**DEFINING A TARGET POPULATION: A PROGRAM DESIGN PLANNING TOOL**



**INTRODUCTION**

**Defining a Target Population: A Program Design Planning Tool**

**This tool is designed to support:**

* Development of a profile of your target population,
* Identification of assets your target population may bring to the requirements and characteristics of your target occupation,
* Identification of potential issues or barriers your target population may face in completing the program and becoming successfully employed in the target occupation,
* Identification of program elements and interventions that will be needed to support them to complete the program and become employed, and
* Analysis of the feasibility of potential program elements and interventions.

**Step 1** → List your target **Occupation Title**

**Step 2** → List the **requirements and characteristics of your target occupation**. This information should come primarily from your partner employers and from job postings from employers in your region. [O\*NET](https://www.onetonline.org/) is also a helpful source of information about occupational characteristics and requirements. If you don’t have sufficient information for a specific attribute or if it is not relevant to the occupation, enter N/A.

**Step 3** → Develop an **Initial Profile** of your target population

**Step 4** → Compare the occupation requirements with your target population characteristics and **Assess Program Feasibility**. Ask yourself:

* For which requirements is my target population a good fit?
* For which requirements would my target population need preparation or assistance?
* What is the program element or intervention that might be necessary?
* Would it be feasible to provide such preparation or assistance in a reasonable timeframe? If NOT, should I consider modifying my target population profile? Or should I consider a different target occupation?

**Step 5** → If you decide to keep your initial target occupation, **Revise and Develop a Final Profile of Your Target Population**. Revise your **Initial Population Profile** based on the assessment of feasibility and fit you completed in Step 4.Develop a **Final Profile** of your target population, including assets that would contribute to their success in the program and in the occupation.

If you decide to assess the feasibility of preparing your target population for a **different occupation**, create a new worksheet and follow Steps 1-5 [Using Labor Market Information Tool.docx](https://commcorp1.sharepoint.com/sites/ESOLFSRsFY24-24204075-OeschMartha/Shared%20Documents/2504075%20-%20Oesch,%20Martha/Portal/Program%20Design/Identifying%20the%20Target%20Population/(mymy)%20Target%20Population%20Program%20Design%20Planning%20Tool.docx) is a resource to help you explore and identify target occupations.

**STEP 1**

**List your target Occupation Title**

**Occupation title:** *[enter here]*

**STEP 2**

**Target Occupation Characteristics and Requirements**

**This information should come primarily from your partner employers and from job postings from employers in your region.** [**O\*NET**](https://www.onetonline.org/) **is also a helpful source of information about occupational characteristics and requirements. If you don’t have sufficient information for an attribute or if it is not relevant to the occupation, enter N/A.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ATTRIBUTES** | **QUESTIONS** | **ANSWER HERE** |
| Education | Are employers seeking individuals who are proficient in languages other than English? If yes, what languages? |  |
| Certificates/  Licenses | What level of literacy is required for entry into the occupation? |  |
| English Language Proficiency | What is the level of English language proficiency required for the occupation?  ​​☐​ Low  ​​☐​ Intermediate  ​​☐​ Advanced |  |
| Other Language Proficiency | Are employers seeking individuals who are proficient in languages other than English? If yes, what languages? |  |
| Literacy | What level of literacy is required for entry into the occupation?  ☐ Below 12th grade level  ☐ 12th grade level  ☐ Above 12th grade level |  |
| What type of information do workers in this occupation need to be able to read? |  |
| What type of writing do they need to be able to do? |  |
| Numeracy | What level of numeracy is required for entry into the occupation?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| How do workers in this occupation use numeracy skills? |  |
| Computer Literacy/  Proficiency | Is computer literacy/proficiency required for the occupation? |  |
| Technical Skills | What technical skills are required for entry into this occupation? |  |
| Work History | Do employers require previous work history for entry into the target occupation?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If yes, how many years of previous employment are required? |  |
| Is previous employment in the target industry or in a specific occupation required?  If yes, describe the requirement. |  |
| Work Schedule | What is the likely work schedule for this occupation?   * Time of day * Days of week * Part-time or full-time * Seasonal or year-round |  |
| Transportation | What are the transportation requirements for the occupation?  ​​☐​ One worksite that doesn’t change  ​​☐​ Variable worksites  ​​☐​ Need to own a vehicle  ​​☐​ Can use public transportation, or carpool, rideshare or other methods |  |
| Criminal Record or Involvement  with the Justice System | Do employers prohibit employment in the occupation for individuals with a criminal record or involvement with the criminal justice system?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No    If yes, what are the restrictions? |  |
| Substance Use | Do employers test applicants or employees in this occupation for substance use?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| Earnings | What is the average hourly entry wage for the occupation?  What are the annual earnings for a new worker in the occupation? |  |

