

Employment Service Providers: an overview

Employment Service Providers provide job search and employment assistance to job seekers. This Fact Sheet focuses on Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services.

If you are receiving an income support payment through Centrelink subject to activity testing you will be required to register with an Employment Service Provider.

If you are not receiving income support payments, you may still be able to access an Employment Service Provider by self-referring. If your income support does not require you to undertake job search activities, it can still be subject to some conditions. The level of employment support for people that do not have a disability can be limited.

How do I access an Employment Service Provider?

Access to Employment Services Providers occurs mainly through referrals from Centrelink but as noted above you may be able to self-refer. There are a number of different programs available and as a result access is based on an individual's assessed barriers to finding and maintaining employment.

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. These questions are called the Job Seeker Capacity Instrument (JSCI) and include questions about your education level, disability and work experience. If the JSCI indicates that you have barriers to employment you will be referred to a Job Capacity Assessor who will undertake a more thorough assessment. For more information on Job Capacity Assessments please see the Fact Sheet *Job Capacity Assessments*.

You are entitled to choose your own Employment Service Provider. For more information read Fact Sheet *Selecting an Employment Service Provider* before you make your decision.

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.

Which is the right Service for me?

Job Services Australia

Job Seekers using Job Services Australia are classified into four separate "streams". "Streams" are used by Job Services Australia and Centrelink to identify the level of service a job seeker may require in order to get work.

- Jobseekers that are viewed as "work ready" will be referred to stream 1.
- Those with relatively moderate barriers to employment and those who have lost their job due to the impact of the global recession will be referred to stream 2.
- Jobseekers with relatively significant barriers will be referred to stream 3.
- Jobseekers with severe non-vocational barriers to employment, including highly disadvantaged jobseekers in the community, vulnerable young jobseekers and vulnerable young students, will be referred to stream 4.

A person can move from one stream to another without needing to change providers.

Disability Employment Services

The role of the Disability Employment Services is to provide specialist assistance to people with disabilities to prepare them to enter work and maintain employment. Disability Employment Services assist with employment preparation, job search, promoting skills to employers, negotiating with employers and on-the-job or off-site employment support.

Disability Employment Services consists of two programs. **One** for people with a disability, injury or health condition who require the assistance of a disability employment service but are not expected to need long-term support in the workplace. The other is for people with a permanent disability with an assessed need for more long-term ongoing support in the workplace.

What services are offered?

Employment Service Providers are required to provide employment services suited to you. You will have a case manager who works with you. All services are required to undertake the following activities:

- conduct an initial interview and develop an Employment Pathway Plan on your first contact (for more information on Employment Pathway Plans please see the BRQ Fact Sheet Getting the most out of your Employment Pathway Plan);
- have regular face-to-face contact with you;
- provide ongoing training and development activities that meet the skills and labour needs of employers and assist you in obtaining suitable employment;
- monitor your attendance at appointments and participation in activities such as education or training and work experience as set out in your Employment Pathway Plan.

- arrange a review after 12 months of service;
- update your information at any time that circumstances change; and
- continue to deliver tailored services for you when you engage in Work Experience.

For more information about individual programs/streams please see the Fact Sheet: *Stream 1 (Limited), Stream 1, Stream 2, Stream 3, Stream 4, Disability Employment Services.*

How do Employment Service Providers fit with Centrelink?

Employment Services Providers play a role in the Centrelink compliance regime through the creation and monitoring of Employment Pathway Plans.

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 them. If you fail to complete the activities listed in the EPP you may face financial penalties.

You can suggest what activities you would like included in the agreement, but the ultimate decision rests with Centrelink or the Employment Service provider. EPPs can be changed at any time and should be updated any time your situation changes. If you are unhappy with your EPP and believe it is unfair you can appeal it. For more information on appealing a decision please see the BRQ Fact Sheet *Complaining is OK.*

When deciding the terms of an EPP, the Employment Service Provider must have regard to your capacity to comply with the proposed terms, and your needs.

Employment Services Providers are required to report any non-compliance to Centrelink through a Participation Report. Centrelink will then

investigate the matter and may impose penalties such as a non-payment period (please see the BRQ 'Penalties' Fact Sheet for more information).

If you are a voluntary client (one that does not have a requirement to look for work) you will still have an EPP that outlines expected activities but you will not be penalised for not completing them.

What if I am not happy with my Employment Service Provider?

Your provider must establish and promote a Customer feedback process. The Customer feedback process should outline how feedback can be provided, including Complaints lodged by Customers, about the conduct of an Employment Service Provider. Your Provider must give you a copy of these procedures if you request them.

Generally it is best to raise complaints directly to the provider. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, or cannot raise your complaint with the provider, you can contact:

For Job Services Australia Clients: the Department of Employment Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260. You can also make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

For Disability Employment Services Clients: the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service on 1800 880 052 (free call), TTY 1800 301 130 (free call). You can also make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

If you would like to change providers you should call the Department of Employment Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 and discuss your issue with them. Clients of both Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services programs can access this line. They can approve your transfer to another provider. For more information on changing providers please see the BRQ Fact Sheet Help I want to change my Employment Service Provider.

If you are unable to raise your concerns for any reason you can contact BRQ for advice and assistance and advocacy may be provided. This service is free of charge.

Please Note:

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

Basic Rights Queensland 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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