

INSTRUMENT 4
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DEI Evaluation

Customer Focus Group – Facilitator Guide

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Pre-Focus Group Checklist

- € Screen all interested potential participants for eligibility and needed accommodations
- € Confirm that there are two potential locations in the Center for conducting the focus group(s)
- € Distribute parental consent forms for any prospective youth participants
- € Ensure reasonable accommodation needs are met
- € A day before the focus group, call respondents to provide reminder
- € Arrive at the focus group site one-hour before the session is scheduled to begin
- € Arrange chairs in a semi-circle (if possible)
- € Hang one or more copies of the DEI FG flyer near and immediately outside of the room entrance
- € Test the recorder to make sure it is working and the sound is clear
- € Place the following in front of each participant's seat:
 - o DEI Evaluation Overview – customer bulletin
 - o Informed consent form
 - o Participant background questionnaire
 - o Pen
 - o Blank paper for note taking
- € Order/pick up/set up refreshments
- € Use cardstock paper to create info/directions tents (for example, on the table where the name tags and permanent markers are located, you can create a sign using the cardstock paper saying, "Please fill out a name tag")
- € Locate the bathrooms so that you can direct participants to them if needed

Bring to the Focus Group

Make sure you have the following materials:

- 🔊 3 copies of the DEI FG flyer,
- 🔊 Scotch tape (for hanging flyers near and immediately outside of room entrance),
- 🔊 4 copies of the Focus Group Facilitator Guide,
- 🔊 At least 25 pages of blank paper,
- 🔊 2 notepads,
- 🔊 25 blank name tags,
- 🔊 12 pieces of cardstock paper (optional),
- 🔊 25 copies of the DEI Evaluation – Customer bulletin
- 🔊 3 permanent markers,
- 🔊 Extra pens,
- 🔊 25 copies of the participant background questionnaire,
- 🔊 50 copies of the informed consent form,
- 🔊 Enough food/beverages for 20 people,
- 🔊 Enough stipends to pay up to 25 people
- 🔊 A voice recorder
- 🔊 List of prospective participants (first name only is fine)

Administrative Information

Date of the focus group:	
LWIA:	
Pilot or Comparison Site:	
City:	
One Stop Name:	
Facilitator's name:	
Note taker's name:	
Time the focus group began:	

Time the focus group ended:	
Number of participants attending the focus group session:	
Number of pages of handwritten notes:	

This section gathers information on the logistics of the focus group and is to be completed by the note taker.

Qualities of an Effective Focus Group Facilitator

Roles and Responsibilities:

Keep participants focused, engaged, attentive and interested

Monitor time and use limited time limited time effectively

Use prompts and probes to stimulate discussion

Use the focus group guide effectively to ensure all topics are covered

Politely and diplomatically enforce ground rules:

Make sure everyone participates and at a level that is comfortable

Limit side conversations

Encourage one person to speak at a time

Be prepared to explain or restate questions

Diffuse and pre-empt arguments

After the focus group, work with the note taker to finalize the notes. A debrief between the facilitator and note taker is encouraged.

Effective Facilitators:

Address the person first, not their label (“people with disabilities” vs. “disabled people”)

Have good listening skills

Have good observation skills

Have good speaking skills

Can foster open and honest dialogue among diverse groups and individuals

Can remain impartial (i.e., do not give her/his opinions about topics, because this can influence what people say)

Can encourage participation when someone is reluctant to speak up

Can manage participants who dominate the conversation

Are sensitive to gender and cultural issues

Are sensitive to differences in power among and within groups

Provide probes if participant(s) provide vague responses

Examples of Probes:

“Would you explain further?”

“Would you give me an example of what you mean?”

“Would you say more about that?”

“Is there anything else?”

“Please describe what you mean?”

“I don’t understand.”

