation and child care are arranged in advance if needed.

When applying, clients should understand what the job involves:

- What are the work hours?
- Will the job require work on the weekends?
- Is overtime required or available?
- Is the job full or part time? Permanent or seasonal?
- What skills is the employer looking for?
- What are the minimum qualifications?
- When is the employer planning on making their hiring decision?

Clients successful in getting hired often practice basic Work Search strategies:

- Know about the employer(s);
- Have a completed application and/or targeted resume that includes references;
- Understand and follow the employer's instructions for applying for the job;
- Complete a job interview;
- To explain any gaps in work history and highlight their strengths;
- Dress appropriately for the position;
- Arrange for transportation and child care for the job interview;
- Follow up with the employer after the interview--a thank you card or a phone call to let the employer know about continued interest in the position; and,
- Apply and interview for many jobs--even if a job looks like a "sure thing," continue to apply and interview until they are officially hired and have a start date.

2.1.9. Monitoring Work Search

Monitoring and verification is vital to ensure clients continue to engage in Work Search and their activities help them to get work. It is also a way to collect information on strengths, successes, challenges and needs.

Work Services staff monitor client Work Search with a Job Log the client uses to document their Work Search contacts and activities. A standard Job Log usually has space to write down:

- The business name;
- The date they applied;
- Contact name and phone number;
- Date and time of interview;
- Space for notes on what they need for the interview; and,
- The final outcome of each contact.

In addition to helping the client track what jobs they have applied for, interviewed for, and the outcome of each contact, Job Logs are a good way for clients to keep track of all of their potential jobs and keep contact numbers in one place. Work Services staff help the client evaluate this information to identify potential challenges to getting a job, and what supports and activities they may need to be successful.

Monitoring also happens informally during office visits and phone conversations with the client, and through follow-up and feedback from employers and Work Services staff and vendors.

2.1.10. Supporting Work Search

There are many things Work Services staff can do to help clients secure employment. Much of this section has discussed these things, such as job match and referral, and job logs and monitoring.

Clients may need supports or tools to help them as well. Child care and transportation are vital to client success during Work Search and while employed. Some clients need

interview clothes. Some jobs require the client pay out of pocket expenses such as a criminal background check or finger printing prior to hiring.

Work Services staff help clients to access computers or office equipment, such as copiers or faxes, to complete Work Search documents. Work Services staff may assist clients to prepare for and apply electronically for those jobs that require an on-line application.

Work Services staff attitude towards the client and Work Search is very important. Every client is employable. Even when work history, case file documentation, family circumstances and challenges seem to identify a client as "not job ready" or even "unemployable," clients can succeed in employment and become more self-sufficient.

Every person deserves a chance to try the labor market and get employed. Effective Work Services staff don't give up on the client, and do help them learn their strengths and learn from their experiences so they can succeed in employment and improve their lives. Helping the client figure out what job situation they can "fit" into, how their particular strengths and skills will be important to an employer, and how their challenges won't prevent them from being hired is a vital part of Work Services.

Work Services staff and clients will have better success if the focus is on what they can do, and not on what they can't. Some ways of doing this are listed below.

Celebrate success. From doing a better interview than the last one, to taking initiative and following up a job lead, to getting a job, help clients recognize and congratulate themselves on what they are doing right.

Celebrate movement and progress. It's easy to congratulate someone when they get a raise at their job, but all progress, even if it's incremental, is a step towards exiting Temporary Assistance.

Celebrate strengths. Recognize and cheer for client strengths. Whether it's tenacity in continuing a long Work Search, going the extra mile to volunteering at their children's school, or finding a way to independently meet their family's need rather than using supportive service funds, help clients know you see that they are valuable.

Celebrate "everything". Help the client think about what they have learned when something didn't work out. Most people learn as much or more from failures than from successes - so celebrate the learning and help the client learn from mistakes.

For more on supports, see [Chapter 4, Supports](#).

2.1.11. When must a client take a job?

Clients must take jobs that are available to them. For some clients, the first job they find provides for immediate self-sufficiency; but for many other clients, the first job they are offered does not. While a particular job may not provide enough in wages and benefits for a client to exit Temporary Assistance, it can be a stepping-stone to their next better job. Most workers start out at the bottom of the career ladder, and move up rung by rung. Each increase in hours, wages, and benefits increases income, and each successful month on the job develops new skills, experience and job references which can lead to an even better job.