**STEP 3**

**Initial Population Profile**

**This information should come primarily from your partner employers and from job postings from employers in your region.** [**O\*NET**](https://www.onetonline.org/) **is also a helpful source of information about occupational characteristics and requirements. If you don’t have sufficient information for a specific attribute or if it is not relevant to the occupation, enter N/A.**

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| **ATTRIBUTES** | **QUESTIONS** | **ANSWER HERE** |
| Education | What level of formal education do you expect individuals to have completed before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ High School  ​​☐​ Some College  ​​☐​ Associate’s Degree  ​​☐​ Bachelor’s Degree or Higher |  |
| Certificates/  Licenses | What certificates or licenses do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program? |  |
| English Language Proficiency | Are you targeting native English speakers or non-native English speakers?    If non-native, what average level of written and spoken English do you expect them to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Low  ​​☐​ Intermediate  ​​☐​ Advanced |  |
| Other Language Proficiency | Are you targeting individuals who are proficient in languages other than English?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If yes, what are the languages? |  |
| Literacy | What level of literacy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| Numeracy | What level of numeracy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| Computer Literacy/  Proficiency | What level of computer literacy/proficiency do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Comfortable using computers and accessing the internet?  ​​☐​ Have used basic computer programs  ​​☐​ Have access to the internet at home  ​​☐​ Have smart phones |  |
| Technical Skills | What technical skills do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program? |  |
| Work History | What type of work history do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Consistent, stable history of employment  ​​☐​ Unstable, spotty history of employment  ​​☐​ No history of employment |  |
| Work Schedule | Are you targeting individuals who are likely to have dependent care responsibility? Y/N    How would that affect their work schedule needs? |  |
| Transportation | Do you expect individuals to have a valid driver’s license before enrolling in your program? Y/N    Do you expect them to have reliable transportation to a worksite before enrolling in the program? Y/N |  |
| Criminal Record or Involvement with the Justice System | Are you targeting individuals who have had involvement with or are currently involved with the criminal justice system?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| Substance Use | Are you targeting individuals with substance use disorders?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| Earnings | Are you targeting individuals who are currently receiving public benefits to support the cost of food, housing or other essential needs? Y/N |  |
| Employment Status | What type of employment status do you expect individuals to have before enrolling in the program?  ​​☐​ Unemployed  ​​☐​ Underemployed (working but in a low-wage job or part-time with low or unstable earnings)  ​​☐​ Other (describe) |  |
| Housing Status | Are you targeting individuals who are experiencing housing instability?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| Veteran Status | Are you targeting Veterans?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| Disability Status | ​​☐​ Are you targeting individuals with physical disabilities?  ​​☐​ Are you targeting individuals with emotional disabilities?  ​​☐​ Are you targeting individuals with cognitive disabilities? |  |
| Age | What is the age range of your target population?  ​​☐​ 18-24  ​​☐​ 25-44  ​​☐​ 45+ |  |
| Assets | What assets does your target population bring to the requirements and characteristics of your target occupation? |  |

**STEP 4**

**Need for and Feasibility of a Program Intervention**

**Compare the occupation requirements with your target population characteristics and Assess Program Feasibility. Ask yourself:**

* For which requirements is my target population a good fit?
* For which requirements would my target population need preparation or assistance?
* What is the program element or intervention that might be necessary?
* Would it be feasible to provide such preparation or assistance in a reasonable timeframe? If NOT, should I consider modifying my target population profile? Or should I consider a different target occupation?