Occasionally allow a 5-second pause after a question is raised or response is provided in order to prompt additional points of view or agreement with the previously mentioned position

Roles and Responsibilities of Note Takers

Roles and Responsibilities:

Record major themes, ideas, comments and observations regarding group dynamics in hand-written notes

To the best of your ability, link response to a respondent in your notes (will help connect customer comments and tell individual customer “stories”)

Complete Administrative Information form

Complete a debrief session with the facilitator. Capture any new insights that emerged as a result of this discussion with the facilitator and add them to your focus group notes

Effective Note Takers:

Have good listening skills

Have good observation skills

Have good writing skills

Are able to take notes that are comprehensive but not word-for-word

Act as an observer, not as a participant

Can remain impartial (i.e., do not give her/his opinions about topics, because this can influence what people say)

Consent

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group for the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Evaluation

The purpose of this focus group is to discuss customers' experience at the One Stop Career Center, how they feel about the services provided, and their ideas for how the Center can better meet their needs. There will be two focus groups completed in each of seven states (a total of 14 focus groups). A total of about 140 customers will participate.

By signing this form, I consent to take part in one of these focus groups. The focus group will last about 1hour. It will involve completing a brief questionnaire which asks for basic background information about me and my employment status. I also consent to the focus group being sound recorded for the purpose of ensuring that comments provided have been accurately captured.

The purpose of the focus group has been explained to me. I have been told that my information:

- ✓ Will be kept confidential
- ✓ Will not be identifiable in any reports
- ✓ Will be used for research purposes only
- ✓ Will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team unless all identifying information is removed first
- ✓ Will not be shared with Career Center staff/counselors, employers, family members

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to leave the group at any time. If I decide not to participate at any time during the focus group, my decision will in no way affect the services or benefits that I receive at the Career Center.

I will receive a \$25 gift card for participating in the focus group.

If I have questions or concerns, I can contact Douglas Klayman, Ph.D., 301-990-1105 x105

I have been given a copy of this form.

Please PRINT Your Name

Date

Please Sign Your Name

Are you under 18?

- Yes – *Must have parent consent as well*
- No

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1230-XXXX. The time required to participate in the focus group is estimated to average 60 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20210 and reference the OMB Control Number 1230-XXXX.

For Parents:

Form Approved
OMB No. 1230-XXXX
Exp. Date XX/XX/2020

The purpose of this focus group is to discuss customers' experience at the One Stop Career Center, how they feel about the services provided, and their ideas for how the Center can better meet their needs. There will be two focus groups completed in seven states (a total of 14 focus groups). A total of about 140 customers will participate.

By signing this form, I consent to my child taking part in one of these focus groups. The focus group will last about 1 hour. It will involve your child completing a brief questionnaire which asks for basic background information about him/her and his/her employment status. I also consent to the focus group being sound recorded for the purpose of ensuring that comments provided have been accurately captured.

Your child's information:

- ✓ Will be kept confidential
- ✓ Will not be identifiable in any reports
- ✓ Will be used for research purposes only
- ✓ Will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team unless all identifying information is removed first
- ✓ Will not be shared with Career Center staff/counselors, employers, family members

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and they will be free to leave the group at any time. My child also does not have to respond to any questions they do not want to answer. If my child decides not to participate at any time during the focus group, their decision will in no way affect the services or benefits that they receive at the Career Center.

Your child will receive a \$25 gift card for participating in the focus group.

If I or my child has questions or concerns, I can contact Douglas Klayman, Ph.D., 301-990-1105 x105.

I have been given a copy of this form.

Please PRINT Child's Name

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Please PRINT Your Name

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1230-XXXX. The time required to participate in the focus group is estimated to average 60 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20210 and reference the OMB Control Number 1230-XXXX.

A. General Participant Focus Group Protocol

As participants are entering, welcome them, ask them to put their name on a name tag, ask them to fill out the questionnaire, invite them to enjoy the refreshments, and tell them that we will get started shortly. If any participants seem to want help, ask if they need assistance.

