

Chapter 4: Building Blocks for Survivor Success



Developed in Partnership with [the Urban Institute Income and Benefits Policy Center](#).

Supported Employment Considerations

What factors should be considered when selecting potential partners with education and workforce training programs? Programs selected should reflect the experiences and needs of your community and client base, as well as what the partnership may need to be successful.

ALIGNMENT WITH SURVIVORS' NEEDS AND LIFE

When exploring potential programs and organizations to partner with to support survivors' education and employment goals, reflect on the survivor's experiences, needs, as well as the types and amount of supports they may need to succeed. Below is a list of considerations in determining best fit.

CAREER INTERESTS AND GOALS



Determine survivors' career interests and help connect those interests to available education and training opportunities.

A critical component of selecting an education and training program is determining survivor interest in the career pathway. “**Career interest assessments**” allow individuals to answer a set of questions about the types of work they like doing, subjects they are interested in, and the types of working environments in which they are most comfortable. This type of career exploration can help provide direction for individuals with limited work experience or for those who are not sure of their next steps.

[My Next Move](#) offers a career assessment tool that gauges career interests and matches individuals to a variety of career options. The tool also provides detailed

occupational information including knowledge, skills, and capacities needed as well as salary and job growth projections.

EDUCATION LEVEL & PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE



Determine if education support or additional experience is necessary prior to job training or educational programming.

Depending on their level of education, survivors may also need more academic or employment supports before entering a more advanced program. This could include classroom courses to strengthen or build confidence in reading, writing, or math skills; English learner programs; or specialized courses and career coaching designed to help empower individuals with the information and resources necessary to secure and maintain work, including effective workplace communications, workers' rights, and how to advocate for themselves in the workplace.

Discussions around prior work experience can be particularly challenging for survivors of human trafficking. While some survivors may have limited education or work history, others may have extensive work experience in their field, but that experience includes work for which they were trafficked. For survivors with work experience that was exploited by traffickers, care is needed to explore if this is a career they would like to continue or if they would prefer to avoid similar work and explore other employment opportunities that utilize their skills. Consider what programs look for in individuals, such as the level of education or any program eligibility assessments that participants need to pass to start work or class.

TRAUMA & MENTAL WELLNESS



Assess the impacts of trauma on job readiness and provide supportive mental health services.

Survivors will likely be experiencing the effects of **polyvictimization** and trauma. As a result of the link between exploitation and work, survivors of human trafficking in particular may find practices within a workforce development program or the workplace itself triggering. For example, the process of writing a resume or explaining gaps in work history may cause a survivor to confront their exploitation. Trauma itself is often an obstacle to education and employment success. Programs must actively support the healing and resilience of survivors as they pursue their education, training, and career goals to help ensure their ability to succeed. Survivors may continue to experience the

physical and psychological impacts of trauma which can impact their attendance at programming if not properly supported with health services and counseling. This is especially critical if programs have attendance policies that do not allow for absences or scheduling flexibility.

Take this as an opportunity to work one-on-one with employers and job training programs to educate them about the unique needs of survivors.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION RELIEF



Determine the implications a client's citizenship and/or immigration status may have on a chosen career and connect survivors to appropriate legal resources for help.

Citizenship status impacts a survivor's ability to access resources and opportunities for employment. Survivors who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents are eligible for Title 1 services under WIOA, if they are: 1) are 18+ years of age and have a Letter of Certification issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or 2) are minors under 18 years of age and have a Letter of Eligibility for Minor Victims issued by HHS. Also, some job training and education programs might provide sponsorship or immigration help as a part of their wraparound services.

CRIMINAL RECORD EXPUNGEMENT



Certain career pathways and financial assistance may be unavailable if survivors have criminal records.

It is important to address this obstacle by connecting survivors with organizations that can help seal, expunge, or vacate criminal records. Most states offer some form of criminal record relief for trafficking, though laws and access vary from state to state.

The Survivor Reentry Project from Freedom Network USA provides national training and technical assistance on vacatur, expungement, sealing and other criminal record remedies for trafficking survivors, legal service lawyers, pro bono attorneys, and victims' advocates.

Opportunities and programs that accept people with criminal records should also be explored. Look to see if programs have requirements related to criminal records or if they provide legal services to help with the expungement process.

COST AND INCOME NEEDS



Explore the cost versus benefits of certain career pathways and connect survivors to financial stability resources.

Cost can also be a big barrier to accessing education and training, not only in terms of enrollment fees, but also the opportunity cost of not having an income while attending a program. Providing information that enables survivors to access financial aid (scholarships, grants and loans) as well as financial assistance to provide stability (cash assistance, food and nutrition assistance, housing assistance), will also be critical to their enrollment and success.

It is also important to make sure that survivors interested in earning entry-level credentials (such as phlebotomist positions) are not spending more on obtaining their credential than they will be able to pay back with future earnings.

Make sure that desired program partners offer financial assistance for individuals with low-incomes. Financial assistance is offered by a variety of local workforce system programs, from federal programs to state- or provider-based scholarships or help from partnership community-based organizations. Federal financial aid programs commonly used by public community and technical colleges include the Pell Grant Program and federal loan programs.

TIME AND/OR SCHEDULE



Consider time or scheduling constraints that may impact survivors' ability to enroll in and complete a training program.

Other commitments that survivors might have (such as parenting and working) can put a lot of pressure on their capacity, particularly since these efforts have immediate opportunity costs – potential loss of extra hours at work or the added cost of childcare and transportation. Programs that offer multiple scheduling options or online components can help alleviate this potential hurdle.

CHILDCARE



Consider the cost and availability of childcare to mitigate that obstacle to obtaining education, job training, and employment.

Many colleges and training providers do not provide on-site childcare. If childcare is not offered, check local schools and community-based organizations to determine if they offer afterschool learning programs. These programs might allow children to participate in additional enrichment after school allowing survivors the additional time needed to participate in a program or study. In addition, connect with the local health and human service agency to explore eligibility for childcare assistance via government subsidized childcare funds.

TRANSPORTATION



Consider survivors' access to safe and reliable transportation to and from the program site.

The ability to physically access programs can be a big barrier for people without a car or reliable public transportation. Explore what resources are available to help assist with these costs or that can provide transportation services.

For survivors located in rural areas or areas that have prohibitively high transportation costs which serve as a barrier to accessing in-person education and training, consider virtual or online programs. To learn more about exploring online programs, visit our resource [Helping Survivors Navigate Online Education and Training Opportunities](#). These programs are also popular with working parents, who need more flexibility to complete coursework and access recorded lectures without needing to attend the same class at the same time every day.

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