

Customized Self-Employment Toolkit

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



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Introduction

This tool has been developed to assist DVR Staff throughout the exploration and development of a small business for consumers who need a customized or supported approach to self employment. A consumer requiring a customized approach may need supports to develop and/or maintain the business. Supports could include: **long term job coaching supports, ongoing case management, peer supports, natural supports, family supports or ongoing paid professional services for the business, etc.**

Self employment requiring a customized approach is typically called customized self-employment or supported self-employment. For the purpose of this document, the term **customized self- employment** will be used.

The customized self-employment process unites person-centered planning strategies with the development of a business plan. The goal of the planning process is to develop an individualized, profitable and sustainable microenterprise. This process does not require the individual to get ready to go to work but, instead focuses on the talents, interests, and assets of the individual.

For many consumers with disabilities, including consumers who need long term supports or ongoing supports, self-employment can be a great option to meet their employment needs.

Self-employment allows for:

- Choice and control
- The use of natural skills and talents
- Expanded work opportunities
- Accumulation of wealth
- Independence and creative freedom.

Supporting individuals with significant disabilities to start their own business may seem like uncharted territory to some VRC's but WDA 10 has participated in a pilot project funded through Dane County Services and DVR since 2004.

From 2004-2008, **33** consumers with significant disabilities have been involved in the pilot project with DVR and Dane County Human Services. The pilot has had the following results:

- 11 consumers were closed successfully.
- 3 consumers were closed due to changes in their disability or death.
- 3 consumers were closed just after the assessment process was completed because they decided not to proceed with the customized self-employment process.
- 2 consumers were closed unsuccessful due to the business' failing to meet minimum wage earnings criteria.
- 14 consumers continued business planning into 2009 because they were opened sometime in 2008 and hadn't completed the process yet.

- To date, 67% of consumers who completed the pilot project were closed successful by DVR.
- The average time frame from initial IPE development to case closure, was 24 months (breaking down to an average of 3 months for customized self-employment assessment services, 15 months for customized business planning, and 6 months of follow-along).
- The average “wage” at the time of case closure, based on gross receipts for self-employment work activity hours, was \$10.51/hour.
- Ongoing tracking of successful pilot participants has revealed an increase in income over time, to an average of \$15.48 per hour and 80% of businesses remaining successful over time.

This pilot demonstrates that customized self-employment can assist DVR consumers in successfully achieving their employment goals.

Out of the pilot emerged 3 main processes that were identified as necessary for successful planning. These processes are:

1. **Facilitated Exploration-** is an “alternative-to-traditional-assessment”. This approach aims to get to know a prospective business owner. To understand and explore his/her proposed business idea primarily through conversations with the individual and significant others. This spoken exchange allows the group to identify strengths, interests, assets and challenges in the areas of education, employment history, communication, transportation, housing, assistive technology, business equipment and supplies, health, personal interests and outlook, benefits and financial information, legal considerations, supports, and community connections.
2. **Team-based business planning-** involves goal validation, determination of business feasibility, and the writing of a business plan through a variety of practical and creative strategies.
3. **Business plan implementation and follow-along-** involves obtaining the necessary business equipment and supplies, launching the business, activating the supports that were determined necessary in the team-based business planning process and transitioning to long-term support.

For the purpose of DVR, the customized self-employment process is similar to the Self-Employment Start-up toolkit. You will notice that the steps remain essentially the same with a few small changes. These changes are necessary because these types of businesses are typically:

- Very small,
- Require a planning and support team.

In this toolkit, the planning team will be referred to as the Business Planning Team (BP Team). The BP team assists in exploration, feasibility determination, development of the business plan, business launch, and addresses the person’s long term support needs. For further information on the BP Team and their responsibilities see [Appendix 2](#).

The information provided in this toolkit is best practice; it is not meant to be taken as DVR policy nor does it replace DVR policy related to self-employment or supported employment. *If DVR policy is being referenced it will be italicized and clearly noted as policy.* [Appendix 1](#) of this toolkit states the DVR policy specific to self-employment and supported employment. When using this toolkit you should allow for flexibility, changes in the process and inclusion of other tools to ensure that the consumer's individualized needs are being met. For questions regarding which toolkit should be used in a specific case, please consult with your supervisor or policy analyst.

Please note that this toolkit was not designed for use with existing businesses, Business Enterprise Program plans, Farm plans, or self-employment cases that do not require a customized approach. Please refer to the tools and guidance pieces developed for those specific types of self-employment.

Nancy: Owner of Delicious Deliveries since 2006

After 9 years of unemployment and trying a variety of typical community jobs, (none of which lasted long-term due to the nature of Nancy's disability and frequent health concerns) Nancy's parents and case manager decided to explore the idea of creating work through self-employment. Nancy's family felt strongly that Nancy had enjoyed work in the past and that she would be able to contribute to her community through work. With the help of a Self-Employment Coordinator,* a team was formed to discover Nancy's strengths and interests. After developing an understanding of "who Nancy is," the team brainstormed and evaluated different business ideas through research and consultation with other small business owners. Based on Nancy's interests, what she demonstrated that she liked to do and input from businesses and community members, three potential business ideas were generated: 1) a mobile coffee cart business, 2) a towel laundering/delivery service for local pubs and cafes and 3) a cookie business. Next, the team set up some trial situations that would help Nancy and her team validate which business would best suit her interests, abilities and support needs. Several months of trial and error occurred while refining the business idea. "Delicious Deliveries" - a personalized coffee and food delivery service was the result of the customized self-employment process.

The journey to entrepreneurship has been well worth it for Nancy. Because of her business and the connections that have resulted, her health and wellness have dramatically improved. Her psychiatrist and nurse have commented how they wish they had taken "before and after" photos of Nancy and wish that everyone they work with could have meaningful work in their lives. Nancy's family and staff report that Nancy now accompanies them to the library, video store and grocery store. Prior to owning this business being in public places was difficult for Nancy. With the extra income from her business, Nancy purchases time with a music therapist, which allows her to enjoy one of her primary interests. Nancy continues to operate her business with success and is supported by her family and a supported employment service provider.

*See Definition on Page 7

- *Self-Employment Coordinator: this is a generic title, much like “job developer” or “employment specialist.” The Self-Employment Coordinator is the person who is assisting the potential business owner with plan development by coordinating planning activities and facilitating the team planning process. The Self-Employment Coordinator may be an independent consultant or job developer hired by DVR (or other funding sources like PASS or Managed Care) or may be a member of the potential business owner’s circle of support who voluntarily accept this role (like a family member or advocate). **To avoid conflict of interest, the Self-Employment Coordinator should not be the DVR counselor.**

- Basic core competencies of the Self-Employment Coordinator should include experience with:
 - disability issues
 - person-centered planning
 - professional networking
 - team coordination and facilitation.

Most often, the Self-Employment Coordinator takes the lead role in writing the business plan, however completion of the business plan could be funded as a separate service (in addition to the services of the Self-Employment Coordinator) or written by the consumer and/or their family.

We hope you find this tool useful when working with your consumers!

Customized Self-Employment Steps

Listed below are the twelve steps in the customized self-employment process. (Full description provided on following pages). The steps and their order are similar to the start-up toolkit. As you read through the steps, descriptions regarding any content differences are shared.

1. Share and Discuss DVR's Position and Policy Regarding Self-Employment
2. Arrange Initial Appointments to Discuss Self-Employment and Feasibility of Proposed Business and Support Needs
3. Develop the IPE for the Occupation
4. Complete Skill Development
5. Meet to Discuss Continued Interests and Progress
6. Develop the Business Plan
7. Review the Business Plan
8. Amend the IPE to Reflect DVR's Support and Contributions for the Approved Business Plan
9. Submit the Business Plan to Potential Investors
10. Amend IPE to Reflect any Needed Changes to Funding and Services
11. Open the Business
12. Successful Closure of the DVR Case

Step 1 Share and Discuss DVR's Position and Policy Regarding Self-Employment

This checklist is to ensure that DVR staff share these essential points about the customized self-employment process with the consumer and his/her BP Team. By communicating all points in this checklist with the consumer and the BP Team an informed decision can be made, i.e. whether or not to pursue customized self-employment.

- The purpose of DVR is “to provide VR services for individuals with disabilities so that such individuals may prepare for and engage in **gainful** employment”.
- There is risk involved in starting a business. Many people consider running their own business at some point in their lives. Of these, very low percentages ever actually follow through and try it.
- Clarify that customized self-employment is not an employment goal for DVR purposes, just as working for someone else would not be written as an employment goal.

Self-employment is a way to make money at an occupation or a means of practicing a skill (e.g. welding), or selling a product (e.g. insurance policies).