State/LWIA/One Stop personnel are not allowed to participate or observe the focus group session. If there are more than 18 participants, split participants into two focus groups. If a person is not on your list of perspective participants, they need to be screened for eligibility. If any participants invited a family member or friend along to support them, let them know after the focus group that we can only provide the gift card to the person that meets the eligibility criteria

Hello and welcome to our discussion! Thank you for taking the time to join us. My name is (_____). I'm working with (_____), who will be taking notes for us today. As you may know, the purpose of today's discussion is to learn about your experiences with the One Stop Career Center, how you feel about the services provided, and your ideas for how the One Stop can better meet your needs. We have invited people who have a disability or any health-related situation that could potentially affect their ability to work. The reason why we are specifically interested in speaking with you is because <NAME OF STATE> is participating in the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The DEI is a three-year grant awarded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). It is designed to help improve education, training, and employment outcomes for One-Stop Career Center customers, particularly customers with disabilities. Social Dynamics, the company I work for, was hired by USDOL to complete an independent evaluation of the DEI.

Did anyone here not speak with a member of the focus group team before today to have a quick discussion about eligibility? *Any person that raises their hand needs to be screened for eligibility.*

This discussion is called a "focus group". The purpose of focus groups is to get the honest opinions of small groups of people about a specific topic.

Today's focus group will take about 1 hour. I will ask you questions about your experiences and your feelings about the One Stop Career Center and about the process you have went through to get One Stop services. You will be able to hear each other's responses and make additional comments based on what you hear.

Before we begin, I would like to review a few details about our discussion:

- There are no right and wrong answers. Neither I, nor <NOTETAKER> work for the One Stop Career Center or the state, so please feel free to share your thoughts, whether they are positive or negative.

- The information you share with us is for research only. It will be kept private, and will not be disclosed to anyone but the researchers. It will not be shared with employers or One Stop staff.
- We will be using first names only today. Everything you say is private. After we conduct several of these group discussions across the country, we will write a report for the Department of Labor. Your name will not appear anywhere in the report. We also ask that you don't tell other people what was said by anyone during the group. *What you say today will not be attached to your name at any point.*
- Your answers will not affect the services you receive from the One Stop.
- It is important to hear everyone's ideas and opinions so feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.
- It is ok to disagree with one another. If you disagree with someone, please do so respectfully.
- We may miss some of your comments if several people are talking at the same time, so only one person should talk at a time.
- Your participation in today's focus group is voluntary. You are free to leave at any time.
- We are tape recording this session so that we don't miss anything important but just like the rest of your information, the recording is also private and will only be used by the note taker.
- I would like everyone to participate. But, you each don't have to answer every question. You don't have to raise your hand either.
- I have a lot that I want to talk about today. So, don't be surprised if at some point I interrupt the discussion and move to another topic. But, don't let me cut you off. If there is something important you want to say, let me know and you can add your thoughts before we change subjects.

Read the informed consent form (ICF) aloud and ask participants if they have any questions. Ask them to sign the form. Note taker should collect ICFs and ensure that all have been received before starting the focus group discussion.

As I mentioned early, our discussion will last about an hour. You will not get out any later than _____. We will not be taking a formal break so if you need to take a short break, please feel free to do so at any time. If you need the restroom, they are _____. Please help yourself to the refreshments at any time.

What questions do you have for me before we get started?

To begin, let's go around the room so that everybody can introduce themselves. Please state your first name only.

Allow participants to respond one by one.

The facilitator and note taker should document the names provided during the introductions and draft a seating diagram on their notepad for reference.

QUESTIONS

Use probes when the focus group participants are not engaged, appear not to understand the questions, and/or do not provide the information requested.

How does One Stop staff help you or people you know find employment?

PROBE: Exploring vocational options, assessing existing occupational skills, identifying training needs, teaching job seeking skills...

What kind of workshops and activities do they have at the 1-Stop?

PROBES: Financial literacy, asset development, employment related training, skill-development, job seeking, benefits eligibility...

Please walk us through your experience when you first came to this Center. If you can, try to tell us what happened in the order of when it happened. PROBES: Describe the intake process. How did you go about getting assistance from the One-Stop Career Center?

How do One-Stop staff help determine your disability-related service needs?

Can you describe how staff addressed you and your needs upon your interest in their services?

PROBES: How did they explore your career goals? Did you feel your options were evaluated adequately?

