

3.1 Overview

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The Tools-Overview section includes:

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3.1.1 What are the tools WFPS/WFSSS use?

This chapter describes the major tools and techniques WorkFirst Program Specialists (WFPS)/WorkFirst Social Services Specialists (WFSSS) use to help WorkFirst participants succeed. To be fully effective, most of these tools rely heavily on the partnerships and communication between the participant and case manager, including collaboration with WorkFirst agencies.

The main tools used to partner with a WorkFirst participant are listed below with a brief description.

Tool	Description
Case staffing	Case staffing is a group process, which creates an opportunity for the WFPS/WFSSS to discuss with the participant their engagement in activities. Professionals and partners the participant is engaged with can also be invited to the case staffing and provide support.
Continuous Activity Planning (CAP)	Continuous Activity Planning is an informal consultation or joint evaluation with available WorkFirst partners, DSHS co-workers, or other service providers.
Customer Driven Severity Scale	An optional tool that provides support and guidance to WFPS around assessing the participant's barriers and their need to connect with a WFSSS.
eJAS	eJAS is an automation tool for WFPS, WFSSS, Community and Technical Colleges, Career Scope Coaches, Commerce agencies and many contracted service providers, such as contractors that serve our limited English population. It allows for documentation of participation and any barriers participants experience when seeking employment. Service providers use eJAS to report participation to the WFPS/WFSSS.
Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)	An Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) outlines a participant's required action steps towards self-sufficiency.
Intensive Services	Intensive services are extra or exceptional supports provided to participants having the greatest difficulty finding and keeping jobs, and achieve success.

Pathway Development Tool	The tool used for comprehensive evaluations which are required for all WorkFirst participants. This tool is also used for WorkFirst social service assessments.
Personal Pathway <i>Effective 11/15/21, the Personal Pathway is suspended until further notice.</i>	A short participant self-assessment, supporting development of rapport between participant and WorkFirst staff, indicating participant areas of interest. The information is used to guide what topics to start with during the comprehensive evaluation discussion and subsequent assessments (where applicable).–
PRISM	PRISM is a Predictive Modeling tool intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sources of medical evidence; • Identify high medical risk/special needs participants; • Identify barriers and/or risk factors affecting employability; and • Assist with referral or treatment for chronic health issues. <p>Note: Don't use PRISM to gather information for purposes of imposing sanctions for failure to adhere to program standards.</p>
Protective payee	Protective payees are contracted vendors that provide money management to assigned participants to make sure assistance funds are used for basic needs.
Sanction	A sanction is a status that a participant enters when they are able, but refuses to participate as required.
Stacked Services	Stacking services requires the participant to engage in more than one activity at a time - perhaps working with different providers to access services.
WorkFirst Partner Directory	A statewide list of WorkFirst contracted partners, which supports development of an IRP with a participant. <i>Note: This directory is only directly accessible to CSD staff.</i>

3.1.2 What are our guiding principles for tool use?

It is important to:

- Identify and resolve issues that interfere with employment as soon as possible, without impeding the participant's progress towards economic stability.
- Require parents/caregivers to participate as close to full-time as possible to make full use of their time on WorkFirst cash assistance. Participants can often do more than one thing at a time and work with more than one provider. Offer stacked services to meet the participant's goals.
- Believe in the participant's ability--don't make an assumption that the participant cannot succeed.

- Document issues, strengths, and participation plans on a consistent basis. As you get to know each participant better, you can use new insights to create more effective IRPs.
- Detail in writing, specific action steps each participant can take to become independent from WorkFirst cash assistance. Even better, you can make joint plans with the participant and community partners so everyone is working towards a common goal.
- Pool resources and expertise with partners in the community.
- Everyone is required to participate to the best of their ability. Ongoing communication with the participant focused on their goals provides support to keep the participant engaged.

3.1.3 Additional considerations when communication and engaging a participant.

When communicating and engaging with participants, consider the following:

- Giving participants information both verbally and in writing, and taking all the time needed to make sure they understand what is required.
- Making sure all written communication is in plain talk and in the language of the participant's choice.
- Checking whether the participant has an Equal Access (EA) plan. If they do, ensure we are following all of the requirements in their EA plan as instructed (see [EA-Z Manual: Equal Access\[Necessary Supplemental Accommodations\]](#)).
- Letting participants know why you are asking for information (generally, to determine eligibility or to discuss their strengths and barriers to engaging in activities).
- Using open-ended questions to engage the participant in sharing their strengths and needs.
- Talking with co-workers, supervisors, or community partners if you have trouble deciding what to do. Someone else may know of another resource or an approach you haven't considered.
- Fostering relationships with partner agencies and community-based organizations. We have a common goal, and effective coordination can make the difference in creating effective plans.

Resources

Related WorkFirst Handbook Sections

- [1.2 Required Participation](#)
- [3.2.1 Comprehensive Evaluation](#)
- [3.2.2 Personal Pathway](#)
- [3.2.3 Pathway Development Tool](#)
- [3.3.1 Individual Responsibility Plan](#)
- [3.4 Case Staffing](#)

- [3.5.1 Entering Non-Compliance Sanction \(NCS\)](#)
- [6.1 Resolving Issues - Overview](#)

Forms & Other Resources

- [Customer-Driven Severity Scale](#) – *only accessible to CSD staff*
- [Personal Pathway \(DSHS 11-154\)](#)
- [WorkFirst Partner Directory](#) – *only accessible to CSD staff*
- [WorkFirst Website](#)