- Customized self-employment cases involve *person-centered planning*. This process emphasizes the practice of bringing together DVR staff, families, friends, supporters and others to help consumers explore their interests, guide them through the process, and assist them in successfully achieving their goal. The person(s) who agree to assist the consumer throughout this process come together as a team. This team is called the **Business Planning Team (BP Team)**. (See [Appendix 2](#))
- DVR staff, the consumer, and other team members all have roles in the customized self-employment process. (See [Appendix 2](#).)
- There are 12 steps in the customized self-employment process. (See [Page 8](#).)
- A feasible Business Plan is necessary before DVR can approve financing for the business. However, DVR may provide services to assist in the development of the business plan. DVR does not support hobby businesses.

The following information may assist the BP Team in determining whether the proposed business is a hobby.

Hobby

Business

No profit motive (typically loses money)
Net income consistently under \$400/year
No marketing efforts

Hoping to make profit
Net income of \$400 or more/year
Marketing efforts

- Explain that DVR services and funding for self-employment are related to the start-up costs of a business, not for future or ongoing costs related to the business. Explain that DVR does not provide cash to help launch a business. When the business plan review committee reviews a business plan, they will be evaluating the business's ability to cover its ongoing expenses and to be self-sustaining.
- Explain DVR policy related to supported-employment services. (See [Appendix 1.](#))
- For consumers receiving SSI/SSDI DVR staff should take time to discuss with the consumer if they are interested in going off of cash benefits or working at Trial Work Wage level (TWW). The decision should be reflected in the IPE case note and also in the goal. The goal should include the anticipated income level (TWW or SGA) and the anticipated hours of work per week. Follow the requirements outlined in [Step 12](#) of this toolkit.
- If the consumer receives SSI/SSDI benefits, discuss how earnings may impact his/her benefits as well as work incentives that may be available to him/her. [Appendix 8](#) and [Appendix 11](#) contain information on business structure, social security, work incentives, and resources on how further information can be obtained.
- Explain that before DVR provides certain VR services, DVR staff must determine if comparable benefits or services exist under any other program and whether those benefits or services are available to the consumer. Explain what services are exempt from this requirement. (See [Appendix 1.](#))

Examples of comparable benefits:

- Referral to SCORE for business plan development assistance, if available and appropriate, versus referral and payment to a business consultant for business plan development.
- Referral to a local community library for free basic computer skill development, if available and appropriate, versus payment to an agency for this skill development.

- If applicable, you should discuss with the consumer that DVR is not able to purchase real estate or property. (See [Appendix 1.](#))
- Explain that continual progress toward the goal within a reasonable timeframe is required. Work with the consumer and BP Team to set target dates for completion of various steps in the process. Explain that these dates can be changed if appropriate, but stress that target dates are necessary for successfully completing self-employment activities and that these will be reviewed regularly.
- If a consumer is interested in going into business with a non-DVR consumer the expectation is that the consumer have at least 51% ownership (controlling interest) in the proposed business. Furthermore, DVR would provide assistance toward an approved business plan at the rate of ownership and the business partner would be expected to contribute their rate of ownership (e.g., *consumer has 75 % ownership. BP lists \$1000.00 needed for initial stocks and supplies. DVR would look at assisting with 75% of the initial stock and supplies request (75% of \$1000.00 is \$750.00) and the business partner would be expected to contribute the other 25% (\$250.00).*)

If two DVR consumers are going into business together, a single business plan would be developed. Each consumer must have an approved IPE with the goal identified on their plan. Each consumer would be eligible for funding following DVR purchasing policy. If the BP is approved, the total amount for the two requests cannot exceed the need identified in the business plan.

Percentage of ownership of each consumer must be equal (50-50), when both partners are DVR consumers.

Each consumer must meet the successful rehabilitation standards independently of the other. This means that the income for each consumer must meet the standard. The earnings of each consumer must be at least minimum wage for hours worked.

- If a consumer expresses an interest in starting a non-profit business the following should be discussed:

DVR does not support non-profit businesses as self-employment because:

- Non-profit businesses by definition do not generate a profit.
- These businesses are typically overseen by a board of directors. They are not owned and controlled by the consumer; therefore, the consumer is not "self-employed".

This does not mean that a consumer cannot work for a non-profit. It would simply be an employment goal like any other in which they work for an employer ... it is not self-employment.

- Explain the expectations, roles, and requirements related to closing a case successfully. Discuss the process related to transitioning to long term supports. Be sure to discuss the different requirements to successfully close a consumer who's receiving SSI/SSDI and wishes to go off of cash benefits. (See [Step 12.](#))
- Explain Post-Employment services. (See [Step 12.](#))
- Take the time necessary for the consumer to understand what you are communicating and check for their understanding throughout the process.

Step 2

Initial Appointments to Explore Customized Self-Employment and Support Needs

For customized self-employment cases Step Two varies slightly from the start-up toolkit. The focus in this step is on self-exploration. While the activities listed below are different from the start-up toolkit, the purpose and outcome of the activities are the same. The purpose is to determine if customized self-employment will meet the consumer's conditions for work. It is recommended that these activities be spread out over several appointments to allow completion and a thorough discussion of all the information gathered. As with all cases, if the IPE will not be developed within the 90 days, an extension is needed following DVR policy.

1. Development of the Business Planning Team ([Appendix 2](#)):

A Business Planning Team is essential in assisting the consumer throughout the exploration, discovery and actions that lead to a successful and sustainable business enterprise (See [Appendix 2](#)). If a Business Planning Team has not yet been developed it should be done in partnership with the consumer at this time. The Business Planning Team will assist the consumer throughout the planning process beginning in this step.

Persons who the consumer may want to be part of the Business Planning Team may include family members, a legal guardian, the DVR counselor, County/Managed Care Organization (MCO) Case Manager, friends, and any other person (s) who knows the prospective entrepreneur well.

A copy of [Appendix 2](#) should be provided to potential Business Planning Team members in order for them to:

- To determine their interest in becoming a team member and
- To guide them throughout the planning process if they agree to become a member of the Business Planning Team.

2. Determination of Interests and Goal utilizing Facilitated Exploration ([Appendix 3](#)):

As discussed in the introduction section of this toolkit, facilitated exploration is used to identify interests and establish an employment goal that is appropriate given the consumer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The consumer with the support and assistance of his/her team should complete the exploration activities and questions listed in [Appendix 3](#). Part of this process involves understanding the consumer's SSI/SSDI benefits and work incentives related to self-employment. This may require a referral for a benefit analysis which can be purchased by DVR following the [technical specifications](#). **To understand how benefits planning fits into the customized self-employment planning process, refer to the information, resources and flow chart in [Appendix 11](#).**

Consumers receiving SSI and Medicaid should be made aware that if they decide to structure their business as a Limited Liability Company (LLC), S Corporation, or C Corporation, business assets may be considered as personal assets which could jeopardize their SSI or Medicaid benefits.

The consumer and his/her team may decide to purchase assessment(s) that would address the Facilitated Exploration process. Completion of the Facilitated Exploration activities may take several meetings.

The questions in [Appendix 3](#) are not all inclusive and are simply a guide to initiate conversations for information gathering. During the exploration phase all team members should listen closely, be open minded, and patient.

Information from these activities should be provided in a written summary to the BP team for review, discussion and action planning. This summary should be attached to the DVR case file. *Activities are taken from the *Supported Self-Employment Development, Facilitated Exploration, Workbook 1*.

If the information collected during the facilitated exploration process indicates that the consumer's needs *will not* be met through customized self-employment, other employment options should be explored. See [Appendix 7](#) for some examples.

If the team is unsure that the consumers vocational goals can be met through customized self-employment, the team may want to proceed to activity #3 listed below. These activities should assist the team in making this determination.

3. Business Feasibility & Goal Validation- action orientated ([Appendix 4](#))

The feasibility/market analysis allows the consumer and team members to determine the business' potential and how realistic it is.

Compared to the Self-Employment Start-up Toolkit, the Customized Self-Employment feasibility study is more action orientated. While the outcome is still the same (i.e. answering the question "Is the business idea feasible?"), how the information is obtained utilizes a different process. By actually experiencing activities involved in the proposed business idea, the consumer along with his/her support team will be able to make informed decisions about the business. Likewise, the team members will be able to evaluate what supports the consumer will need and help him/her make the changes necessary to the product or service so the business will be successful.

The feasibility activities and documents included in [Appendix 4](#) include:

- Feasibility activity list
- Team plan for goal validation
- Person-centered planning discussion questionnaire
- Business Summary

Completing these activities may involve:

- Talking to others
- Setting up informational interviews
- Selling a few and getting feedback while tracking time and costs
- Completing a breakeven analysis of the business, etc.