(Youth only) Did you work with your one-stop to identify social and professional networks that would help you with your education or career goals?

Have you heard of the DEI before you learned of this focus group?

Which services do you think are most effective for PWD? SUBQUESTION: Why?

What has been the result of your experience with this Center?

In general, are you satisfied with the help you receive from the Center?

Do you feel like you have a say in the help you received?

CONCLUSION:

I want to thank all of you for coming to the focus group session and for sharing your opinions with us. We have learned a lot about your experiences with the One Stop Career Center and how you feel about services provided.

Provide a summary of the discussion and invite comments.

1. Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to tell me about your experience with the One Stop Career Center?

Thank you again for your time and the information you provided.

This is the end of our discussion. To compensate you for your time and effort, I would like to give you all a <AMOUNT> stipend for your participation.

Thank you and please get home safe.

After The Focus Group:

- *Place the chairs in the positions they were in prior to the focus group session*
- *Collect and pack away all of the background questionnaires and ICFs*
- *Pack up all supplies*
- *Throw away all trash*

B. Career Pathways Focus Group Protocol

Career Pathways Staff and Stakeholder Questions

Staff Questions

A. Collaboration –

- **PROBE:** What collaborative relationships were needed to be in place to design and implement the career pathways program?
- In what ways is the existing career pathways system accessible in terms of needed accommodations, including assistive technology, flexible scheduling, universal design for learning?
- In what ways is it inclusive?
- In what ways does it accommodate people with disabilities?

B. Accommodations

How does the career pathways program accommodate the following groups?

- At the secondary level (such as local education agencies, high schools, alternative high schools, Job Corps programs, YouthBuild program, career academies, and secondary career technical education programs)
- At the postsecondary level (such as occupational certificate programs offered by community colleges, registered apprenticeship programs, and associate's and bachelor's degree programs)
- With workforce agencies, business and other community stakeholders
 - Workforce Investment Board(s) and local job centers
 - Secondary Education staff;
 - Adult Basic Education providers
 - Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) providers and Human Service agencies
 - Economic Development agencies
 - Business/Employer representative(s)
 - Vocational Rehabilitation specialists
 - Other community-based organizations
 - State agencies:
 - State Departments of Labor
 - Adult Basic and Postsecondary Education
 - Economic Development
 - Human Services
 - Rehabilitation

- Corrections/Juvenile Justice
- Mental Health
- Intellectual/Development Disabilities
- o Other Stakeholders/Services
 - Medicaid
 - Social Security/Ticket to Work Employment Networks
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Registered apprenticeship programs
 - Asset development entities
 - Carl D. Perkins Act providers
 - Career and Technical Education (CTE) providers

Are there written agreements that clearly define the agreed upon roles and responsibilities of partnership members?

PROBE: Has a leadership or steering committee for the DEI collaborative partnership been established to guide the process of making the existing career pathways system inclusive of people with disabilities?

PROBE: Please describe the structure of this committee, or alternative governance structure, and its role in the development of the DEI career pathways initiative.

PROBE: Who are the specific sector/industry partners for your DEI career pathways initiative?

How were they approached and what role(s) do they play in the project? (Programming development? Advisory? Placement/Work Experience?, etc.)

C. Service Delivery

PROBE: What does the Disability Resource Coordinator(s) play in the context of the career pathway program in terms of design? What about in terms of local level implementation?

PROBE: What role does the DEI Project leadership play in the context of the career pathway strategic design at the state level?

PROBE: What steps or supports are in place to follow the individual through the various components of a career pathway process (i.e. enrollment, completion, support services, transportation, advisory services, counseling services, completion, lattice (vertical movement) and ladders (vertical and horizontal movement)?

PROBE: How are the stakeholders, including the American Job Centers, involved in assisting the individual progress of participants?

PROBE: In what ways do they provide comprehensive support that leads to employment and career advancement?

