

Stream 1 – what to expect

Who is eligible?

If you are receiving an income support payment through Centrelink and have activity requirements you will be required to register with an Employment Service Provider. Stream 1 is one of the programs available through Job Services Australia Providers.

How do I access the service?

When you register for income support with Centrelink they will ask you a series of questions about your individual circumstances and the impact these might have on your ability to find work. This group of questions is called the Job Seeker Capacity Instrument (JSCI) and includes questions about your education level, personal circumstances and work experience. If the JSCI indicates that you are “work ready” (for example only recently unemployed) and have few barriers to employment you will be assigned to the Stream 1 program.

You can choose which you are referred to. Centrelink should ask you whether there is a service you would like to access, or they can also assist you to select a provider, or they can choose one for you.

Information on Employment Service Providers in your area is available at:

<http://jobsearch.gov.au/>. Please see the Welfare Rights Centre (WRC) Fact Sheet *Selecting an Employment Service Provider* for more information.

What help will I get?

Stream 1 provides job seekers with limited support.

You are entitled to:

- help with creating or refining your resume or CV;
- access to, and help with, job search facilities;
- skills assessment after three months of service;
- support with a possible intensive activity to

help you find work;

- some access to training; and
- monthly face-to-face meetings with your provider.

In your initial interview your provider should:

- outline services they will provide to you;
- help with creating or refining your resume or CV;
- if you are an activity tested participant they will explain your rights and obligations;
- explain the use of Jobsearch Facilities and where they are available;
- provide an initial list of appropriate job vacancies;
- provide advice about the best ways to look for and find work and discuss local employment opportunities; and
- provide information about skill shortage areas and access to the Productivity Places Program.

If you are fully eligible for Stream 1 services, you may also be able to access work experience activities after 12 months.

Employment Pathway Plan

An Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) lists your obligations to your Employment Service Provider and Centrelink and the provider’s obligations to you. This used to be called an Activity Agreement. In Stream 1, Centrelink completes the EPP with you before you are referred to an Employment Service Provider.

You will be required to sign the EPP to say that you agree to participate in the activities outlined within it. If you fail to complete the activities listed in the EPP you may face penalties. You can suggest what activities you would like included in the agreement, but the ultimate decision rests with Centrelink or the Job Services Australia provider. EPPs can be changed at any time and should be updated any time your situation changes.

When deciding the terms of an EPP, the Employment Service Provider must consider your



capacity to comply with the proposed terms and your needs.

If you are a voluntary client you will have an EPP that outlines expected activities but you will not be penalised for not completing them. For more information please see the Fact Sheet *Getting the Most Out of your Employment Pathway Plan*.

Employment Pathway Fund

Employment services have access to an Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) for job seekers which can be used to assist in finding employment. This fund can be used for work clothing and equipment, travel assistance, wage subsidies or training. Your provider can decide how and when this fund is used and must consider not only your needs but the needs of other job seekers who are receiving their services. Your provider will focus on whether or not purchasing an item or service will lead to/increase the chances of you getting paid work. They cannot fund activities or equipment that you are interested in but which will not enhance your employability.

Skills Assessment

After 3 months with the provider they will do a skills assessment with you. This will find out what work or educational skills and experience you have and identify and develop strategies for you to secure and retain employment. This may include, for example, training or work experience that might help you achieve your goals.

Intensive Activities

An Intensive Activity is designed to improve your ability to find and keep employment. This activity must be relevant to you. Activities could include skills training, work experience or English language programs. These activities usually occur after your skills assessment at three months of service.

Why is it such a limited service?

Stream 1 is designed for “work ready” job seekers who have only recently become unemployed and who are able to look for work without a lot of help. The more intensive employment services are reserved for those who have significant barriers to employment such as long periods of unemployment, homelessness, drug and alcohol

issues or literacy problems.

What if I think I need more help?

When you are assigned to an employment program by Centrelink, the Employment Service Provider only knows about the information you gave in the JSCI. It is in your best interests to tell Centrelink about what is going on in your life that might make it more difficult to find employment.

If your circumstances change and it becomes harder for you to look for work or you did not disclose some information about what is going on in your life, you should let your Employment Service Provider know and you may be reassessed to receive more assistance. This process may involve referral to a Job Capacity Assessment (please see the Welfare Rights Centre (WRC) Fact Sheet *Job Capacity Assessments*). It might also mean your Employment Pathway Plan can be renegotiated to accommodate any changes.

Letting Employment Service Providers know your situation has changed will also mean that you are less likely to incur a penalty for non-compliance.

Contact the WRC for further information.

Please note:

This Fact Sheet contains general information only. It does not constitute legal advice. If you need legal advice please contact the Welfare Rights Centre on 3421 2510 or if outside of Brisbane on 1800 358 511.

The Welfare Rights Centre is a community legal centre, which provides specialist advocacy and legal services in Social Security law, administration and policy. We are independent of Centrelink. All assistance is free.

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