Business research may be conducted by phone, internet, or in-person. A script, survey, informational interview, and/or questionnaire, etc. can be utilized in the research process. In rural communities, face to face research may not be possible due to transportation and other barriers.

If no team member is willing or able to assist in this action orientated process, this service could be purchased as an assessment.

The consumer, DVR, and the team should review, discuss, and determine when the feasibility study is complete.

If the proposed business idea is feasible, the team should discuss and determine how DVR should support further business development. If concerns remain regarding the feasibility of the plan, DVR should ask the consumer and the BP Team members to address each of the points of concern.

If the information indicates that the consumer's vocational rehabilitation goal will not be achieved through customized self-employment, and/or the business idea is not feasible, other employment options should be explored. See [Appendix 7](#) for examples.

4. Credit Information ([Appendix 5](#))

Having good credit is important when starting a business; however, it is still possible to start a business with poor credit. For customized self-employment cases, the need to go through the credit resources (See [Appendix 6](#)) should be determined on an individualized basis. Some customized self-employment plans will be simple and start-up funding small enough that outside funding will not be needed.

If a consumer has poor credit, the reason for the poor credit should be considered. For example a consumer's poor credit may be disability related (e.g., hospital bills).

If appropriate and necessary, credit counseling services can be addressed in the IPE.

If it is determined that credit scores are needed, DVR can assist with the cost of obtaining this information.

5. Resources ([Appendix 6](#))

A list of resources has been developed and included in [Appendix 6](#). Staff are encouraged to review the resources with their consumer and BP Team. These resources may be helpful to the BP Team members throughout the process. Many of these resources are the same as those found in the [Self-Employment Start-Up Toolkit](#).

Step 3

Develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) For the Occupation

After working through [Step 2](#), if the proposed business idea appears feasible the following activities should be completed with the consumer and his/her team members as appropriate:

- Identify an appropriate long term employment goal.
- A description and statement justifying why the goal is appropriate should be documented in the Integrated Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS). For example, past training, prior work experience, demonstrated talent/personal pursuit/interests, assessments that support the person's ability to produce the product or service for the business.
- An IPE should be developed for the occupation.
- The goal should be written as dual track. Examples of employment goals:
 - Food delivery- full time through job placement or self-employment working above SGA.
 - Lawn care- full time through job placement or self-employment.
- The IPE should list all services that are needed and known at the time the IPE is developed including:
 - Services needed to address the functional limitations identified at the time of eligibility. This includes the identification of supports and sources of the support that have been determined needed.
 - Services that are identified as needed based upon activities completed in [Step 2](#).
 - Services that address other barriers that come to light e.g. criminal background, prior bankruptcy, driver license issues, skill deficiencies, etc.
 - Training and business development services e.g., temporary employment, job shadowing, mentoring, informational interviewing, apprenticeships, training in business management, etc. needed to achieve an employment outcome.
 - Support services and materials for test marketing,
 - Supports that are necessary for the completion of the services listed in the IPE. Include the provider of those supports.
- Progress measures should be positive as well as measurable. Services should be incremental and should clearly identify who is responsible.

For consumers receiving SSI/SSDI and are interested in working at Trial Work Wage or going off of cash benefits this decision should be reflected in the IPE and also in the goal by stating their anticipated income level (TWW or SGA) and hours per week following the requirements outlined in [Step 12](#).

It is the consumer and BP Team's responsibility to determine if there are any barriers that would prevent the consumer from obtaining the necessary certifications and/or licenses needed for the identified IPE goal.

During the development of the dual track IPE, the consumer and his/her team should be provided a copy of the Customized Self-Employment Business Plan Checklist (See [Appendix 10](#)). This checklist will be used as a guide for the consumer and the BP Team when writing the business plan, as well as by the Business Plan Review Committee when they evaluate the proposed business plan.

Note: per policy, during IPE development DVR must provide the consumer a copy of their appeal rights.

Step 4

Complete Skill Development and Prepare for Self-Employment

*** Note to Counselors:** If Step 4 does not apply to a specific consumer and the team agrees that it is appropriate to pursue customized self-employment the IPE can include the development of a business plan at this time and Steps 4 and 5 can be skipped.

Step four remains the same for customized self-employment consumers as it does for other consumers pursuing self-employment. During this step the individual with the assistance of their team (as appropriate), is successfully completing training, work experiences, job shadows, or other activities as needed to achieve their IPE goal.

If the person is experiencing difficulties in completing the activities that are needed, it is important to ascertain why. The following questions may need to be posed and answered to determine why the person is experiencing problems:

- Does the consumer need some additional supports?
- Are there disability related barriers that need to be addressed?
- Is the consumer dissatisfied with the services (e.g. training not meeting his/her needs)?
- Has the consumer determined that he/she is no longer interested in pursuing the goal, etc.?

The consumer along with his/her team should work together to ensure progress is being made and determine how best to address any concerns raised.

Step 5

Meet to Discuss Continued Interests and Progress Toward Self-Employment

Step 5 remains the same for customized self-employment consumers as it does for other consumers pursuing self-employment. This is an opportunity for the counselor, consumer, and the business planning team to re-evaluate the individual's initiative, drive, and progress toward achieving customized self-employment. At this time, the BP team should not mistake the effects of poverty, limited income, or disability for a lack of drive or motivation. These qualities should be assessed in the context of the individual's economic conditions and functional limitations.

If the consumer and BP Team agree that it is appropriate to pursue customized self-employment, the IPE should be updated to include the development of a business plan. The IPE should include the services and supports that are necessary for the development of the business plan and identify the provider, who pays, and payment method.

If the consumer has decided they are no longer interested in self-employment and/or their employment goal, then the consumer and BP Team should address this and update the plan as needed.

Step 6

Develop the Business Plan

The development of a business plan is the key for a successful business. It requires the evaluation of the entire business and the business plan is considered a road map for the business. A business plan also allows the individual and their team to identify specific support needs (transportation, personal assistance, flexible work schedule, bookkeeping services, assistive technology needs, etc) necessary for the consumer to successfully launch and maintain their business.

For business' that will be seeking outside private funding (e.g. bank loans, Angel Funds) the consumer and BP Team should determine whether or not disability support needs and rehabilitation technology services should be included in the business plan. If it is determined it is not appropriate to include information about disability, supports and rehabilitation technology services in the business plan, a separate attachment should be created for the review committee that addresses the supports needed as listed in [Appendix 10](#) under Operations and Support Services checklist.

Customized self-employment cases require an approved business plan prior to DVR supporting the business. While all the main areas to be covered in the business plan are the same, a micro-enterprise business plan should:

- Typically be shorter and more concise than a business plan written under the Self-Employment Start-up Toolkit and will describe the roles of the team members if applicable.
- Contain as much information as necessary to demonstrate that the business will be profitable and sustainable for the consumer.
- Identify the supports necessary for the ongoing success of the business.
- Incorporate the information from the feasibility study and the exploration process.

[Appendix 8](#) has an outline and activities that need to be incorporated in the business plan.

[Appendix 8](#) needs to be provided to the consumer and BP team at this time.

The BP Team should provide assistance to the consumer in developing the business plan as necessary. A list of suggested activities that the consumer and BP Team can complete to assist in the business plan development process is included in [Appendix 8](#). While completing some of these activities may be time consuming and difficult, working through them can help the consumer and BP Team understand the ins and outs of a owning and operating a business. This can ultimately lead to the success of the business.

The Operations and Management section of the business plan should identify both the short term and long term supports the consumer will need to be successful at customized self-employment and who will provide those supports.

If needed, the consumer may be referred to a business consultant for assistance in the development of the business plan. The business consultant will not be able to tell the consumer or BP Team if the consumer has the necessary skills and abilities to be successfully self-employed with or without supports in place. This is something that the consumer and BP Team will need to determine.

In the Financial section of the business plan include any work incentives that will be utilized to support the business e.g. Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Property Essential for Self-Support (PESS), Un-Incurred Business Expenses, Unpaid Help, and Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE). (See [Appendix 11](#).)

Reminder: Consumers receiving SSI and Medicaid should be made aware that if they decide to structure their business as a Limited Liability Company (LLC), S Corporation, or C Corporation, business assets may be considered as personal assets, which could jeopardize their eligibility for SSI or Medicaid.

This reminder is to ensure that the business structure designation should be explored further by the consumer and BP Team if it has not already been addressed. See [Appendix 11](#) for further information.

Curtis: Owner of a lawn care business with three additional part-time jobs

For years, Curtis mowed lawns for people in his neighborhood. He would receive some money for his work as well as barter for goods and services he needed. Curtis's neighborhood is a mix of four-plex rentals with "absentee" landlords and single family homes. Mowing lawns was a "side activity" for him since his income came from 3 part-time restaurant jobs. Curtis is largely independent at these jobs, receiving only a spot check from a job coach every month or two to see how things are going. At home, Curtis receives supportive living services for budgeting, shopping, cleaning and some decision making.