Are there specific strategies or supports being used, such as;

PROBES:

- Using the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to integrate resources and services, blend and braid funds, and leverage resources across multiple service delivery systems;
- Participating in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work Program to access training and employment resources;
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations at the state and local levels;
- Implementing the "Guideposts for Success";
- Implementing customized employment;
- Hiring/designating a dedicated staff person, at the local level, with workplace and disability experience and expertise (Disability Resource Coordinators or Disability Program Navigators);
- Using Universal Design Principles;
- Aligning adult and youth career pathways programs with the use of Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs).

D. Employer Engagement –

- Are there state industry organizations, business associations, or local employers involved in the design of curriculum and/or work-based learning opportunities (such as on-the-job training, summer youth employment, registered apprenticeships, internships, and other paid and unpaid work experiences)?
- Please describe the role they have in any of these activities:
 - Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system.
 - Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations.
 - Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations.
 - Collaborating with training institutions to design education and training programs.
 - Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs.
 - Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects.
 - Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process.
 - Serving as mentors.
 - Serving as a job shadowing site.
 - Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students.
 - Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

E. Professional development –

- **PROBE:** Are there professional development opportunities that support the design, implementation, and maintenance of CP, foster innovative teaching and learning strategies, and are available for administrators, teachers, faculty, and other education professionals?
- **PROBE:** Is career pathways service delivery to youth inclusive, integrated, and based upon and consistent with the “Guideposts for Success?”
 - Please describe how the Guidepost for Success, School-Based Preparatory Experiences, is integrated into your career pathway service delivery model for youth with disabilities.
 - Please describe how the Guidepost for Success, Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning Experiences, is integrated into your career pathway service delivery model for youth with disabilities.
 - Please describe how the Guidepost for Success, Youth Development & Leadership, is integrated into your career pathway service delivery model for youth with disabilities.
 - Please describe how the Guidepost for Success, Connecting Activities, is integrated into your career pathway service delivery model for youth with disabilities.
 - Please describe how the Guidepost for Success, Family Involvement & Supports, is integrated into your career pathway service delivery model for youth with disabilities.

F. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and teaching and learning strategies–

PROBE: Is UDL used in the design of career pathways program? What kinds of innovative and creative instructional approaches are being used, that enable teachers to integrate academic and technical instruction?

Secondary and post-secondary curriculum –

- Is the secondary and post-secondary curriculum sequenced so students do not duplicate coursework?
- Are formal agreements in place between secondary and postsecondary systems that allow students to earn postsecondary academic or career and technical education (CTE) credit while in secondary school?
- **PROBE:** Guidance counseling and advising – Is there guidance support and academic advisement that assists students in planning for their careers by mapping a complete sequence of coursework that ensures secondary graduation and preparation for a postsecondary training/education program?
- **PROBE:** Is there a “disability coordinator” or office at the various post-secondary entities involved in the workforce or regional career pathway model?

G. Wraparound services –

- **PROBE:** Does the program provide wraparound and support services (such as child care, transportation, case management, academic and career counseling, college adjustment and retention services, financial aid, employment assistance/job retention assistance)?

Services may also include such supportive services as:

- job coaching;
 - social support;
 - financial literacy training;
 - drop-out prevention services;
 - life skills;
 - financial capability counseling;
 - Using the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to integrate resources and services, blend and braid funds, and leverage resources across multiple service delivery systems;
 - Participating in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work Program to access training and employment resources;
 - Fostering partnerships and collaborations at the state and local levels;
 - Implementing the "Guideposts for Success";
 - Implementing customized employment;
 - Hiring/designating a dedicated staff person, at the local level, with workplace and disability experience and expertise (Disability Resource Coordinators or Disability Program Navigators);
 - Using Universal Design Principles; and
 - Aligning adult and youth career pathways programs with the use of ILPs.
- **PROBE:** Please describe each component of the wraparound services that are being provided.
 - **PROBE:** What role, if any, do the DRCs and integrated resource teams have in connecting the individual to career pathways services? What about the AJC and its partners more broadly?
 - **PROBE:** Is active resource coordination being used in conjunction with Integrated Resource Teams to facilitate access to wraparound services?

H. Academic/technical skills, standards, and assessment –

- **PROBE:** Are content standards clearly defined and are assessments used to ensure students meet them?
 - Have accommodation procedure been incorporated into the assessment process?
 - What actions have been taken to assure that technical skill assessments do not “screen out” individuals with disabilities?

