

## Selecting an Employment Service Provider

There is a lot to consider if you are a Centrelink recipient and you need to look for work. One of the most important, yet confusing requirements is selecting an Employment Service Provider that best meets your needs. This Fact Sheet outlines some things to consider before you do.

### Why do I need an Employment Service Provider?

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 whose role it is to provide job search and employment focused assistance to jobseekers.

There are two main types of providers: Job Services Australia (JSA) and Disability Employment Services (DES). Some providers offer both Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services from the one office location.

When you register for income support, Centrelink will ask you a series of questions to assess your individual circumstances and the impact this might have on your ability to find employment. The group of questions is called the Job Seeker Capacity Instrument (JSCI) and includes questions about your education level, disability and work experience. If this questionnaire identifies that you have barriers to work, you will be sent to a Job Capacity Assessor whose role it is to assess how your medical conditions or identified barriers to work affect your capacity to work. These assessors will make recommendations as to which Employment Service Provider would suit you best and will refer you to one of these providers. You have a right to take a couple of days after your Job Capacity Assessment to investigate providers in your area and the Welfare Rights Centre (WRC) encourages you to do this.

### How do I find an Employment Service Provider?

Before you start looking for an Employment Service Provider that suits you, consider the following:

- Identify skills and areas of work that interest you so you can indicate from the start what your goals are. This helps your Employment Service Provider to tailor their services to helping you to achieve your employment goals.
- Identify individual needs you may have regarding appointment times and locations. For example early morning appointments may not be ideal due to medication issues so be ready to check with potential providers to see if alternative arrangements are possible.
- Ask your friends if they've accessed a good provider. If they have, ask them what the provider did which made the service good? This will help you to work out what may be important priorities for you. Be aware though that there are different Employment Service Areas so depending on where you live you may not be able to access the same service as your friends.
- Be realistic about what your expectations. For example, selecting a provider on the basis of whether they will buy you a mobile phone is not going to guarantee you a better service. You can read our Fact Sheets about what to expect from the various employment programs for information on what they are able to provide you.
- If you have been with an Employment Service Provider in the previous 12 months, and you need to be linked up with a service again, you will be referred to that same provider. If you do not wish to be with the same provider you can discuss this with Centrelink.



## Things to be aware of

### Star Ratings

You might notice that Employment Services Providers advertise the quality of their service through a system called “Star Ratings”. These ratings are a measure of the outcomes employment services have achieved according to the guidelines of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations who fund them. These star ratings are not necessarily a good indicator of the kind of service employment services provide. For example the star ratings may not indicate what kind of working relationship a service develops with its clients. The ratings are a measure of the short term outcomes achieved by an employment service’s job seekers. Use them as a guide only, and remember, a lower star rating does not always indicate a lesser service.

### Specialist providers

There may be specialist providers in your area that have greater expertise/knowledge about working with particular groups such as youth at risk, ex-offenders, indigenous Australians, the homeless, people with mental health issues and culturally and linguistically diverse people. You might like to locate one if you identify with any of these groups.

### Employment Service Areas

To assist governments to coordinate and organise employment, Australia has been divided into Employment Service Areas (ESA). You will be required to attend an employment service provider in the ESA where you live. You may be able to access one outside your ESA if you can argue that a particular service might be able to provide you with better services than you could get elsewhere.

## How to find providers in your area

- Centrelink can give you a list of providers in your area to contact.
- Search on <http://jobsearch.gov.au> for providers by the region that you live in. This will also give you information on specialist employment services.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under Employment Services (please note some listings in this section are commercial recruitment companies so disregard any that reference recruitment)

## • Talk to or interview potential providers

Contact a few Employment Service Providers in your area and ask if you can come in and meet with them.

Don't be afraid of preparing and taking a list of questions with you to ask the provider as it can be easy to forget what you want to find out. Sample questions could include:

- Have you been successful in finding work in hairdressing/an apprenticeship for someone like me?
  - How did you do it?
- Do you have case managers that understand Auslan/my cultural background?
- What do you think you would do to help get me a job as a butcher/gardener/shop assistant?
- Which employers do you usually work with?
- Would it help if I had a qualification?
  - How would you help me get a qualification?

**Remember – you might be required by Centrelink to attend an Employment Service but you can make sure that you work with one that can provide you with the right support and outcomes for you.**

### 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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