



Career Mapping for Chronically Homeless Job Seekers

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Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance Center

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Career Mapping for Chronically Homeless Job Seekers

Introduction

Each day thousands of people across the country - families, children, single adults and people with disabilities - wake up without a home. Among those who are single, 10% are homeless not for one night, or one episode. Their homelessness is measured in years or in repeated episodes. For lack of a better term, they are chronically homeless. They are homeless individuals with a disabling condition (most often a substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability) who have been homeless either continuously for one year, or experienced four or more homeless episodes in the past three years. Like others with disabilities, their options to increase their income is either through receipt of disability benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veterans benefits or by earning income through competitive employment or by some combination of these sources.

This paper is intended for workforce and homeless assistance professionals who seek to engage chronically homeless job seekers in their efforts to determine their employment goal and strategies to get a job as a means to increase income and pursue a satisfying life activity. Because of the complex circumstances in which these job seekers are found, there is a need to customize employment strategies with them, tailoring interventions based on their interests, needs and capacities. This customized approach includes inspiring chronically homeless job seekers to develop their motivation to work and to use the talent they possess or to develop the skills needed for their preferred job. The first step is to discover their experience and ambitions for work. Career mapping is one customized strategy that can help employment counselors facilitate vocational goal setting and help chronically homeless job seekers develop a vocational profile.

This paper describes an alternative method of assessment and goal development intended to augment the core services provided through One-Stop Career Centers. Career Mapping is a customized employment method derived from an understanding of the impact of disability and homelessness on employment. In many respects, career mapping is self-directed. That is, job seekers take responsibility for leading their own map and their own course of vocational exploration to identify a job or career goal. Staff facilitate job-seeker mapping and the process allows for as much time as people feel necessary to get the information they need to further the goal-setting process. The value of this innovative approach is that it assumes from the start that the goal is to help participants better utilize mainstream Career Center resources, rather than relying solely on housing or supportive services agencies to meet all of their job search, training, placement and support needs. When career mapping is offered as a One-Stop Career Center core service, homeless and other customers with complex needs can receive targeted guidance on how to address their barriers to employment. This intervention can be a gateway to competitive employment by increasing customer readiness to benefit from WIA intensive or training services.

Background

One-Stop Career Centers assist job seekers by offering an array of services from assessment, to tools and resources for job search and placement and access to skills training. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 created the One-Stop Career Center system with the philosophy that "One-Stop Career Centers work for all," including people with serious disabilities in

transition from homelessness. One-Stop Career Centers provide a range of services for job seekers including:

- **Core Services** include outreach, intake and orientation, initial assessment, determination of eligibility for additional services, job search and placement assistance, career counseling, information on the availability of supportive services such as child care and transportation, labor market information and follow-up services. Resume writing and job interviewing workshops are frequently offered in core services. These services are available to all.
- **Intensive Services** are provided to eligible individuals. Intensive Services include comprehensive assessment of skill levels and service needs, development of individual employment plans, individual counseling and career planning, group counseling, case management, and short term prevocational services such as development of learning, communication and personal maintenance skills.
- **Training Services** are provided to eligible individuals. Training services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, training programs operated by the private sector, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities and customized training.

In a workforce system largely oriented towards rapidly matching applicants with jobs, it is not difficult to understand that One-Stop Career Center staff may find it difficult to provide the extensive counseling and support that people with significant disabilities, including those who are homeless, often need.

The President's New Freedom Initiative and Ending Chronic Homelessness objectives both include access to mainstream employment as critical to recovery and community integration. City mayors and other government officials throughout the country launched "Ending Chronic Homelessness" plans¹, recognizing how the growing numbers and costs of chronic homelessness affect their communities. These plans recognize that housing, especially housing linked with an array of supportive and employment services, known as "supportive housing" is the key intervention to addressing long-term homelessness for individuals and families.

On a given day, an estimated 600,000 people are homeless,² approximately one-third have a serious mental illness,³ and about one-sixth suffer from a co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorder.⁴ In general, a person is considered homeless if he or she would have to spend the night in a homeless shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation. More specifically, an individual is considered homeless if he or she is:

- Sleeping in an emergency shelter.
- Sleeping in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, or abandoned or condemned buildings.