There are some circumstances under which a participant may not be penalized for refusing employment. For more on job refusal see [Section 3.7, "Attendance, Performance and Job Quit"](#) and [Alaska Temporary Assistance Program Manual](#) section 722.

2.1.12. Becoming Employed

When Work Search leads to employment, celebrate! Work Services staff start working immediately to help the client plan how to keep and advance on the job.

- Revise their FSSP to reflect their new job and intermediate goal.
- Discuss and plan intermediate goals and steps for job retention and advancement.
- Evaluate how soon they may expect to exit Temporary Assistance.
- Evaluate how their earned income will affect their budget.
- Discuss what other steps they can take to achieve their employment and self-sufficiency goals.

Part of updating the FSSP is reevaluating PASS I child care needs, transportation, and identifying any items client needs to go to work such as tools, special equipment, or work clothing.

For more on how to help someone who has become employed, see [Section 3.2, "Unsubsidized Paid Employment"](#).

2.1.13. Documenting Work Search

Client activities are defined by the [State of Alaska Work Verification Plan](#). Please refer to the Alaska Work Verification Plan on how activities must be monitored and verified.

Initial Work Services Staff and Work Services Case Managers use the following tools to document plans, actions and outcomes of client activity:

- FSSP
- "Client Notes" screen in CMS
- Work activities type and hours of participation in the "Work Activities" screen in CMS using JAS Work Activity Codes
- Other documentation as appropriate, including job logs, correspondence, assessments, resumes, and referrals to other resources.

Note on Verification of Work Search:

Work Services staff should provide, and Work Services Program Managers should review case files for, the following documentation:

- Copies of job logs in client files to support Work Activity hours entered in CMS.
- Client Notes in CMS that reflect that the case manager has had conversations with the client regarding their experience in applying and interviewing for jobs (success, strengths or challenges they are experiencing) and how the case manager is assisting the client to be successful in work search.

- Client Notes in CMS that reflect the case manager has conducted spot-checks with employers to confirm that the client has applied/interviewed or other wise contacted them as noted on the client’s job log if the information appears questionable based on the information written on the log, or based on the conversations with the client.

In completing documentation, consider that while some portion of Work Search activities are conducted in a group setting that is appropriate for teaching clients about the job market, workplace expectations and how to secure employment, ultimately work search is different for each client based on their goals, strengths and challenged to employment.

Case file documentation should show that Work Services staff are providing clients one-on-one support – that case managers “de-brief clients on job search experience and provide coaching and additional job leads.” (**Alaska Work Verification Plan** Sec 1: Work Search and Job Readiness)

Ideally, client notes should have enough detail to help the next case manager to have an idea of the client’s success in activities already completed, and what next steps may be needed to assist the client to progress towards self-sufficiency via employment. This includes notes on contact with employers that might have insight into why client may not be successful in getting hired.

2.2. Initial Work Services Work Search

2.2.1. What is Initial Work Services?

Initial Work Services refers to the time a new (or returning) client spends doing intensive Work Search. Following the Work First philosophy, each client tests the labor market to find employment and to identify their strengths and challenges in finding employment. Work Services staff help the client with job referrals and referrals to resources to get a job as quickly as possible.

Initial Work Services Work Search starts the moment a client comes in to apply for Temporary Assistance. Each office tailors the client intake and application process to their unique community and resources, so clients in different areas are linked to Work Services resources differently. Some clients meet with a Work Services Intake staff for an initial employability assessment and are referred to DOL Job Club before they are assigned an on-going case manager. Others meet with their new case manager the same day they apply and receive Initial Work Services and Work Search assistance from a service provider. In some areas Job Club is available six days a week and in some areas, other alternative services are available. However, the expectation for all clients is the same-- test the labor market with a Work Search and get employment as quickly as possible.

During Initial Work Services Work Services staff:

- Engage clients as early as possible to promote active participation in Work Search and other activities;
- Link clients with job listings, refer clients to job openings, and provide or refer clients to workshops and other employment services;

- Monitor and verify Work Search activities and provide assistance to improve a client's Work Search skills when needed;
- Actively assess clients' Work Search experience to develop information on their skills, interests, aptitudes, strengths and challenges;
- Refer for or provide the supportive services necessary to allow an active Work Search; and,
- Work with the client in developing, adapting and revising the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan based on what is working and not working in progressing toward employment.

2.2.2. Job referrals and resources

In the Work First model, each client gets the level of services they need to access and maintain employment. Because Initial Work Services usually is staff's first experience with a client, it's important not to assume what level of assistance the client needs. The first tools to use with clients in initial Work Search are job referrals and resources.