As the years progressed and more and more neighbors began asking Curtis to mow their lawns, Curtis began making business cards, posting fliers at local businesses, and hanging a sign with his name and phone number on his mower trailer. His support team, having heard about self-employment and microenterprise, began wondering if Curtis could "officially" set up a business. However, they were concerned about how making more money might impact his benefits, since Curtis was already very close to SSA's Substantial Gainful Activity criteria with his part-time jobs.

Curtis decided to apply for DVR services to access help in determining if he wanted to be self-employed. To start the process, Curtis worked with the Self-Employment Coordinator to gather a planning team together for a few exploratory meetings. People invited to form a planning team included Curtis's case manager, residential support coordinator, the job developer who checked in with him and his mother. With the help of the Self-Employment Coordinator, Curtis and his team identified his strengths, interests, challenges and potential support needs for owning and operating a small lawn care enterprise. Once he and his team had explored the possibilities and areas that Curtis might need support, the Self-Employment Coordinator developed a "service plan" that outlined the steps of the planning process and resources available.

A primary component of Curtis's plan was to invite a benefits specialist into team meetings to help him and his team understand work incentives and plan for suspension of his cash benefits. Curtis and his team met each month for almost a year to receive advice from other business owners about lawn care, determine how Curtis could operate his business as independently as possible, connect with community resources for banking help, develop a business plan, develop marketing materials and obtain necessary equipment and supplies to expand his business. With the benefit counseling, Curtis learned that he could add hours at his part time jobs, as well as claim and earn more self-employment income, while keeping the benefits that he needed. Curtis continues to be largely independent with both his jobs and his lawn care business, but when he needs support he can find it from a variety of natural and paid supports that were involved with him through the planning process.

Step 7

Review the Business Plan

For Customized Self-employment business plans, outside business plan reviews are not necessary because these types of businesses are typically:

- Very small,
- Low risk ventures.

1. Consumer and BP Team Review:

The consumer and BP Team should be reviewing the business plan throughout its development and at completion. It is recommended that the steps below be followed prior to submitting the business plan to the Business Plan Review Committee:

- The consumer and BP Team should review and evaluate all drafts of the business plan for completeness and thoroughness.
- Review reports from business consultants, benefits specialists, healthcare providers, supported employment vendors, etc. to ensure that any priorities, issues, and/or concerns have been addressed.
- Assist the consumer in exploring comparable benefits and ensure that this exploration is reflected in IRIS.
- The counselor is to dialogue with the supervisor and reviewers throughout the plan development process in order to benefit from their advice, thereby enhancing the likelihood of a well developed and approvable Business Plan. Share this feedback with the consumer and BP Team.
- The counselor is to complete the Business Plan Submission Checklist which will be provided to the Business Plan Review Committee. All the information on the checklist must be completed and case noted in IRIS prior to submission to the BP Review Committee. (See [Appendix 9](#).)
- The counselor should not use the designated reviewers as a means of disapproval for an incomplete or poorly developed plan. The VRC should have a comfort level with the quality of the Business Plan the consumer and BP Team submit so that approval can be recommended.
- If any changes or clarifications are needed at this stage, they should be addressed before submitting the business plan to the review entity.
- If the business plan is complete and ready to be submitted to the committee but, the counselor is not in support of the proposed business, the counselor should communicate these concerns to the consumer and other members of the BP Team. Even if the counselor is not in support of the proposed business, he or she is still expected to assist the consumer in submitting the plan to the committee if the consumer wishes to go forward. When this is the case, the counselor should explain to the consumer that s/he will be making clear to the committee their concerns and the reasons for not supporting the plan. The counselor needs to document why they don't support the business in IRIS.
- The counselor is expected to be present as a means of support, along with other BP Team members as appropriate, whenever the review committee requests to meet with the consumer.

2. Internal Review: Business Plan Review Committee:

Once completed, all business plans need to be reviewed and approved by the WDA Business Plan Review Committee utilizing the Business Plan checklist found in [Appendix 10](#).

The internal review resource or committee will evaluate the consumer's business plan, the counselor's recommendation, and any input from other sources (e.g., references, grade reports, credit counseling report, therapist recommendations, etc.) when determining if DVR will support the business plan.

The Business Plan Review Committee will schedule a meeting for the consumer to present the proposed business plan within two weeks of receiving it. If the committee will not be able to meet within the two week time frame, a reasonable extension can be agreed upon by all involved parties. The consumer's counselor is expected to attend this presentation to provide support and assistance to the consumer. **Other BP Team members are encouraged to be active participants in presenting the plan to the review committee as well as any other persons the consumer wishes to invite.**

Within three business days of the review meeting, the committee will inform all interested parties of whether or not the plan has been approved or denied. If approved, the VRC can authorize for services within their delegated purchasing authority without an exception request for purchases exceeding the fee schedule. The VRC needs to document in a case note what services were purchased and reason(s) why.

If the anticipated purchasing approval requires the director's purchasing authority, it is recommended that the team have a mechanism in place to have the director sit in on the review committee for that particular consumer.

If the anticipated purchase amount exceeds the director's purchasing authority, the director needs to summarize within three business days in an IRIS case note the rationale justifying the purchase request. The director is to email the bureau director requesting review of the IRIS case note dated X for either approval/denial of purchase. The bureau director is to approve/ deny the request within five business days.

If the plan is denied, a meeting will be arranged with the consumer, BP Team, and other interested parties to review this decision, answer questions, and discuss what changes need to be made in order for the plan to be resubmitted.

*Any decisions to not support the proposed business needs to be provided to the consumer or as appropriate the individuals representative in writing, and if appropriate in the native language or mode of communication of the individual, or the individuals representative, along with their appeal rights and CAP information.

You should document in IRIS the determination by the committee.

Business Plan Review Process	
Action	Timeframe
Completed business plan is submitted to the WDA Business Plan Review Team for review	Following counselor approval or consumer request
The Business Plan Review Team schedules a meeting for the consumer to present their business plan	Within two weeks of submission to review team
The Business Plan Review Team will inform the consumer if the plan has been approved or denied	Within three business days
If the business plan is approved	Schedule appointment to amend IPE and include necessary services
If the business plan is denied	Schedule appointment with Business Plan Review Team to discuss the decision/next steps as appropriate.

Step 8

Amend the IPE and Determine Parameters of DVR Contribution

Up to this point, self-employment has not been formally identified as the employment outcome. If DVR has decided to support the business, this decision should be reflected through an IPE amendment. The IPE amendment should include:

- The DVR funding amount agreed to and how the funds are to be used.
- The necessary supports that have been identified including funding sources and natural supports that will be in place.
- Identification when transition to these supports will occur and when the closure clock begins.
- Voluntary consumer contribution- *Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation does not apply or require a financial needs test as a condition of providing vocational rehabilitation services. DVR consumers shall be advised that they can voluntarily participate in the costs of services in their IPE.* (See [Appendix 1.](#))

If a consumer wishes to voluntarily contribute towards the business this can be done in many ways such as an in-kind contribution or a microloan.

During this step, DVR's contribution is finalized if the business is so small that additional funds beyond the DVR Counselors spending authority will not be sought.

Step 9

Submit the Business Plans to Potential Investors (If necessary)

When additional funding is required beyond the funding and supports identified in [Step 8](#), other potential funders should be tapped into at this time.

Written documentation of DVR's funding contribution can be provided to the consumer if outside funding is being sought. This documentation may allow the consumer to leverage additional funding from outside sources.

Review the business plan to determine if other funding sources have been identified. If not, then potential funding sources include family, friends, banks, micro loan programs, and Social Security Administration Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS). See [Appendix 11](#) for information on Social Security Administration (SSA) Plans for Achieving Self-Support, other SSA work incentives, and [Appendix 6](#) for other funding resources.