¹ See <http://www.usich.gov/slocal/plans/10-year-plan-communities.pdf> for a list of community plans.

² Interagency Council on the Homeless. *Priority: Home! The Federal Plan to Break the Cycle of Homelessness*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1994.

³ Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness. *Outcasts on Main Street: Report of the Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness*. Washington, DC: Interagency Council on the Homeless, 1992.

⁴ Fischer, P.J., and Breaky, W.R. The epidemiology of alcohol, drug, and mental disorders among homeless people. *American Psychologist* 46(11): 1115-1128, 1991.

- Spending a short time (30 consecutive days or less) in a hospital or other institution, but ordinarily sleeping in the types of places mentioned above.
- Living in transitional/supportive housing but having come from streets or emergency shelters.
- Being evicted within a week from a private dwelling unit and having no subsequent residence identified and lacking the resources and support networks needed to obtain access to housing.

President George W. Bush remains committed to the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2012. In fact, he has reinvigorated the Interagency Council on the Homeless (ICH), which has responsibility for planning and coordinating the Federal government's activities and programs to assist homeless people. Chronically homeless individuals who have disabling conditions and live on the streets and in shelters for long periods comprise less than 10 percent of the homeless population, yet they consume over half of emergency homeless services. In turn, the ICH has prompted more than 200 communities to develop 10 year plans to end homelessness. A recent review of a sample of these plans found more than two-thirds (68 percent) of plans call for creating job training opportunities for homeless people; these are usually through government assistance programs funded through the Department of Labor.⁵

Because of their federal mandate, a social commitment to assist in solving community problems and their expertise to address the needs of employers and job seekers, One-Stop Career Centers should play a leadership role in planning and implementing services to meet the employment and training needs of homeless people. Certainly as leaders in workforce development addressing the needs of the American workforce, it would appear that helping people transition from homelessness and joblessness into stable housing and employment is in the interests of labor, employers and society in general.⁶

Although people who are homeless are stigmatized and generally viewed as “unemployable,” the reality is quite different. People who are homeless want to — and can work — given the opportunity and support to do so. In a national survey, 44 percent of homeless clients worked for pay during the last 30 days, but less than half of these workers had a regular job. Once housed, formerly homeless clients work at jobs lasting or expected to last three months or more.⁷ We learned, through other national demonstration projects, that the more homeless people use employment services, the more likely they are to work. We also learned that absent vocational interventions, people with serious mental illness or those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders are not likely to become employed as a result of treatment or housing alone.

The challenge of making employment services and supports available through innovation and collaboration across the workforce development and homeless assistance systems is being met in

⁵ National Alliance to End Homelessness, *A New Vision: What is in Community Plans to End Homelessness?* November 2006.

⁶ Shaheen, G. *Making the Connection: Securing a Place in the Workforce of the Future for People with Mental Illnesses who are Homeless* in Dew, D. W. & Alan, G. M. (Eds.). (2005). Innovative methods for providing VR services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities (Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Monograph No. 30). Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education.

⁷ Burt, M., Aron, L.Y., Douglas, T. Valente, J., Lee, E. and Iwen, B. (1999). Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, August.

some communities. Employer incentives to hire people who are homeless,⁸ increasing their access to and use of One-Stop Career Centers are among the methods being used.^{9 10} However, programs seeking to provide employment and training services to chronically homeless job seekers need to develop an understanding of the complex needs and attributes present in this population as well as how their circumstances relate to their participation in the workforce. Collaboration across these systems may best begin in joint planning and by including key objectives in the local workforce investment plan that address homeless job seekers.

The impact of chronic health conditions upon a person's ability to hold a mainstream job is significant. Recurrent homelessness, the cyclical nature of psychiatric disability, and the ebbs and flows of recovery from substance abuse disorders result in major disruptions of work history, job skills, and reliable support networks. These disruptions have a compound effect.