Referrals to hiring employers should be provided as frequently as jobs become available. Jobs should be matched to the client based on what is known about the client's goals, skills and employment history and the local labor market. An in-depth job match, based on extensive knowledge of the client, is not usually possible during initial Work Search due to minimal current information on the client's work and Work Search skills. When referring clients to jobs, staff follow up after application and interviews to learn more about the client's success and need for Work Search supports.

For more on job matching see [Section 2.2, "Initial Work Services Work Search"](#).

In addition to job referrals clients may need resources to carry out a successful Work Search. The most commonly used resources are:

Resource Rooms. One Stop Centers and Work Service providers maintain rooms with computers, faxes, phones and copiers which are available for use in Work Searching. Resource room staff help find job leads and develop Work Search tools.

Job Clubs. A kind of Work Search support group which is facilitated by staff or clients. Clients looking for work meet on a regular basis (usually twice daily) to discuss job leads, the application and interview process, and successes and challenges in finding employment.

Internet Resources. Many job openings are posted on the Internet. Alaska's Job Bank is a listing of available jobs provided to DOL by hiring employers. Some jobs are both posted and applied for on-line, and some businesses post job openings on their web sites. Most newspapers' classified sections can also be accessed on-line.

For more on Work Search resources see [Section 2.4, "Resources Quick Reference"](#).

2.2.3. Planning for Work Search and Employment

Planning for Work Search and Employment is vital to a successful Work Search. Work Services staff talk with clients about supports they may need in order to look for work and to engage in other Work and Work Readiness activities full-time.

The client's plan for employment and self-sufficiency is documented on their Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP). The Plan outlines their employment goal, intermediate goals, steps and activities they will engage in to become employed, and the supports they may need to complete their plan. Because the FSSP is a contract between DPA and the client, it's important that the Plan clearly outline expectations for client participation, including number of hours, schedule and location of activities.

Employment and Work Search are the primary activities clients engage in during Initial Work Services. The kind of Work Search a client engages in, either structured or individual, depends on the client and resources available in their area. Work Search activities may include receiving Work Search services, such as resume workshops or job clubs and other activities noted above.

In order to provide for success in employment and increased self-sufficiency, clients may also work towards additional intermediate goals and engage in supporting activities as they work and Work Search. Work Services staff help clients to identify any activities that can be done concurrently with Work Search that will support them in getting and keeping a job.

Examples of concurrent intermediate goals and activities clients may engage in during Initial Work Services include:

- Find and arrange for appropriate child care;
- Arrange for transportation to and from work or Work Search;
- Get an Alaska Driver's License (if needed for work or to get to work);
- Complete application process to receive AHFC Housing Assistance (to provide for stable, safe and affordable housing near employment opportunities); and
- Contact and access services from (name of service) (following up on immediate referrals as needed).

Some clients need to be referred to or provided with certain supports. Because all Temporary Assistance clients have dependent children, all need to consider how their Work Search fits in with their children's school schedule and child care needs. All clients also need to determine their transportation needs for employment and Work Search.

For more on Family Self-Sufficiency Planning see [Section 5.3, "Family Self-Sufficiency Planning"](#).

For more on Supports available to clients see [Chapter 4, Supports](#).

2.2.4. Work Services for Initial Work Search

All adult clients receive Work Services case management. Case management, the primary work service used to assist clients in working toward self sufficiency, consists of assessment, planning, monitoring and linking.

Assess. Client strengths and challenges to employment are identified through initial and on-going employability assessments that evaluate (see [Section 5.2, "Employability Assessment"](#)) Work Search experiences, work and training history, and personal strengths and challenges.

Plan. Planning focuses on employment and self-sufficiency. The Plan is documented on the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (see [Section 5.3, "Family Self-Sufficiency Planning"](#)),

which also serves as a record of expectations for client participation and those supports they will need to accomplish the plan.

Monitor & Verify. Case managers and other Work Services staff monitor and verify client activities to ensure participation, encourage them to succeed, and identify strengths, challenges and lessons learned during their Work Search. Monitoring and verification methods vary by activity. See the appropriate section for details.

Link. Clients are linked to resources they need to be successful in employment, Work Search and self-sufficiency. The most common referrals are related to child care (referral and resource agencies), Work Search and employment workshops, and other agencies for housing, heating, or other assistance. The most used supports provided by Work Services are discussed below.

