

Stream 4 – 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 4 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 to assess your individual circumstances and the impact this might have on your ability to find employment. 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 have significant barriers to employment you will be referred to a Job Capacity Assessment investigate further. If you are assessed as having severe non-vocational barriers to employment, such as mental health issues, you will be referred to Stream 4. This includes disadvantaged jobseekers in the community, vulnerable young job seekers and students.

For more information on Job Capacity Assessments please see the Welfare Rights Centre (WRC) Fact Sheet *Job Capacity Assessments*.

You can choose the provider 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 choose one for you.

Information on providers in your area is available at: <http://jobsearch.gov.au/>. Please see the WRC Fact Sheet *Selecting an Employment Service Provider* for more information.

What can I expect/What services are offered?

You will be entitled to:

- help with creating or refining your resume;
- access to, and help with, job search facilities;
- skills assessment after three months of service (see below);
- access to training;
- monthly face-to-face meetings with your provider; and
- work experience after 12 months of service.

In your initial interview with your provider should:

- outline what services they will provide to you;
- help with creating or refining your resume;
- if you are an activity tested participant they will explain your rights and obligations;
- prepare an Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) which outlines the activities, services and training you and your provider will do to assist you to get work (please see below for more information);
- 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.

Stream 4 provides support to jobseekers through case management (individual one-on-one support) with an employment. In Stream 4 support may include counselling or access to other professional services and referral and assistance accessing additional support services.



Employment Pathway Plan

An Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) lists your obligations to the Employment Service Provider and Centrelink and the provider's obligations to you. This used to be called an Activity Agreement. 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 the 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 Employment Pathway Plan, 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 still have an EPP that outlines expected activities but you will not be penalised by Centrelink for not completing them.

For more information please see the Fact Sheet *Getting the Most out of your Employment Pathway Plan*.

Skills Assessment

A Skills Assessment is completed after three months of service to determine work or educational skills and experience you currently have and to identify and develop strategies for you to secure and retain employment. This may include, for example, types of training or work experience that might help you achieve your goals.

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. The 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 that are receiving their services. They will focus on whether or not purchasing an

item or service will lead to/increase the chances of you achieving an employment outcome. They cannot fund activities or equipment that you may be interested in but do not enhance your employability.

If you believe there is some equipment, service or training that will help you achieve employment you should explain to your provider about why you believe it will increase your employment opportunities.

What if I think I need more help?

When you are assigned to an employment program by Centrelink, they are only able to consider the information you provide them with in the JSCI and Job Capacity Assessment. It is in your best interests to be honest about what is going on in your life that might make it more difficult to find employment.

Let your Employment Service Provider know if your situation has changed. Your Employment Pathway Plan can be changed to accommodate any new restrictions you have and this will mean that you are less likely to incur a penalty for non-compliance if you are unable to meet your requirements.

You might also believe you will be better off with a Disability Employment Service. Discuss this with your provider as they may be able to assist you to transfer programs.

Contact 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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