- Job skills that are either eroded or obsolete in today's marketplace make it difficult for job seekers with these disabilities to successfully compete for jobs at a living wage. They find themselves caught in a series of low-wage, low-skilled jobs that do not provide security or income sufficient to break the cycle of poverty.
- Over time, repeated job losses erode a person's self-confidence, self-respect, and hope for the future. This in turn often makes it extremely difficult to conduct an honest self-assessment of their skills, gifts, and capacities that could make them an attractive employee.
- Job postings and training announcements are available through a wide variety of media, including through One-Stop Career Centers. But if the consequences of disability or homelessness include distrust of formal systems, and people do not feel welcomed or comfortable using One-Stop resources, they cannot take advantage of these valuable resources.

Services integration is one of the keys to ending homelessness. Employment and training services must be linked to other homeless assistance services, including treatment services and housing. Employment needs to be a priority to help people who are homeless develop the motivation to work, to help them obtain job goals and skills, and to give them the ability to compete in the marketplace for jobs at a living wage. Employment must be an emphasis from the point of outreach, through engagement in treatment and rehabilitative services and through job development, placement, and support. The employment and training services at One-Stop Career Centers are resources that homeless job seekers need but often do not use. We need to consider enhanced activities that can be delivered by One-Stop Career Center staff, or in partnership with homeless assistance agency staff, that are effective.

This Career Mapping practice with homeless customers emerges from work done at the West Portland One-Stop (WPOS) Career Center and the Community Integration Program IV (CEPIV) in Portland, OR operated by Central City Concern under contract with the WorkSystems Inc. (WSI), the administrative agency for the local Workforce Investment Board for Oregon Region 2. The region consists of the City of Portland, Multnomah, and Washington Counties. WSI is one

⁸ See "Supe aims to find jobs for disabled, homeless" at www.sfexaminer.com/articles/2005/10/03/news/20051003_ne06_supes.prt

⁹ Henderson-Frakes, J. (2004). *Serving the Homeless Through the One-Stop System: A Case Study*. Oakland, CA: Social Policy Research Associates. Available at <http://documents.csh.org/documents/cheta/homelesspaper.pdf>

¹⁰ See "Profiles of One Stop Career Centers Serving Homeless People". Available at <http://documents.csh.org/documents/cheta/onestops.pdf>

of five workforce investment agencies in an innovative demonstration initiative to end chronic homelessness through employment and housing led by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development. Partnering with Workforce Investment Boards in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland (OR), Indianapolis, and Boston, the initiative revolves around the development of customized employment strategies for this target group linked with permanent supportive housing.¹¹

Career Mapping Overview

Career Mapping is a process that identifies the strengths, gifts, and capacities of the participants. It also reveals concrete strategies for addressing barriers to employment that can be used to access additional resources at the One-Stop Career Center and in the community. The concepts and practices of career mapping are not, in themselves, new.¹² Many university guidance offices as well as employers use this approach when helping people plan for job entry and advancement. Mapping means identifying the resources (both internal and external) which are important in achieving a job or career goal, and setting an action strategy to achieve those goals. The techniques of mapping are also used in the disability field as an integral part of a person-centered planning process to help people better understand their skills, gifts, and aspirations. As an approach that builds upon strengths and talents, it stands in opposition to traditionally deficit-based techniques that begins with identifying all of the barriers to achieving a goal and then proceeds with strategies that accommodate or overcomes those barriers. For example, the process of facilitating individual choice and empowerment, identifying and evaluating core readiness skills, personal strengths, community resources, and establishing a plan for achieving a life goal is essentially a mapping process well integrated into the principles and practices of psychiatric rehabilitation.¹³ The attributes of the career mapping approach are contrasted with the more traditional strategies in Figure 1. These approaches differ in their process and planning, role of clients, skills of staff and orientation to helping.

Figure 1. Comparison of traditional and career mapping approaches to vocational planning.

Traditional Planning Approach	Career Mapping Approach
Process driven and plan written by professional	Process driven and map written by the job seeker
Usually based on a professional assessment of strengths and deficits	Based on a discovery process
Plan is on correcting deficits	Plan is asset, strength-building focused
Identifies need for services	Pursuit of job seekers personal preferences
Determination of which program fits the person; focus on matching applicant to employer need	Develops a personal profile and future vision and what the job seeker selects as desired supports
Place clients in jobs as available in the labor market	Needs of both applicant and employer are met in creative ways that can increase retention

¹¹ Notice of Funding Availability for Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing, Federal Register, Vol. 68, No. 138, July 18, 2003, 4217-42872. The definition of chronic homeless is shared by the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs.