Supports. Supports (such as help with child care or transportation) may be needed to help clients participate and succeed in Work Search and employment. Encourage clients and help them to plan and problem-solve potential challenges such as alternative child care and transportation arrangements. Clients use their own resources first, then community resources. If there is no other way to meet a family need directly related to employment, self-sufficiency or participation, then you may provide Temporary Assistance supportive services. See [Chapter 4, Supports](#) for what Supports are available how to determine appropriate level of support.

2.2.5. When initial Work Search leads to employment

As soon as a client is employed Work Services staff:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the client's success;
- Verify employment (see the Alaska State Work Verification Plan Sec 1: Unsubsidized Employment for details);
- Evaluate and document what has been learned about the client's strengths, preferences and challenges through the Work Search experience;
- Plan for job retention and advancement (and document the plan on the family's FSSP);
- Transition them to Extended Work Services; and,
- Help the client to reevaluate their child care and transportation needs immediately so they are prepared to begin their job. Some clients may need assistance with work clothes or special tools or referral to child care resources (see [Chapter 4, Supports](#)).

Planning should include job retention and wage advancement strategies, including back-up child care and transportation arrangements. If the work is part-time, other intermediate goals such as continued Work Search, Community Work Experience, GED classes or other concurrent activities may be identified on the Plan to keep the client moving towards self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

For more on working with employed clients see [Chapter 3, Work](#).

2.2.6. Lessons learned from Initial Work Services

Lessons learned from Initial Work Services include information about the client's strengths and challenges in pursuing employment. The information gathered aids in

identifying the most appropriate next steps and activities that will help the client to become employed quickly.

Talking to the client about what they learned is the best place to start. What contributed to their success in getting a job? Why do they think they didn't find employment? Are there any things that they think they could improve? What is the most difficult part of Work Search? What would be helpful to them in finding and keeping work? What are they good at when it comes to Work Search?

Reviewing information from Job Club staff and employers can lend insight into strengths and challenges. Sometimes a lack of work history or basic skills can reduce the number of job opportunities available to a client. In some communities the labor market is so limited that finding employment is very difficult. Attendance, attitude and dress can have a dramatic impact in success in Work Search and employment.

Challenges may be identified by asking a series of questions and gathering information from multiple sources. Some challenges are easily identified and lead directly to a way to address the challenge, such as finding back-up child care if a client's child is often sick. Others challenges may be identified by helping the client, job club staff and/or others identify knowledge, skills, attitude, behaviors and circumstances that affect employability and success in Work Search.

2.2.7. When to transition to Extended Work Services

Clients who become employed during initial Work Search immediately transition to Extended Work Services. For those who do not get work immediately, the transition to Extended Work Services is made on a case-by-case basis.

A client should have enough intensive Work Search experiences to ensure they've adequately tested the labor market. Because the labor market is different in each community, the length of time for which an intensive Initial Work Services Work Search is reasonable varies. Most clients will continue to Work Search during Extended Work Services, but combine the search with a larger variety of other intermediate goals and activities to give them a better chance at becoming employed. It is also important to remember that Initial Work Services usually won't need to exceed one month in duration. If a client is not successful in finding employment after one month of intensive, full-time Work Search, it is time to combine Work Search efforts with other activities.

It is during Extended Work Services that staff may identify subsidized work or Community or Business Work Experience (CWE or BWE) opportunities, training, specialized assessment and referrals to remediate challenges to employment based on what was learned during Initial Work Services.

For more on Extended Work Services Work Search see [Section 2.3, "Extended Work Services Work Search"](#).

2.2.8. Documenting Initial Work Search

All Work Search is verified and documented as per the [Alaska Work Verification Plan](#). See [Section 2.1.13 Documenting Work Search](#) for details.

2.3. Extended Work Services Work Search

2.3.1. What are Extended Work Services?

Extended Work Services provide clients with the level of assistance they need to be successful in Work Search and employment based on the lessons learned during the client's time in Initial Work Services. Clients receive Extended Work Services as soon as they finish an intensive Work Search during Initial Work Services. Work Services case managers use a combination of tools and techniques to assist clients in planning for and reaching their employment goals. Services include those available during Initial Work Services and a variety of tools and activities which address increasing job skills, self-sufficiency, and remediation of challenges.

Work Search during Extended Work Services is usually concurrent with other work activities, such as employment, training or remediation of challenges. It may be structured and supported with in-depth, one-on-one or specialized services tailored to a client's specific strengths and needs.