Sean: Talented musician and business owner with the goal of exceeding SGA

For 10 years, Sean, an extremely talented musician with Autism, was working in minimum wage jobs bussing tables at fast food restaurants. He was supported at these jobs with a 1 to 1 job coach. His income was limited to the hourly wage these job opportunities would pay and the availability of paid job coaching supports. When the option of helping Sean create his own work through self-employment was presented to him and his family, they jumped at the opportunity. Through the Facilitated Exploration process, it was discovered that Sean and his family had an abundance of connections in the music world. The family reported that Sean had learned everything through music, math, reading, social skills, you name it! With his intrinsic interest and abilities in music, Sean had begun a piano tuning apprenticeship with a retired University professor. Since high school, he had played percussion and piano in professional bands and had begun playing piano at nursing homes. In his wake was a host of professional musicians to tap for information and guidance on how Sean could create his own work through self-employment. Sean, his family and business planning team began gathering information to build his business. DVR was very supportive in providing start-up help and Sean used SSA's Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) to launch 88 Key Productions. In the last two years, Sean has released 2 CDs, has played some "high profile" piano performances and has recently added piano tuning to his business venture. This year, in addition to the live performances, CD sales and piano tuning, Sean has contracted with public schools to hold events in the schools to educate children about Autism through his musical performance. To support him in his enterprise, Sean relies on his siblings and his parents. He uses a combination of natural family support, Self-Directed Supports and his business income to hire the professional services and personal supports he needs to be a successful business owner. Through self-employment, Sean's working life is no longer limited to minimum wage or paid vocational supports.

Step 10

Amend the IPE to Reflect Final Funding and Service Changes

Now that DVR knows all the funding sources and amounts, the consumer and BP Team can re-evaluate previously-established funding parameters, finalize DVR's contribution and specify how start-up funds will be used.

If further services are needed at this Step or if additional sources of supports have been identified, the IPE should be amended to reflect those and the timeframes for putting them into place.

If the consumer was unable to secure outside funding and DVR is identified as the sole contributor, or if ongoing supports that were identified as necessary are not able to be provided, the consumer and BP Team should discuss the possibility of paring down the business or changing the set up to accommodate the consumers needs and/or to reduce required funds.

If after DVR's funding parameters have been finalized any request for additional funding or services must be done through the exception process. (See Appendix 1)

Step 11

Open the Business

At this point in the process, the business is ready to open as all funding sources have been identified and secured. The equipment and supplies have been purchased. The DVR staff will continue to provide follow- along support and counseling services, as well as assist the consumer in connecting with any additional resources that may be needed.

Step 12 Successful Closure of the DVR Case

After all necessary criteria have been met for the individual case; the case can be closed as successful.

Determine if the consumer can be closed as successfully rehabilitated after 90 days:

- The closure criteria is the same as it is for all rehabilitation closures (*90 days of at least gross minimum wage at the level agreed upon (full time, half time, etc.), stable on the job, etc.*).
- For self-employment cases, the minimum wage is calculated from the gross receipts (income prior to expenses) of the business when the consumer is the sole owner. This is not necessarily the same as the consumer's income as they may be reinvesting the money into the business, paying employees, and not drawing an actual income at that time.
- The consumer's business must have brought in the equivalent of gross minimum wage times the number of hours per week that has been agreed upon in the IPE (10 hours, 20 hours, full time- calculated at 40 hours) for each of the three consecutive months.

Example: 20 hours (# of hours/wk. the IPE states this consumer will work) x \$7.25/hr (min. wage) x 4.3 (# of weeks in a month) = \$623.50/mo. (sustained for 3 consecutive months)

These earnings must be documented through the consumer providing DVR a brief letter stating that "... the monthly gross income figures from my business for January 2010 is ..., February 2010 is ..., and March 2010 is ...". If there is a cost for providing this information, DVR can assist with these expenses as determined appropriate.

After all closure criteria have been met the case can be closed successfully.

Documentation for SSA cost reimbursement wage or self-employment claim: (Must be in IPE)

1. Documentation for SSA cost reimbursement wage or self-employment claim:

*Consumers receiving benefits should be reminded that they are responsible for reporting any changes to their annual earnings or resources to the Social Security Administration. Failure to do so can result in over payment and subject to collections by SSA.

If the consumer will have earnings at SGA **DVR will need wage documentation demonstrating SGA earnings for 9 out of 12 consecutive months.**

How SSA looks at income for reimbursement is different than how DVR looks at income for closure.

- For self-employed individuals SSA looks at net income minus Work Incentive Deductions to determine if the consumer has earnings at TWW or SGA.
- The VRC must engage the consumer to determine what his/her net income will be and if any work incentive deductions will be utilized. This information will help determine if DVR will be able to make a claim on the file and if wage documentation should be obtained.
- The counselor and consumer should determine how to obtain the necessary wage documentation. The following are acceptable types of wage documentation:
 - Annual 1040 income tax returns- for SSA self employed cases
 - Quarterly FICA Documentation
 - 1040-ES- estimated tax payment if taxes not available- determined on individual basis
 - Schedule F for farmers

Please note: UI data is not available for self-employed consumers or farmers.

Please refer to the [Working with Social Security Consumers Directive](#) for specific requirements when working with SSI/SSDI consumers.

Appendix 1

DVR Policy Related to Self-Employment

VR services are any services described in a plan for employment necessary to assist a consumer in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the consumer, including:

VR policy states the following related to self-employment:

Services to help achieve self-employment or small business goals: Technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans and otherwise provide resources to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided through the statewide workforce investment system to consumers who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome.

The DVR and the consumer must assess the individual's knowledge, ability, motivation and personal commitment to establish, operate and maintain a business that generates a competitive wage and will be self-sustaining.

The consumer must complete a thorough and well-researched business plan on self-employment or the operation of a small business. The plan must address all aspects of start-up costs, sources of funding, sufficient resources to leverage start-up capital, ongoing operation costs and likelihood of profitability within a reasonable timeframe.

VR policy states the following related to supported employment:

Supported employment services, including ongoing support services and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain a consumer with a most significant disability in supported employment that are provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available to assist the consumer to achieve competitive employment. Supported employment services are provided based on a determination of the needs of the consumer and specified in a plan for employment. Supported employment services are provided for up to a maximum of 18 months unless, under special circumstances, the consumer and the VR Counselor agree to extend the time in order to achieve the rehabilitation objectives identified in the plan for employment.

When developing an IPE for Supported-employment the following needs to be identified:

- The extended services needed by the consumer.
- The source of extended services or, if the source of the extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the plan for employment, a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such source will become available.

Exception Requests

DVR consumers can request exceptions to the DVR fee schedule by completing an [exception request form](#). If you need assistance in completing this form or need this form in a different format please notify the DVR staff.

Comparable Benefits

Before providing any VR services to a consumer, except for services exempt from determination of comparable benefits, DVR staff must determine if comparable benefits or services exist under any program and whether those benefits or services are available to the consumer. If available, the comparable benefits and services shall be used in whole or in part to cover the cost of VR services, unless such determination would interrupt or delay:

- The progress of the consumer toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the plan for employment.
- An immediate job placement.
- The provision of such service to any consumer at extreme medical risk.

The following services are exempt from determination of comparable benefits:

- Assessment for eligibility and plan for employment needs.
- VR counseling and guidance.
- Referral and other services to secure services from other agencies.
- Placement services.
- Rehabilitation technology.

Comparable benefits do not include awards and scholarships based on merit.

Consumer Case Services Purchase Authority:

VR Counselors, Consumer Case Coordinators (CCC):

- Up to but not to exceed \$5,000

Contract and Procurement Officer, VR Supervisors, DVR WDA Directors:

- Up to but not to exceed \$25,000

BCS Director and Central Office DWD Managers (If BCS Director or designee is not available request should go to DVR Deputy Administrator):

- \$25,000 and above

Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)

34 CFR 76.533 Acquisition of real property; construction.

No State or subgrantee may use its grant or subgrant for acquisition of real property or for construction unless specifically permitted by the authorizing statute or implementing regulations for the program.

If construction is necessary for the consumer to go to work and achieve his/her IPE goal, DVR can provide it. The relationship between the remodeling/construction and the job must be clearly established in the case record.

*DVR does not purchase land or buildings

We would not consider construction as a service if:

1. The property is not owned by the consumer (e.g. rental properties- responsibility of rental company)
2. The construction is not necessary or appropriate for the achievement of the IPE goal

The following process has been agreed to for construction/remodeling services:

- The service needs to be determined as necessary and appropriate by the counselor and the counselor must document in IRIS the rationale for this decision.
- The request needs to be submitted to the supervisor/ director who will review the counselor's rationale and determine if the service is necessary and appropriate.
- The supervisor/director will then pass the request up to the Bureau of Consumer Services Director for review.

Extensions

DVR will complete development of the IPE as soon as possible. The IPE must be completed within 90 days of the date of eligibility (or activation from the Order of Selection waiting list - whichever is later). Extensions to the 90 day limit may be requested by the counselor if circumstances beyond the control of the consumer and DVR make an extension necessary. An example of a circumstance beyond the control of the consumer and DVR is if the IPE cannot be written without an evaluation which cannot be completed within the 90 day period. Exception requests must be approved by the consumer, the counselor, and DVR management before they are granted.