¹² See <http://www.autismnetwork.org/modules/social/pcp/lecture04.html> for how maps are used in educational programs.

¹³ Anthony, W., Cohen, M., and Farkas, M. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation*. Boston, MA: Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, 1990.

What is unique about the approach discussed in this paper is that it is focused on a particular group of individuals who share the experience of chronic homelessness and its associated disabilities and who are seeking employment through the mainstream labor system. It is currently utilized as a core assessment intervention of Central City Concern's Community Engagement Program (CEP) IV, an employment-focused assertive community treatment team serving the long-term homeless population by pairing permanent housing with customized employment services for 89 individuals under funding from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development. The team stresses the benefits of employment to each individual's rehabilitation and recovery process.

The goal of this workforce-led collaboration is to help people move from life on the streets to jobs and homes of their own, as well as to build linkages between homeless assistance agencies and One-Stop career centers. This initiative appreciates that the transition from a life of homelessness often takes a long time and that it is not sufficient to just provide a home and an opportunity for a job without helping people develop insight, motivation to change, and better informed life choices. Career Mapping explores all of these facets. The CEP IV project is unique in that Central City Concern—the homeless services agency implementing the employment, housing and case management services—also operates the West Portland One Stop (WPOS) Career Center, where Career Mapping is a core service.

Session Structure

The structure of a Career Mapping session is divided into five maps: life history; strength gifts and capacities; what works, possible resources; possible jobs and referrals. These maps serve as a template for a discussion about a participant's strengths, gifts and capacities, and what works best for them. A career map can be completed in a variety of settings. It can be done individually or in groups. It can include just a facilitator and one or more participants or it can include friends, peers, and family who can contribute to the overall "picture." Staff should possess the necessary skills and talent to conduct career mapping sessions - a mix of interviewing or interpersonal skills; technical skills of how-to-do-it; facilitation skills to manage groups; experience in use and coordination of vocational resources and appreciation of the cultural diversity in the participants.

Participants use large, presentation-sized paper and colored markers to create the maps. Participants should be given the freedom to record and organize information in any way that is comfortable for them (e.g., spelling doesn't matter, pictures are okay, and colors can be used). Having participants work in pairs allows them to collaborate and give each other feedback. The flexibility and creative nature of this process is a way of accommodating various learning styles. Participants also feel empowered because they help determine how and what information is recorded. Using pictographs and verbal interactions to record information can be especially effective for people who have literacy challenges, difficulty in concentrating or

Key Staff Skills Needed for Career Mapping Intervention include the ability to:

- **Engage & connect with job seekers**
- **Listen to customers' life stories and recognizing significant events, activities, hopes**
- **Ask open-ended questions to solicit information on customers' gifts, strengths, skills, interests, contributions**
- **Inspire hope and confidence in job seekers**
- **Respond to customers' expressions and emotions**
- **Acknowledge and supporting customers' efforts**
- **Identify vocational resources**

understanding written instructions, and who have not had success taking traditional paper form assessment instruments.

Eligibility counselors at WPOS and CEP IV staff were made aware of the mapping process and were instructed to refer customers, including those who could benefit from intensive WIA services but experienced multiple barriers to employment. The mapping class was held weekly in two-hour sessions, over a period of five weeks, with average groups of five to 10 participants per staff member.