2.3.2. Who Work Searches during Extended Work Services?

Most clients will Work Search at some time during Extended Work Services.

Clients who are employed when they transition from Initial to Extended Work Services may use Work Search to find employment with more hours or better wages. Unemployed clients may need a higher level of assistance to be successful in finding employment. Clients who are in subsidized work or Community or Business Work Experience can use Work Search to find unsubsidized employment.

Clients engaged in training as their primary activity Work Search for employment before they exit their educational program to make the most of their new skills while finding work as quickly as possible. Clients who are engaged in Family Support activities (such as applying for housing assistance, or remediation of challenges) will look for work concurrently along with activities supporting other intermediate goals. Case managers work with clients to determine an appropriate level of services and plan the best steps and route to employment which provides for exiting Temporary Assistance.

Only those clients who are temporarily excused from participation in Work and Work Readiness activities may be excused from Work Search. Clients who are excused from full-time participation but are able to participate part time may Work Search for employment that is appropriate for their strengths and will accommodate their limitations or schedule. Clients completely excused from participation in work activity are encouraged to voluntarily Work Search and work as much as they are able, though they are not subject to penalty if they do not follow through with Work Search or are unable to maintain participation in Work or Work Readiness activities.

It's important for case managers to convey to clients that they are capable of succeeding at work in order to effectively support their efforts. Regardless of the challenges, there is no way to know if someone is truly "job ready" or not except to help them to try and see if they succeed. The entire continuum of Work Services is designed to provide clients with planning, tools and support help them have steady employment and get an even better job.

2.3.3. Work Services for Extended Work Search

There are a wide variety of Work Search services available to clients and staff during Extended Work Services. All clients receive work services case management and receive planning, assessment, monitoring, and referrals to appropriate resources. Extended Work Services also has a variety of services designed to assist those clients who appear to have significant and multiple challenges to employment including job coaching, Community Work Experience, and other specialized services.

All Initial Work Services offered for Work Search are also available during Extended Work Services, including job referrals, internet resources, resource rooms, and workshops. These services are appropriate for clients who are engaging in an independent work search as well as those or who are in a structured work search.

Extended Work Services for Work Search are those most common in Initial Work Search, along with additional ones such as in-depth job matching, vocational counseling, job sampling, and vocational rehabilitation.

In-depth job matching and referral

Uses the lessons learned during Work Search and employability assessment to match and refer clients to jobs. Clients are matched to jobs to build on strengths and increase their chances of success in finding and retaining employment. In-depth job matching includes assessing the client's career interests, work experience, academic history, skills, work maturity, financial and geographic situation assistance to find the best employment matches available in the local labor market. In-depth matching does not mean client job referrals are limited to certain types of employment. Instead, clients are helped to identify and discuss how certain jobs offer opportunities for success and what the client can do to make the most of opportunities.

Vocational counseling

Is provided through referral to employment counselors or other vocational specialists. Vocational counseling offers a variety of services appropriate for both unemployed and working clients. Clients receive specialized information on different types of jobs, career advancement options, individualized help with resumes and interviewing, and work to develop strategies for making vocational choices. Employment Counselors and vendors may conduct interest inventories, workplace skills assessment, basic education assessments (like the GATB and TABE), and other vocational assessments to identify client strengths and interests. This information can then be used to develop plans for employment and advancement.

Community Work Experience (CWE) and Business Work Experience (BWE)

May be appropriate for clients who have little work history, are no longer able to find the kind of work they've done in the past due to availability or a change in their abilities. These clients may have difficulty knowing if they are interested and suited to a certain type of work. While this should not keep them from applying to a variety of jobs they may be suited for, CWE at a government or non-profit site or BWE with a for-profit business can allow for a closer look at a type of employment the client may be interested in while they contribute to their community. CWE or BWE can also be clients' best option for getting job skills and networking in communities with high and limited unemployment. For more on CWE and BWE see [Section 3.4, "Community Work Experience and Business Work Experience"](#).

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) or Native Vocational Rehabilitation (NVR) programs can provide job placement and employment services to clients who experience a disability. Clients with documented disabilities who need workplace accommodations or other assistance to get and keep a job may be referred by Work Services staff to DVR or NVR as appropriate. Not all individuals who have a disability are in need of, or want, Vocational Rehabilitation services. Referrals are made when requested by clients, or when information gathered during Work Services indicates this level of assistance is necessary.