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| **ATTRIBUTES** | **QUESTIONS** | **ANSWER HERE** |
| **Education** | Does your target population’s education level fit the requirements?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Certificates/**  **Licenses** | Does your target population have all of the required certificates/licenses?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe? Y/N  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **English Language Proficiency** | Does your target population’s English-language proficiency fit the requirements?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Literacy** | Does your target population’s literacy level fit the requirements? ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Numeracy** | Does your target population’s numeracy level fit the requirements?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Computer Literacy/**  **Proficiency** | Does your population’s computer literacy/proficiency fit the requirements?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Technical Skills** | Does your target population have all of the required technical skills? ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Work History** | Does your target population have the required work history?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Work Schedule** | Does your target population’s work schedule requirements fit with the likely work schedule for the occupation?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe? Y/N  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Transportation** | Does your target population’s transportation profile fit with the requirements for the occupation? ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Criminal Record or Involvement with the Justice System** | Does a criminal record or involvement with the criminal justice system conflict with employers’ requirements for the occupation?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If YES, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |
| **Substance Use** | Does your target population’s substance use disorder history conflict with employers’ requirements for the occupation? ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If YES, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile |  |
| **Earnings** | Will employment in this occupation affect your target population’s eligibility for public benefits?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If YES, what is the program element needed to support them in managing the transition? |  |
| **Housing Status** | Will your target population’s housing status affect their ability to complete the program and secure and retain employment in the target occupation?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If YES, what is the program element that would be needed? |  |
| Is this feasible and could it be provided in a reasonable timeframe?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No  If NO, consider modifying your target population profile or identifying a different target occupation. |  |

**STEP 5**

**Revise and Develop a Final Profile of Your Target Population**

**Revise your Initial Population Profile based on the assessment of feasibility and fit you completed in Step 4. Develop a Final Profile of your target population, including assets that would contribute to their success in the program and in the occupation.**

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| **ATTRIBUTES** | **YOUR DATA TARGET POPULATION PROFILE PLAN** |  |
| **Education** | What level of literacy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| **Certificates/**  **Licenses** | What level of numeracy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| **English Language Proficiency** | What level of computer literacy/proficiency do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Comfortable using computers and accessing the internet?  ​​☐​ Have used basic computer programs  ​​☐​ Have access to the internet at home  ​​☐​ Have smart phones |  |
| **Literacy** | What technical skills do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program? |  |
| **Numeracy** | What level of literacy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| **Computer Literacy/**  **Proficiency** | What level of numeracy do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Below 12th grade level  ​​☐​ 12th grade level  ​​☐​ Above 12th grade level |  |
| **Technical Skills** | What level of computer literacy/proficiency do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Comfortable using computers and accessing the internet?  ​​☐​ Have used basic computer programs  ​​☐​ Have access to the internet at home  ​​☐​ Have smart phones |  |
| **Work History** | What type of work history do you expect individuals to have before they enroll in your program?  ​​☐​ Consistent, stable history of employment  ​​☐​ Unstable, spotty history of employment  ​​☐​ No history of employment |  |
| **Work Schedule** | Are you targeting individuals who are likely to have dependent care responsibility?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| How would that affect their work schedule needs? |  |
| **Transportation** | Do you expect individuals to have a valid driver’s license before enrolling in the program?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No    Do you expect them to have reliable transportation to a worksite before enrolling in the program? Y/N |  |
| **Criminal Record or Involvement with the Justice System** | Are you targeting individuals who have had involvement with or are currently involved with the criminal justice system?   ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| **Substance Use** | Are you targeting individuals with substance use disorders?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| **Earnings** | Are you targeting individuals who are currently receiving public benefits to support the cost of food, housing or other essential needs?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| **Employment Status** | What type of employment status do you expect individuals to have before enrolling in the program?  ​​☐​ Unemployed  ​​☐​ Underemployed (working but in a low-wage job or part-time with low or unstable earnings)  ​​☐​ Other (describe) |  |
| **Housing Status** | Are you targeting individuals who are experiencing housing instability?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| **Veteran Status** | Are you targeting Veterans?  ☐​ Yes  ​​☐​ No |  |
| **Disability Status** | ☐ Are you targeting individuals with physical disabilities?  ​​☐​ Are you targeting individuals with emotional disabilities?  ​​☐​ Are you targeting individuals with cognitive disabilities? |  |
| **Age** | What is the age range of your target population?  ​​☐​ 18-24  ​​☐​ 25-44  ​​☐​ 45+ |  |