Requests for Extensions of Eligibility Determination and IPE Development Timelines

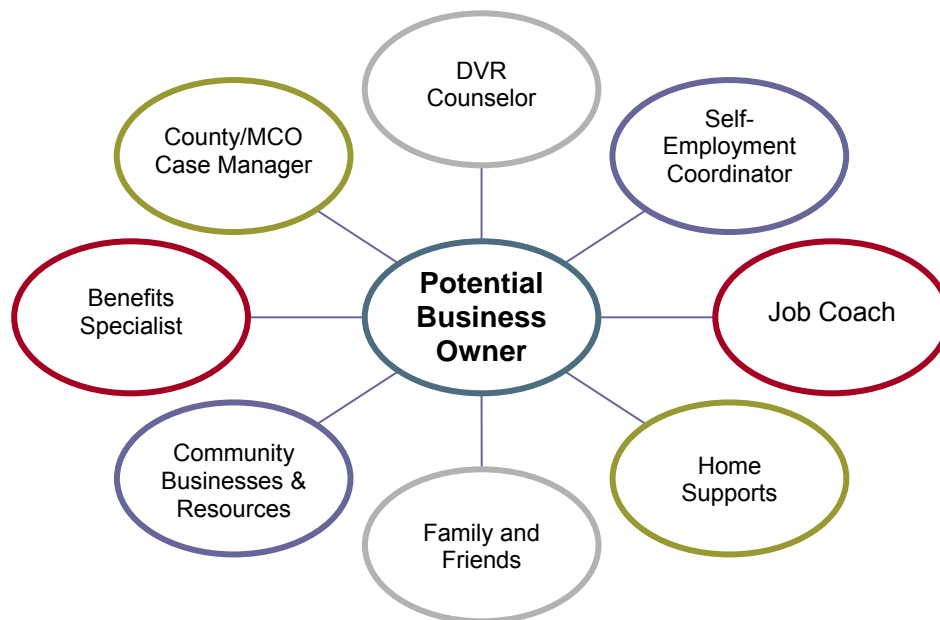
Requests must be made in writing, by a counselor, to a DVR WDA Manager. The request must document the following:

1. The circumstances beyond the control of the consumer and DVR that create the need for an extension, and/or
2. The specific assessment need that cannot be provided within the required time period or as part of the IPE development or implementation process
3. The specific date by which the decision (eligibility or completion of IPE development) will be made,
4. The steps to be taken to complete the process, and a timeline for those steps,
5. Consumer agreement with the extension.

Appendix 2 Business Planning Team Understanding Team Roles in the Customized Self-Employment Planning Process

Like the general population, people with disabilities face the same risks and liabilities when owning and operating a business. Successful business owners regardless of abilities make it a practice to build a “technical assistance team” around themselves for support guidance and feedback. People with disabilities can rely on family members, human service professionals, rehabilitation professionals, and other community members to help them when planning in order to reduce the risk associated with starting a business.

For customized self-employment a Business Planning Team (BP Team) should be developed. Most business planning teams have their “core members.” At minimum, these core members should include the potential business owner, important family members, a legal guardian, the DVR counselor, County/MCO Case Manager, and the Self-Employment Coordinator responsible for facilitating the customized self-employment planning process. These core team members usually meet every 4-6 weeks while developing the customized self-employment business plan, and on a quarterly basis once the business has been launched. Other, still important, team members will make “cameo” appearances at team planning meetings. These team members might include a Benefits Specialist, Occupational Therapist, Assistive Technologist, direct support staff (job coaches or home supporters), friends, family members, experts/consultants, and other community members.



Although each person’s responsibility within each BP Team will have its uniqueness, there are some commonalities in their distinct roles within the planning process. The bullet points below represent a framework for team members to begin clarifying their part in the process.

The Role of the Potential Business Owner:

- To be an active member of the BP Team; which might include:
 - attending meetings,
 - discovering and sharing preferences,
 - trying new things,
 - establishing goals; both short-term and long-term.
- Contribute to the plan financially as much as possible.
- Make owning a business a priority in life.

The Role of the DVR Staff:

- Provide vocational guidance and counseling to the potential business owner throughout his/her involvement with DVR.
- Assist the BP Team throughout the DVR process.
- Assist the potential business owner in identifying the services and supports needed to make an informed choice about the proposed business idea.
- Assist the potential business owner in identifying the long term services and supports needed to maintain the business (e.g. financial management).
- Work with the consumer to plan for and determine how equipment will be installed, if training on the equipment is needed, if accessories need to be purchased, etc.
- Provide feedback and guidance to the potential business owner and BP Team regarding the plan that is being developed.
- Monitor the plan's timely progress toward agreed upon goals.
- Monitor quality of the services being funded by DVR and address concerns that may arise with vendors.
- Help the business owner determine the success of the business after it has been launched, per the expectations of DVR closure criteria, and assess the need for additional services as necessary.

The Role of the Self-Employment Coordinator

- Assist in assessing the feasibility of proposed business idea if applicable.
- Assist the potential business owner to develop goals and co-facilitate team-based business planning meetings.
- Organize, sequence and disseminate the information gathered in the meetings into action plans to implement with the BP Team. These might include visual representation of ideas and processes (such as graphs, meeting notes, work plans, etc).
- Assist the potential business owner in identifying and monitoring the long term services and supports needed to maintain the business (e.g. financial management).
- Regular follow-up with all BP Team members to ensure accountability and progress.
- Conduct research and tap into community resources for information and business planning guidance.
- Synthesize the information gathered from the planning process into a written business plan.
- Within the scope of the business plan assist the potential business owner in identifying and justifying equipment, supplies and services needed to launch the business.

- Educate support staff on business items determined necessary for the business' success.

The Role of the Job Coach:

- Participate in the discussion with the BP Team to determine the potential business owner's interests, strengths and challenges toward self-employment.
- Provide direct support as needed to implement action plans for the business.
- Assist in the development of a task analysis and training plan for the business owner as needed.
- Assist in the development of the consumer's skills and abilities necessary to the success of the business owner.
- Assess the quality and effectiveness of the long term supports and services needed to maintain the business.
- Facilitate community connections with the potential business owner.
- Possess the skills and abilities necessary to help the business owner be successful.

The Role of the Case Manager:

- Assist the potential business owner and the BP Team in determining the potential business owner's interests, strengths and challenges toward self-employment.
- Provide information to the BP Team regarding the long-term supports the potential business owner has available and how these supports can be used within the business.
- Assist the potential business owner in discovering their preferences and progress toward goals, both personal and professional.
- Monitor quality and responsiveness of publically funded long-term supports.
- Encourage and reinforce the importance of community in the potential business owner's life.

The Role of Community:

- To provide information and guidance to develop the business plan. Local communities are filled with free business planning services (SBDC, SCORE, WWBIC, ADVOCAP, etc). Other business owners like to talk about what they do. Relying on the community makes the business planning process less daunting and more efficient.
- To be a "champion" for the potential business owner. Family members and friends are typically the best advocates for a potential business owner. If a family member is involved, the plan can move faster and is more sustainable.
- To be a source of potential customers. The potential business owner's target customers most likely exist within the local community. Get feedback from these people and find natural ways to connect with them.
- To provide opportunities to grow and change. A successful business must learn to adapt and change with the needs of its local community. The more the business owner is connected to the community, the better equipped the business owner and the BP Team will be in making the necessary changes to keep the business successful over the long-run.

Appendix 3 Facilitated Exploration Activities

Note to facilitator: The following questions are intended to initiate and guide discussions with the consumer and BP Team about the self-employment goal. Listen actively and objectively. It is ok to “not have all the answers” as this is the beginning point of the planning process. Researching or answering the “unknowns” will become part of the initial action plan. Remember to take notes during these conversations to include in the planning framework.

Each topic area needs to be fully discussed. During this exploration process the BP Team should answer, *Does this:*

- **Challenge or strengthen the self-employment goal?**
- **If it is strength; how can the person utilize this in the business?**
- **If it is a challenge, can the person/BP Team address it in a timely manner or create realistic plans to meet the challenge without affecting the success of the person or business?**
- **If not, should the person/BP Team consider different options? For examples see [Appendix 8](#) for details.**

Exploring Employment History

- Make a list of the jobs or volunteer work you have had in the past. Which ones did you like the most and least? Why?
- What were the successful experiences? Why were they successful?
- What were the not-so-successful ones? Why? How did these jobs end?
- Describe the environments you like to work in.
- What work-related skills are transferable to the business idea? Explain.
- Has the proposed business idea been a hobby for you? Describe.
- What new skills will you need to develop for the business? How will you learn these skills (classes, mentor, practice, research, etc)
- Why do you want to be self-employed, rather than having a wage job?