I. Competency model –

- **PROBE:** Are there competency models that define successful performance in a defined work setting for the career pathways programs that are provided?
 - *A competency model is a clear description of what a person needs to know and be able to do – the knowledge, skills, and abilities – to perform well in a specific job, occupation, or industry.*
- **PROBE:** Have the education, training, and skill needs of employers in the state/region been analyzed and gaps identified?
- **PROBE:** Has pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship been considered for the career pathway, industry sectors or employers identified in the DEI grant (or regional or local workforce area approach)?
- **PROBE:** Has work experience, on-the-job training, and internships been incorporated into the DEI (or career pathway) strategic design?
 - Are these used to assist individuals in identifying preferable career paths?
- **PROBE:** Do any of the career paths incorporate paid employment into the academic experience? Which ones?
- **PROBE:** Has a plan been put in place to support working with business associations and employers during various phases of the project (design, launch, operation, and evaluation)?

J. Develop career ladders (vertical movement between jobs) and lattices (horizontal movement between jobs) -

- Are there career ladders and lattices that students can pursue after completing an initial certificate? Please describe the career lattices that are available through your career pathways program.
- Are programs stackable and articulate to progressively higher-level credentials or degrees.
- **PROBE:** Do the programs have multiple entry points and exit points (on-ramps and off-ramps)?
- **PROBE:** Are curricula “chunked” or organized in progressive modules, with each level clearly articulated to the next?

- **PROBE:** Please describe how contextualized learning and, accelerated integrated education and training strategies are being used to facilitate attaining positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
These strategies may include:
 - compressed training
 - awarding credit for prior learning
 - dual enrollment
 - hybrid learning approaches
- **PROBE:** Are individuals provided opportunities for self and career exploration prior to choosing a career pathway?
- **PROBE:** Please describe how individualized career plans or ILPs are used to support an individual through the pathway.
 - Who is responsible for developing them and supporting the individual in implementing them?
- **PROBE:** Describe the assessment tools used to determine placement and advancement including credit for prior learning.
 - Are accommodations available when using these assessments?

K. Employer validation –

- **PROBE:** Have your career pathways programs been reviewed by employer and industry personnel that can validate the competencies and pathways for each of your programs? Please describe this process.

L. Flexible scheduling –

- **PROBE:** Does your career pathways programs provide flexible scheduling or attendance via technologies such as video conferencing for students that may not be able to attend class on a regular basis? Please describe your flexible scheduling and/or attendance policies.
- **PROBE:** Are alternate methods of demonstrating proficiency in course/training materials available to students?
- **PROBE:** Please describe how course/syllabus modifications techniques such as universal design, alternate assessments, individual learning and planning tools, and other strategies are being used to effectively integrate and accommodate individuals with disabilities in the existing career pathways system?

Career Pathways Participant Focus Group Questions

M. Enrollment and Onboarding

- **PROBE:** Is there guidance and support available for you from your school or training site? Is there guidance and support available for your family from the school or training site?
- **PROBE:** Is there help available for course work (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, etc.)? What help have you received? Who provided the help? Was it useful?
- Did you get any kind of academic counseling on planning your career or selecting a career path? Tell me about the kinds of academic counseling you received. What help have you received? Who provided the help? Was it useful?
- When you first registered for the career pathways program, did you take any kind of assessment to determine your academic skill level or career interests? Tell me about this assessment? Did you find it useful? Why/Why not?
- Does your program include any instruction related to developing soft skills?
- **PROBE:** Does your program include any instruction related to developing self-advocacy skills?
- **PROBE:** Did you have an opportunity to explore work environments through an internship, work experience, or on-the-job training? Did you find it helpful?
- **PROBE:** Describe how you feel about getting school or training site staff to listen to you when you have a concern about something? How responsive are these staff to your needs?
- **PROBE:** Were you offered or did you request an accommodation and was it provided?
- **PROBE:** When you enrolled in your program, did you use an individualized career plan to help you in identifying your career path? If so, who helped you in developing your plan? Was self-exploration and career exploration part of the process?
- **PROBE:** Did you get services at your local American Job Center or through a rehabilitation counselor?
 - Did the American Job Center staff or vocational rehabilitation specialist stay in touch with you?
- **PROBE:** Are there other programs or services you are involved with in the community that are helping you progress on your career pathway?
- Did somebody help you with this process? What help have you received? Who provided the help? Was it useful?