Career Mapping is a dynamic process that achieves two objectives: First, it uncovers information respecting a person's pace of disclosure. It can be revisited time after time and the picture can be "grown" as participants feel more comfortable sharing information. This is especially significant for people who are homeless and who often have difficulty developing trusting relationships. The discovery of potential does not rely on paper and pencil tests or assessment instruments, but relies on expressed self-assessments to uncover interests and abilities. Second, it is a process that ideally pairs two participants in the information exchange that allows for interaction among peers. This can be an important first step in addressing difficulties in developing connections and relationships that some people have. It is critically important that the discussion center on the positive and specific elements of the map. Staff leaders function as facilitators circulating among the participants to ensure that teams stay on track. Sometimes a discussion will begin with generalities like, "I am a hard worker." It is the facilitator's job to draw out the specifics of this statement, and prompt a participant to add further clarification, like "I always complete my job by the end of the day." Identifying the underlying reasons that the participant has felt positively or negatively about life experiences, events, or activities is an important part of the mapping process and also impacts upon the range and array of supports a person may need. This needs to be done with every map and, quite frankly, is the focus of the entire assessment.

Products and Outcomes

Each class is focused on completing a single map for a total of five maps (Life History; Strengths, Gifts and Capacities; What Works; Possible Resources; and Possible Jobs) at the end of all the sessions. At this stage, the facilitator works one-on-one with participants to develop resource plans and referrals to core service classes, workforce programs/partners, and community-based agencies. The resource plan should state or outline the exact role of WIA services and the possible role of other service providers, e.g. state vocational rehabilitation agency. Upon completion of the mapping curriculum, the facilitator creates a final document from the maps, and presents the consolidated document to One-Stop staff who determine eligibility for WIA funded intensive and training services. At that time the job goal is explained. An example derived from an actual map is presented in Figure 2.

A 'Map in Progress'

Strengths, Gifts, Capacities

Joker, dreamer, water ski, fix cars, traveler, bikes, large machines-forklift, guitar player, quick, curious, learner, bowler, great balance, basketball, coordinated, snappy dresser

Works

*Spirituality
Early mornings
Hands on learning
Exercise daily
Right medications*

Doesn't Work

*Fear of dying
Pushy people
Night work
Noisy settings
Wrong medications*

Possible Jobs

Truck driver, Dancing instructor, Physical Ed teacher, Tour guide, Researcher, Writer, Mechanic, Furniture maker, Welder, Pilot, Travel agent, Personal trainer

The results of using the Career Mapping process include:

- Participants have better insight and awareness about their strengths, gifts, and capabilities and are better prepared to identify initial job goals meeting their profile and preferences.
- Program providers and the One-Stop Career Center are partners in the process from the beginning, helping to meet the needs of participants using both sets of services.
- The maps are “living documents” that can be updated and referred to during the stages of the job search and placement process.
- The process of participation helps build community. That is, participants also build relationships with peers and staff that can be helpful to them in other endeavors.
- One-Stop Career Center staffs know that this alternative core service prepares people to better use their other core, intensive, and training services. Providers making referrals are able to use their familiarity with participants and understanding of their treatment, support needs, and aspirations to weave a tighter web of job accommodations and support.
- Disability Program Navigators, the “linkage agents” between disability and homeless services providers and the career system, are involved in facilitating the use of the Career Mapping process at all Portland One-Stop Career Centers. This reaffirms their role as critical systems-builders and they are in a good position to act as a liaison between the service sectors.

Career Mapping Process “In Action”

The mapping process focuses on eliciting information in an interactive way in each of the following five domains:

PROVEN RESULTS

This process is proving effective. In the past 18 months, 45 CEP IV program participants completed person centered plans using Career Mapping. Of these, 10 used WIA Core Services, two accessed youth employment services, seven received Intensive or Training services, and 25 obtained jobs consistent with their person-centered plan.