2.3.4. Concurrent Activities

Extended Work Search can be quite different from Work Search during Initial Work Services. Independent and structured work searches are still the foundation of Work Searching. However, instead of the intensive full-time Work Search of Initial Work Services, extended Work Search is often combined with other intermediate goals and activities that are part or almost full-time.

The urgency of the 60-month lifetime limit means that each month a client receives Temporary Assistance needs to be used wisely. Full-time extended Work Search (preceded by full-time intensive initial Work Search) may be appropriate on a case-by-case basis, but it should be limited to a short period of time. Many small communities have a limited number of employment vacancies, making full-time work search in excess of a month a poor use of the client's time. In larger communities, lack of success in finding employment after a well supported extended Work Search may indicate the client has hidden challenges that require other activities to ensure they become employed quickly.

Work Search concurrent with employment or other work activities is the best bet for most clients in Extended Work Services. Clients with part-time work look for full-time work; clients with full-time work may look for a job with better wages or benefits. Clients in Community or Business Work Experience (CWE or BWE) or part-time training look for employment that builds on the skills they are acquiring and provides for increased income. Even if the client's intermediate goal is completion of full-time training, Work Search may be appropriate to ensure they have employment on completion of training.

In fact, the only time Work Search is not the best step is when the client is excused from participation, employed in a position which may provide for exiting Temporary Assistance,

or in an activity that makes Work Search unreasonable, such as full-time substance abuse treatment. And even during these times, clients may Work Search.

Work Search can be combined with virtually any other activity. Work Search during Extended Work Services can be creative and should be tailored to each client's unique strengths, skills, preferences and circumstances.

2.3.5. Work Search for a Better Job

As soon as a client becomes employed, case managers assist them in planning how this job brings them closer to self-sufficiency. All employed clients should take steps to retain their employment. For some employed clients, their best bet at increased wages is to advance at their current job by increasing hours and/or their hourly wage. For others, particularly those with seasonal or part-time work with little chance of wage advancement, concurrent Work Search for a better job that allows them to build on their strengths and new skills is appropriate. In some cases client will search for a second job to supplement part-time employment.

Case management can be a great tool to use in support of client continued success in the labor market. By answering a few simple questions, the client may discover likely career paths, intermediate goals, steps to get there and supports to make it happen.

Assess

- What wages and benefits does the client receive from their current job?
- Are there any supports the client needs to keep and be successful at this job?
- Will this job allow their family to exit Temporary Assistance?
- What job skills, experience, references and opportunities for (wage, hours) advancement exist at this job?
- What kind of jobs will the client meet minimum qualifications for after they've worked there for 3 months? 6 months?
- Is a second or third job a manageable option?

Plan

- Does the client think they may want to stay with this employer for 6 months, a year or more? Why?
- What kind of job does the client ultimately want and how will this job help them get there?
- Are there any supplemental supports that could help the client succeed at their current job and prepare for their next? Short-term targeted workshops, training, or Community or Business Work Experience (CWE or BWE) can often augment job skills and experience when applying for better job--is the client interested and able to participate in concurrent Work and Work Readiness activities?
- When is the best time to start Work Search for a better job?

Link & Support

- Are there any community or program resources that would be helpful in keeping their current job or getting a new one? How can they access them?
- Does the client have a good support system of family and friends? If yes, how can they help? If not, what strategies may help balance work and parenting? Does

their work schedule allow for attending a Job Club that allows for networking and encouragement in Work Search?

Monitoring & Verification

- Based on the client's situation, job, strengths and needs, how often should they meet and/or talk with their case manager to problem solve, plan and identify supports?
- How is the client progressing in their Work Search?
- What do job logs reveal about how they are Work Searching? What do employers the client has interviewed with say about their qualifications and interviewing ability?
- Are child care arrangements adequate and authorizations current?
- What supportive services are needed to support Work Search? Does the client need any additional referrals or resources?
- Is it time to update their FSSP? What are their intermediate goals? How many hours of work and Work Search are identified?