Summarize the Discussion about Employment History:

My employment experience strengths/assets are:

Challenges that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address these challenges are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Educational Experiences

- Describe your educational experience. Where did you attend school? Did you graduate? When?
- What do you like to learn about?
- How do you learn best?
- Are there particular educational strengths that you want to utilize in the business (i.e. bookkeeping, entering customer contact info into computer, handwriting “Thank You” notes to customers, etc)?
- Does the proposed business idea pose particular challenges for you regarding reading, writing, computer use, math skills? If so, how will these challenges be addressed?

Summarize the Discussion about Educational Experiences:

My educational strengths related to my self-employment goal are:

Educational challenges that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Transportation

- What form(s) of transportation do you use on a day-to-day basis?
- How is transportation paid for? Who is responsible for making transportation arrangements?
- Does the proposed business model require a lot of driving or specialized transportation?
- Given your available transportation, is the proposed business model feasible? Explain:
- Might transportation be considered a business expense? (If so, the costs for transportation should be included when pricing the product/service).
- What potential challenges might unreliable transportation have on the business (i.e. not able to attend sales events on weekends, late to customers, cancellations, etc)? Describe.

Summarize the Discussion about Transportation:

Strengths/assets regarding transportation and my self-employment goal are:

Transportation challenges that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Housing

- Describe your housing picture (e.g. rent/own, subsidized housing, roommate(s), support services, rural, with family, etc)? Is your housing stable or do you move often?
- List your monthly housing expenses? Do you have difficulty paying your bills? Explain.
- Will you operate your business from home? Describe.
- Will your home address be used for business purposes? If yes, how?
- Do you plan to operate your business from home? If so, will you need to gather information about tax considerations for home-based businesses?
- Will you store business equipment in your home? Do you have rental or homeowner's insurance that would cover your equipment and inventory?
- Describe any other particular challenges relating to housing that might impact yourself-employment goal?

Summarize the Discussion about Housing:

Housing assets related to my self-employment goal are:

Challenges related to housing that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Assistive Technology

- Do you have any physical or cognitive limitations that might present challenges to your self-employment goal?
- What kinds of adaptations, rehab technology or assistive devices do you currently use? Describe.
- Have you worked with an Occupational Therapist (OT)? If so, who and when?
- Are there new tasks in the business that you might need to consult with an OT, rehabilitation engineer, or Assistive Technology expert about?
- How might new devices or technology be paid for? (Medical Assistance, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, County, Care Management Organization, other?)

Summarize the Discussion about Assistive Technology:

Assistive technology assets related to my self-employment goal are:

Challenges related to my self-employment goal are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Benefits and Financial Resources:

Self-Employment Work Incentives are worth talking about! Some important work incentives to consider are: Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS), Un-incurred Business Expense and Unpaid Help. To find out more go to www.ssa.gov or contact your local Work Incentives Benefits Specialist.

- Are you concerned about reducing or losing social security and other benefits with self-employment earnings? Explain.
- Benefits Counselors can help you determine how income will affect your benefits. Have you had a benefits summary completed before? If so, when and by whom?
- What do you receive each month for SSI (state and federal), SSDI, and any other cash benefits? List sources and amounts. Do you have any earnings? If so, how much?
- What form of Medical Assistance are you on (from SSI, MAPP)? Do you receive Medicare?
- Do you know about PASS planning? Might a PASS Plan be feasible?
- How much money do you have in personal savings? Are you willing to invest some personal money into the business? If so, how much?
- What other potential funding sources for business start-up do you have?
- Do you have a financial guardian? If so, have you consulted with them about your goal to start a micro-enterprise?
- Do you have extra money to open a business checking account? If not, how much can you set aside each month to do so?
- Will you need assistance to open the account? If so, who will help you with this?
- If needed, who will help you manage your business account? How will this person help you?
- Will you need assistance with money management for sales transactions or monthly billing to customers? What might the bookkeeping systems and supports look like for this?
- Will you (or someone on your BP Team) need to learn about business income/ expenses and tax preparation? If so, what might be the plan for this? How will you connect with a resource person, if needed?

Summarize the Discussion about Finances and Benefits:

Strengths and assets related to finances/benefits and self-employment are:

Challenges related to benefits/financial matters are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address these challenges are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Legal Considerations:

- Do you anticipate the need for a business partner(s), employee(s) or contractors? (Sometimes for back-up purposes?)
- What legal structure will your business have (Sole Proprietor or Limited Liability Company)? Do you feel you need to explore this?
- Are there special permits required for this business (food license, sellers permit, etc)? Are these “unknowns” at this point?
- What is the risk associated with this business (consider accidental damage to property, food handling, etc)? Will you want to get business liability insurance?
- Might bonding be necessary for this type of business? Do you have a criminal background that might pose a challenge to becoming bonded?

Summarize the Discussion about Legal Considerations:

Strengths and assets related to legal matters are:

Challenges I might face related to legal matters are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Health

- Describe your health.
- How might health concerns impact your ability to carry out the day-to-day functions of the business? Or is health an asset to your self-employment goal? Explain.
- Are there particular times of the day, week or year that you are able to work or not able to work?
- If needed, can a back-up plan be put in place so the business will not be in jeopardy?
- What might that back-up plan look like? Who might be in charge of implementing the back up plan if you are not able to?

Summarize the Discussion about Health:

Strengths and assets related to my health and self-employment are:

Health-related challenges I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed by the BP Team:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Supports

- What paid supports exist in your life? List how many hours a week or month you are supported and how they help you?
- List the members of your BP Team and how often you typically meet with them.
- Are these BP Team members willing to meet monthly to help you through the business planning phase?
- What kinds of support might you need to operate your business?
- What “natural supports” (friends, networks, family) do you currently have? How do they support you? Do they have particular skills or interests that will complement your business idea?
- Are there particular business services (*not job coaching or personal supports*) you would want to purchase with your business revenue? (examples include: bookkeeping, tax preparation, graphic design, website help, marketing help)
- Is there an identified lack of support in your life? What impact might this have on the business?
- Are there ways to engage current supports differently, so that they are more active in supporting your self-employment goal?
- Who on the BP Team will be responsible for facilitating the on-going planning with you to ensure that the business remains profitable and sustainable? Explain how this person will help you.

Summarize the Discussion about Supports:

My support assets/strengths related to my self-employment goal are:

Support challenges I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team members and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Discovering Community Connections

- Who do you know that would be an asset to the business planning efforts? Might these people be willing to come to team meetings or give input?
- Who do the BP Team members know? Might these people be willing to come to a team meeting or give input?
- How might you connect with more people in the community? What businesses, organizations or associations exist in the community (or beyond) that might be good to make contact with?
- Who or what businesses in the local community (or beyond) can you (and your BP Team) contact to ask for an “informational interview”?
- What networking or mentoring opportunities can you (or your BP Team) tap into?

- When you are ready to begin your business plan, are you (and your BP Team) willing to contact Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Counselors, or other professional business planning help? What services for business planning exist in your community?

Summarize the Discussion about Community Connections:

My community strengths and assets are:

Community challenges that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

<i>Exploring Communication</i>

- Describe your communication style.
- Are you able to use the phone and/or email? Explain.
- If you have communication challenges, how might you address business communications with customers? If needed, what role will your staff or support person(s) have in communicating with customers?
- How might customers find out that the business exists and how to patronize it? (ads, website, mailing, word of mouth).
- How will you be involved in marketing your business? What might the BP Team roles be in helping you market your business?
- How will customers contact the business to make orders or request service?
- Is a website necessary upon start-up or can it wait? Explain.
- Will you need to establish an email address for the business? Will you need help to do this? If so, who will help with this?
- Will you use your home phone for the business? If you work with a vocational agency, will the vocational agency let you use their number on business materials? Is this the best way to go (or will it confuse or deter customers)? Is a business cell phone or separate line a better option? Describe.

Summarize the Discussion about Communication:

My strengths and assets related to communication are:

Challenges I might face related to communication are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Exploring Business Equipment and Supplies

- What equipment or supplies do you already own?
- What equipment is needed for business start-up? List items and potential costs.
- What supplies might be needed initially and on an on-going basis? List items and potential costs.
- What kinds of marketing materials might be needed? List.
- Who will create the marketing materials? Will the skills of a graphic designer or web designer be needed? If so, do you or someone on the BP Team have a contact for this?
- List potential suppliers for equipment, supplies, printing, etc?
- List potential funding sources for start-up items.