- Why did you select this career pathway? What do you think about the career path you chose?
- How hard are the courses you are enrolled in? Are you working harder than you thought you would?
 - What types of services and supports being provided are most helpful to your being successful in completing your coursework/training program?
 - Are there other types of services and supports that you need that you are not receiving?

N. Class Experience

- **PROBE:** Is the information you receive in class presented in a way that you understand? What would you change about the way the information is presented?
- **PROBE:** Do you have access to a person at the college who can work with you individually to help you with administrative issues and other issues, like managing your time and work, and getting any accommodations you may need?
- **PROBE:** How did you meet this person? Is this person a staff at the school, friend or colleague? If you do not have access to a person at the college, who can help you? What can you do to find out what resources are available?
- **PROBE:** Are the standards or expectations for your program clearly defined by the instructor?
 - Are the expectations reasonable? Why or why not?
- **PROBE:** Do you believe the experiences you are having in your program are adequately preparing you for the career you have chosen?
 - Are there additional experiences that you believe would enhance your preparation?
- **PROBE:** Does your program provide flexible scheduling, or means of attendance such as video conferencing or recorded lectures, so you can attend to other things such as work, family and errands? What happens if you miss a class or two? Can the work be made up?
- **PROBE:** Do you have difficulty getting transportation to your school or training site? If so, how has it been addressed?
- **PROBE:** Is the course material you receive provided in an accessible way? Can you access it as needed?

- Once you receive your certificate, does the program provide ways of building on your existing skill level to higher levels of skills and credentials or degrees?
- About how much reading and writing are you asked to do outside of class?
- What do you think about the amount of school work you are asked to do outside of class?
- **PROBE:** Do you ever contact your instructor to ask questions about the coursework?
- **PROBE:** Do you feel that you get the information you need from your instructor? Is it helpful?
- **PROBE:** Do you use email to communicate with your instructor?
- **PROBE:** Is the instructor responsive?
- **PROBE:** Has the American Job Center or educational institution assisted you with obtaining employment?
- **PROBE:** Have you been linked with any employers for mentoring, work experience, or other counseling?

O. Outside of Class

- Do you ever work with your classmates outside of class on course assignments?
- What's it like working with your classmates on course material?
- **PROBE:** Do you discuss ideas from readings or class discussions with other students or your instructors after class?
- How do you feel about these discussions? Do you learn anything from other students? Do you find these discussions enjoyable? Is your instructor helpful when you talk with him/her outside of class?
- Has it been difficult to juggle school and others things in your life?
- **PROBE:** What things have been difficult to juggle?
- **PROBE:** How long does it take you to get to campus?
- **PROBE:** Do you have your own transportation? If not, what kinds of transportation do you use? Is it reliable?

- **PROBE:** Do you have other barriers that may inhibit your ability to participate in your school or training program? These may include housing, funding, independent living, health challenges, etc.
- **PROBE:** Do you participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, mentoring or peer mentoring, etc.) at your school or training site? If yes, what activities do you participate in?
- **PROBE:** Describe your level of confidence concerning whether you can perform as well as your non-disabled peers in your schooling or training?

P. Disability-

- **PROBE:** How, if at all, does your disability impact your participation and success in the career pathways program?
 - If so, what types of supports and strategies work best for you in these situations?
 - Are you able to access them as part of your training program?
 - Do you feel you are benefiting from your training program?
 - Are there additional supports that you believe would help you to obtain more benefit from your training program?
- **PROBE:** Was there a “disability counselor” or program at the academic institution to address accommodation requests and provide support services?
- **PROBE:** Did you request an accommodation? How did the educational entity handle your request?