2.3.6. Examples of Extended Work Search

Example 2.1. New client, unemployed with work history (not excused)

A client who is new to Temporary Assistance and Extended Work Services is unemployed, but has a good work history and has several interviews lined up for next week--

The case manager and client agree that she should continue *full-time individual work search for one more week, and schedule a meeting for next Friday to discuss how it's going and alternatives to employment if she doesn't get a job by then. The case manager calls the client frequently with new job referrals, and verifies with job log and client conversation to document number of hours of Work Search and that the client is engaged and making progress.*

Example 2.2. Ongoing client with part-time employment

A client who is employed part-time in food service would like to pursue clerical work--

The case manager and client review work history and job skills and decide that she meets the minimum qualifications for some hotel desk clerk and entry level clerical positions. Because she is unfamiliar with clerical jobs, they decide on a *part-time structured work search while she continues to work so the case manager and resource room staff can help her prepare her applications and for interviews. The case manager gives her some job referrals and they set a meeting for next week to fill out job applications. They agree that they will evaluate how the Work Search is going in 3 weeks, at which time they may consider referring her to a Job Developer to see if there is an opportunity to place her in OJT clerical employment.* The case manager verifies the work search with job logs and client conversation, as well as resource room staff to document number of hours of Work Search and that the client is engaged and making progress.

Example 2.3. New client, unemployed (required to participate in Work Services, but excused from Job Club due to DV & homelessness)

A client who has just relocated to the area is living in a women's shelter. She has some work experience in housekeeping and fish processing, but has not worked in five years. She would like to go into bookkeeping, but doesn't have the training--

The case manager and client agree that she needs to secure housing, arrange for child care, and get some current work experience. They decide on a *part-time structured work search while she applies for housing assistance, finds a rental and locates a child care provider. She will apply for a variety of entry-level jobs, including food-service, clerical and housekeeping. As soon as she finds a child care provider, she will meet with her case manager to arrange PASS I subsidy and start Job Club and a resume workshop so she can develop three different resumes for the three types of work she will apply for.* The case manager verifies the work search with job logs and client conversation, as well as resource room staff to document number of hours of Work Search and that the client is engaged and making progress.

Example 2.4. Ongoing client with full-time employment & low wages

A client has been employed full-time as a supervisor at a fast-food restaurant for six months--

The case manager and client talk about the wages, benefits and opportunities to move up at the business, and discover that the client cannot become self-sufficient in his current position and there doesn't seem to be the chance to move up anytime soon. The client is unsure what kind of job he can get with his experience, and what kind of job he would like to do next. The case manager refers the client to a vocational counselor to assist the client in exploring job options. The client will start a *part-time structured work search with the aid of the vocational counselor and case manager once they determine what jobs are the client's best bet for better wages, hours and benefits.* The case manager verifies the work search with job logs and client conversation, as well as conversation and/or written summary from the vocational counselor to document number of hours of Work Search and that the client is engaged and making progress.

Example 2.5. 2 Parent family, seasonal employment in rural community (1 parent excused)

A client who is returning to Work Services after being off of Temporary Assistance for 6 months is unemployed after Initial Work Services. He is in a 2-parent family, lives in a rural community with high unemployment, and his work history shows that he has had high-paying but sporadic/seasonal work as a fisherman and in construction. His wife is excused from participation due to caring for their disabled child--

He and the case manager examine his budget to determine how much his family needs per month to exit Temporary Assistance, and find that budgeting his earned income could possibly eliminate their need for a Temporary Assistance grant even when he is unemployed. For the last few years he's been able to work for the same three employers for 6-10 weeks at a time during the year. They decide that he will continue with an *individual work search while he takes some budgeting classes so his family can stretch what they earn across the year.*

The case manager also schedules a meeting with his wife to develop an FSSP with her. At that time they may discuss the possibility of her accessing respite for their child and

using her experience in caring for their child to *voluntarily independent Work Search for part-time work as a caregiver or school aide to help their family earn additional income.*

The case manager verifies the work search with job logs and client conversation, to document number of hours of Work Search and that the client is engaged and making progress. The case manager also verifies the client attended the budgeting class and number of hours with a note from or phone call to the agency or teacher that provides the class. If the class required homework, the case manager verifies this with the program and may count homework hours as per the Alaska Work Verification Program rules.

2.3.7. When Extended Work Search Leads to Employment

When a client becomes employed during Extended Work Services they continue to plan and work with their case manager to identify next steps towards self-sufficiency. The client is helped to identify supports they may need to be successful on the job and linked to resources. Case managers should:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the client's success in finding (better) employment;
- Evaluate what they have learned about the client's strengths, preferences and challenges through the Work Search experience;
- Plan for steady work, advancement at work, and better jobs (and document the plan on the family's FSSP); and,
- Reevaluate the client's progress towards self-sufficiency and plan for exiting Temporary Assistance if appropriate.