- **Life History.** This is the starting point for the exchange and includes developing a timeline from the time of birth to the present. Participants will reflect upon their life histories and draw correlations to past experiences. They will identify patterns over their life spans and recognize reoccurring themes, interests, and passions. This is most important in helping the participant recognize and appreciate the various roles they have had in the past (family member, worker, etc) and the strengths, skills, and capacities they developed in those roles.
- **Strengths, Gift, and Capacities.** Participants will identify what they are able to do, what they enjoy doing, and what they have done in the past for the purpose of setting job goals that allow them to market their unique gifts, strengths, and capacities to prospective employers. Strengths can be defined as “I am” statements. They are physical, mental, or moral in nature. Examples of this include: “I am honest,” “I am compassionate,” and “I am good with children.” Gifts can be defined as talents, aptitudes or things you are good at. For example: “I enjoy chess” and “I enjoy listening to music.” Capacities can be defined as “I can” statements. They are concrete skills. For example: “I can type 40 wpm,” “I can operate a forklift,” and “I am bilingual.”
- **Understanding What Works.** This discussion focuses on developing insight into what works and what doesn’t work in peoples’ lives. Participants will create a list of job characteristics that work well for them and job characteristics that do not work well for them. (This may include work hours, location, environment, tasks, or other characteristics.) The purpose of this process is to identify work environments and job descriptions that allow participants to utilize their strengths, gifts, and capacities. Participants use the pictographs and/or converse about job characteristics, environments, schedules, etc. that work well for them and those that do not work well for them. Examples of this include: “I don’t work well at night,” and “I work best in a quiet environment”. The purpose of this process is to identify work environments and job descriptions that allow participants to utilize their strengths, gifts, and capacities.
- **Possible Resources.** Participants will identify community-based resources available to them, as well as resources within the One-Stop Career Center system. The purpose is not to refer the client away from the One-Stop Career Center, nor is it to make any eligibility determinations for the One-Stop Career Center or possible partners. Instead, the purpose is to give the client a generalized introduction to the types of resources available and the possibilities presented through accessing such services. Linking community-based resources and the mainstream workforce has two significant benefits. First, it establishes the need to plan to identify and coordinate employment and support services at the person

level. Second, it acknowledges up front that employment is a priority and focus of the planning process and that access to mainstream labor services is a key ingredient of job success and career growth.

- **Possible Jobs.** Participants develop a list of possible jobs for themselves using strengths, gifts, and capacities, and what works as the only criteria. Barriers to employment will be addressed, but not at this point. Job descriptions should be compared to the strengths, gifts, and capacities map, and the “what works” map and discussed.
- **Referral and Action Plan.** Participants use their map to work one-on-one with an Intensive WIA provider and a “navigator” to interpret the person-centered plans and help them understand how their strengths, gifts, and capacities may transfer into specific job openings. In addition, staff will help participants identify action steps and available resources to help them move forward with their goals and job search.

Robert’s maps in Figures 2 and 3 illustrate how he characterized his life journey from childhood through the various jobs he had as a teen and adult. As he talked about each of these jobs with his peers and staff, he was able to articulate what he liked and disliked about them, and what skills and attitudes he learned as a result of each job. Although the exercise was useful for purposes of describing a vocational journey, it was also useful for its value in clarifying choices, discriminating between work environments, and understanding the factors that affected job success. Each of these elements found their way into the next map as Robert self-sorted his job preferences and choices. Often, people who have been out of the workforce for years “impulse shop” for jobs without first understanding why they want a particular job or the skills and supports needed to succeed at a particular occupation. Robert was able to discuss each of the jobs he identified from the standpoint of their characteristics and how they would meet his personal criteria for selection. After this process, with a list of preferred jobs in hand, he began to learn about each job’s skills qualifications, work schedules, work