For more on how to support clients in employment and increasing self-sufficiency, see [Section 3.6, "Steady work and Better jobs"](#).

2.3.8. Alternatives to Extended Work Search

Some clients may Work Search during Extended Work Services for a reasonable period of time and not be hired. In these situations, case managers help the client to identify lessons learned from their experience and explore what other intermediate goals and activities may help the client to become employed.

Problem solving, referral to community resources and appropriate supportive services can help with remediation of child care, transportation and other common challenges. For those clients who are working closely with other agencies, such as OCS, the court system, or substance abuse treatment facilities, communication or a staffing with the other agency may help to understand the client's situation and other obligations which are impacting success in Work Search and paid employment.

Some of the most common tools used to help Extended Work Services clients who need a higher level of assistance in becoming employed include the following:

Placement in Subsidized Employment

May be appropriate when the client has not been successful in finding or retaining paid employment, or if on-the-job training is a good match for the client's strengths and interests. Subsidized employment includes Job Start and On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities that allow clients to learn job-specific skills while earning a wage.

Placement in subsidized employment is appropriate when the job is a good match and is linked to opportunities in the local labor market. Clients who need extra supports may receive job coaching during their placement as well. For more on Subsidized Employment see [Section 3.3, “Subsidized Employment”](#).

Community Work Experience (CWE) & Business Work Experience (BWE)

Community Work Experience (CWE) allows a client to provide public service at government, non-profit and charitable work sites. Business Work Experience (BWE) allows a client to get work experience at a private business. This structured, unpaid employment allows for skill building and development of work references with frequent feedback on their work performance. Some CWE and BWE sites hire clients into paid positions based on the experience and skills they've gained at the work site. For more on CWE and BWE see [Section 3.4, “Community Work Experience and Business Work Experience”](#).

Job Coaching

Specialized case managers or vendors can offer evaluation and guidance to clients who need extra assistance in identifying strengths and learning workplace behavior and expectations. Job Coaching is often provided while the client is at work or engaged in work activity. In some areas this is offered as part of contracted CWE or BWE services through a DPA approved vendor or as part of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Specialized Assessments

When a client's progress in achieving intermediate goals and completing tasks outlined on their FSSP has slowed or stopped, you may need more detailed information on client strengths and abilities to find new employment strategies or resolve hidden challenges to employment. Specialized assessment refers to any in-depth, formal assessment completed by a professional that results in detailed client information, diagnosis, or eligibility for additional community services and/or federal and state social service programs. Some of the most common specialized assessments are a functional assessment (which may determine if the client has challenges in performing daily activities), vocational assessment (usually as part of vocational counseling), substance abuse assessment, and formal psychological/mental health assessment.

Note

For those clients who are unable to participate full-time due to medical reasons, or are working closely with health or mental health professionals, specific information on capacity for work may help to identify wellness goals which will increase their ability to participate. Clients who are caring for a disabled child or relative may identify special supports, such as respite care, that may help them in pursuing employment.

2.3.9. Documenting Extended Work Search

All Work Search is verified and documented as per the [Alaska Work Verification Plan](#). See [Section 2.1.13 Documenting Work Search](#) for details.

2.4. Resources Quick Reference

2.4.1. Resources for Work Search

All of the job openings listed with the Department of Labor are included on Alaska's Job Bank. You can access these openings on the internet at the [Alaska Job Center Network](#).

In addition the Alaska job openings, there is a great deal of good career information and sources for job hunting techniques.

Other web sites include:

[Federal job openings](#)

[Workplace Alaska listings](#)

[Alaska Job Center Network](#)

[Help Wanted Alaska](#)

[Monster Work Search](#)

[Job Web](#)

[Career Builder Work Search](#)

2.4.2. Job Development Services

Job development is the link with employers that helps to generate employment opportunities for Temporary Assistance clients. In cooperation with the Department of Labor, there are job developers in some communities that have One-Stop Job Centers. Job developers outreach to employers and market on behalf of Temporary Assistance clients.

Job developers take exclusive job orders for Temporary Assistance clients, and market tax credits and other benefits employers can gain by hiring clients.

Job developers also market and develop Job Start and On-the-Job Training (OJT) with private employers. If you have a client who may be appropriate for subsidized employment, the local job developer is your primary contact.

If you do not live in a community with a job developer, you can still use them as a resource for information and ideas.

Phone numbers and contact information for DPA job developers can be accessed at the [Department of Labor Work Services website](#).