Figure 2. Robert’s Life Career Map

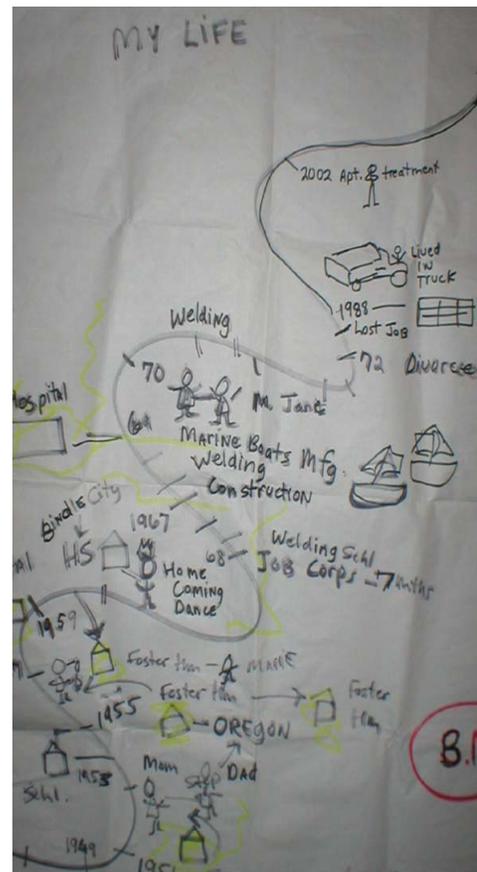
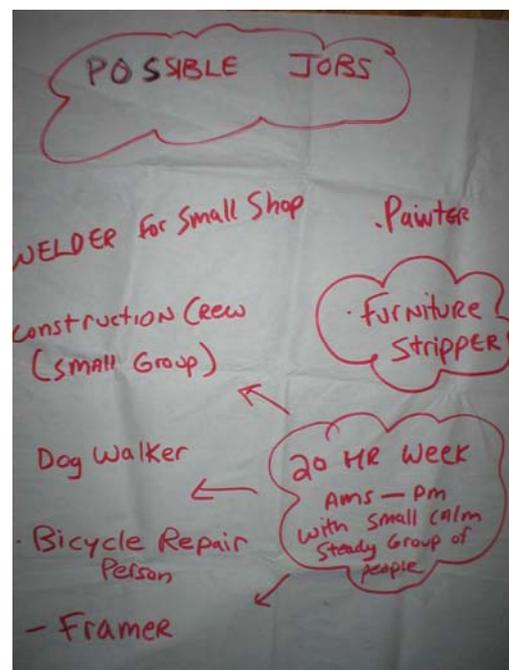


Figure 3. Robert’s Map of Possible Jobs



environment, etc. and make a job choice. Then, he was able to use the job search resources at the One-Stop Career Center more effectively to choose and obtain a job.

Replication Considerations

Career Mapping is eminently replicable, but there are critical elements that are necessary in order for it to succeed:

- **“Zero Exclusion”** and understanding/accepting that when people express a desire to consider work, services to engage and support them in that process must be available.
- **Consensus and partnership** on the importance of employment in ending homelessness and the process of improving employment outcomes using mainstream resources that can include commitments to cross-train staff, share resources, and explore flexible, creative solutions.
- **Commitment to quality improvement**, both in strengthening the partnership and ensuring that after participation in Career Mapping, people can use their new insights and skills to make better job choices. Involvement of DPNs where available can help this process.
- **Trained facilitators** who understand the impact of disability and homelessness on employment and have the skills needed to enhance trust and participation and who believe that participants are in “the driver’s seat” of their own career planning path.
- **Funding resources** that support Career Mapping as an alternative and/or complementary Core Service. In Portland, funds were made available through grant resources; in other areas possible funding might come from WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Development Block Grant or other funding resources.

Summary

People with disabilities who are homeless often face immense personal challenges to obtaining employment, remaining attached to the labor market, and earning a living wage. Service providers who are dedicated to facilitating vocational development also face significant challenges in engaging and supporting their customers who want to work. The mainstream workforce system, with a mandate to serve all job seekers, struggles to find ways to better serve people with serious disabilities in One-Stop Career Center settings. Career Mapping is an intervention with which One-Stop staff can engage homeless individuals to make informed decisions about their vocational ambitions and improve their readiness to benefit from WIA-funded services. It offers a process that is respectful of the requirements of people, programs, and systems while serving a bridging function between provider-sponsored employment services and mainstream workforce services, which often exist in silos.

Career Mapping may not be for everyone. Some people with clear job goals need and want to get right back into the labor market with the least possible amount of participation in job-planning services. Their desires should of course be honored, but the value of the mapping process is that it recognizes a vocational process where insight development and assessment should be ongoing. It may be perfectly appropriate for people to work and “map” at the same time to better sustain

or advance their careers. National homeless assistance policy directed homeless service providers to help their clients understand and use mainstream programs including those in the workforce system. Insofar as this objective is met, people with disabilities who are homeless are well-served both by providers and One-Stop Career Centers. Above all, when job seekers' wishes are honored through Customized Employment interventions like Career Mapping, the more likely their journeys toward self-sufficiency are to be successful.

For more information about helping homeless job seekers go to www.csh.org/cheta .