Summarize the Discussion about Equipment and Supplies:

Equipment assets to my self-employment goal are:

Challenges with equipment that I might face are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed at the meeting:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Discovering Personal Interest and Outlook

- What makes you happy about the idea of being self-employed?
- What are the attitudes of your BP Team about your choice to pursue self-employment?
- Do you like *continuity and stability* or *challenges and changes*? How does this fit with your business idea?
- Do you or your BP Team have any concerns about risk? Explain.
- What plans does the BP Team have to balance these opinions and minimize these fears?
- How much money do you hope to make with the business?
- What other personal goals do you want to achieve with your business? List both short and long term goals?
- Are there any other specific concerns that you or your BP Team has that might need addressing during the planning phase?

Summarize the Discussion about Interest and Outlook:

My assets related to outlook are:

My challenges related to outlook are:

Action steps my BP Team and I will take to begin to address this challenge are:

Ideas and resources discussed:

Unknowns or areas to explore:

Create a written planning framework from the discussions using the following outline:

- I. Describe Business Goal
- II. List Business Planning Team Members (core team members and resource people)
- III. Describe Existing Supports (paid and unpaid)
- IV. Highlight potential gaps in support and additional supports needed
- V. Inventory of Greatest Strengths and Asset(s)
- VI. Possible Primary Challenge(s) to begin planning for
- VII. List the Ideas/Recommendations generated by the BP Team in the exploration meetings
- VIII. List the potential resources and connections identified by the BP Team
- IX. List the things that are still “unknown” and the areas to explore as the planning process unfolds

Appendix 4 Feasibility Activities

1. Suggested Research Activities:

- Think about how you plan to sell your products/services: On-line (e-commerce), Wholesale (to other businesses), consignment, business within a business, direct (through advertising, by word of mouth/referral perks, etc), renting/leasing a storefront, at events, fairs or open air markets.
- Brainstorm ideas and make plans with your BP Team to set-up trial situations so that you can experience the work activity involved in operating the business.
- Sell some of your products or services and get feedback from the people who helped you and bought from you.
- Create a system to track the supplies used and costs involved to make the products or provide the services, as well as the time it takes you to make the product or complete the service.
- Talk to friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to get input, ideas and feedback.
- Research similar businesses on the internet, in your community, or nearby communities.
- Set up “Informational Interviews” with people in similar or complementary businesses to learn more. Prepare your questions in advance.
- Contact SCORE or your local Small Business Development Center to get feedback, ideas and resources. (See *Resources & Web Links* section for contact info.)
- Gather preliminary financial information to complete a Breakeven Analysis. A free downloadable Breakeven Analysis Template is available from www.score.org
- Read about the day-to-day considerations and overall trends of small businesses on www.inc.com, www.entrepreneur.com, www.about.com or other reputable business information websites.

2. Create a Team Plan for Goal Validation

Based on the suggested activities, create an action plan for the next 2-3 months.

Actions Needed	Timeline	Who's Responsible?

3. Engage in Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- How does this business venture utilize your strengths and incorporate your interests, skills, natural talents or abilities?
- What opportunities exist in your life, in your community, and in the market that will help to make this business successful?
- While testing your business idea, what challenges did you or your BP Team member's encounter that will need to be addressed to ensure that you and the business are successful?

4. Summarize Your Business

In one or two pages, develop your business plan proposal. Include:

- What you sell,
- How you sell,
- Why customers buy from you,
- Why you are opening this business
- What strengths and skills you bring to the business
- Activities you engaged in to determine feasibility and the findings from those activities.

Appendix 5

Information Related to Credit

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CREDIT

- It is critical to establish a solid credit history.
- Each time you purchase something on credit or you apply for credit, it is reported to a national credit bureau.
- These bureaus track your credit and payment history.
- If you apply for additional credit (i.e. apply for a store credit card or auto loan) a credit report is generated based upon your name and social security number.
- A credit score is a rating assigned to you based upon your credit and payment history. Creditors and lenders use these scores to make decisions about applications.
- If you are denied credit, you are entitled to a free copy of your credit report.
- Your personal credit will affect your ability to get credit for a start-up business, daily operations and future growth.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CREDIT

- Obtain a consumer copy of your credit report (typically a nominal fee).
- Clear up any dispute on your credit report (in writing).
- Do not carry too many credit cards (this is “potential” credit liability).
- Protect your social security number: do not give it out haphazardly.
- Don’t apply for credit too often: it will count against you.
- Do not give out your credit card number to telemarketers you are not familiar with.
- Pay all bills on time.
- Do not simply cut up old credit cards: write to creditors to have them closed.

IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH BAD CREDIT

- Develop a budget and stick to it.
- Obtain a consumer copy of your credit report (typically a nominal fee)
- If you find an error on your report, contact the credit bureau(s) in writing.
- If you are denied credit, find out why.
- Contact creditors to make arrangements to pay back old debt.
- Do not ignore student loans, utility bills or delinquent taxes- pay them!
- Do not apply for more credit.
- Do not incur more debt.
- Only keep one or two credit cards; destroy others and close the accounts with creditors.
- Work with a reputable credit counseling or debt management service.
- Be wary of quick advertisements to repair credit – there are no easy cures.
- Do not automatically file bankruptcy; it can be more damaging in the long run.

CREDIT DANGER SIGNALS

When used wisely, credit is a helpful financial tool. However, when used carelessly, credit can cause serious financial problems.

Can you recognize the credit danger signals?

Circle Yes or No as you think about your own situation.

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| YES | NO | 1. Fail to save money |
| YES | NO | 2. Always out of money before payday |
| YES | NO | 3. New monthly charges are MORE than account payments |
| YES | NO | 4. Longer time needed to pay account balance |
| YES | NO | 5. Juggling payments to creditors |
| YES | NO | 6. Borrow to pay fixed costs such as insurance, gas or food |
| YES | NO | 7. Credit card as advances used to pay everyday expenses |
| YES | NO | 8. Credit calls and letters demanding payment of overdue bills |
| YES | NO | 9. Unsure how much you owe |
| YES | NO | 10. Always late paying bills |
| YES | NO | 11. Reached credit limit on your credit cards |
| YES | NO | 12. Only pay minimum on credit cards each month |

_____ _____ Total circled

Total the number of YES you checked

One YES:	Signals caution
Two YES's	Trouble brewing
Three or more YES's	You should be concerned and take immediate steps to correct the problem.

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Appendix 6 Resources

This appendix includes resources that might be helpful during the self-employment process. This list of resources is not meant to be all inclusive.

Small Business Development and Information Websites:

[Small Business Administration:](#)

<http://www.sba.gov/>

Start-up help, research, business plan help.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Answerline

Get free answer to your business start-up or management questions. (M-F 8:30-4:30pm) Call 1-800-940-7232 for a live question and answer session with an SBDC expert. www.wisconsinsbdc.net/busanswer

[Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and Trade and Consumer:](#)

http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/business_resources/index.jsp

Click on Get Moo-La Booklet.

[Disability.gov](#)

https://www.disability.gov/employment/self-employment_%26_small_business_ownership

Provides a section on self-employment and small business ownership which includes information about programs and services that can help individuals who are interested in starting a small business.

[The Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation \(WWBIC\):](#)

<http://www.wwbic.com/>

WWBIC is an economic development corporation providing quality business education and access to capital for entrepreneurs.

[SCORE – Service Corps of Retired Executives:](#)

<http://www.score.org/index.html>

SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs.

[Start-up USA](#)

<http://www.start-up-usa.biz/>

Start-up USA is a partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University and Griffin-Hammis and Associates, LLC funded through the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The website provides technical assistance and disseminates resources to individuals interested in pursuing self-employment. Website includes online webcasts and other resources including State VR Policies.

[WISCAP:](#)

<http://www.wiscap.org/>

A voluntary association of Wisconsin's [16 Community Action Agencies](#) (CAAs) and [3 special purpose agencies](#) that have state-wide anti-poverty missions. Provide resources and links on business development.

[Chamber Of Commerce for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.:](#)

<http://disabilitychamber.org/>

The Chamber's mission is to help persons with disabilities and their direct caregivers to form and grow businesses.

[Disabled Business Person Association](#)

<http://www.disabledbusiness.com/>

Founded in 1985 by successful business owners with disabilities, the Disabled Businesspersons Association, an all volunteer, 501(c) (3) non-profit organization provides business information and assistance to VR professionals worldwide.

Urban Miyares

3590 Camino Del Rio North, San Diego, CA 92108-1718

619-594-8805

info@disabledbusiness.com

Business Plan Examples:

[RTC Self-Employment, Steps for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors:](#)

<http://selfemploymenttraining.ruralinstitute.umn.edu/EXAMPLE-business-plan.htm>

Sample business plan.

[Business Plans:](#)

<http://www.bplans.com/>

Some sample plans to review for free * Will try to sell software package (\$100-300).

[Small Business Development Center:](#)

<http://www.wisconsinsbdc.org/>

Provides free courses, resources, and assistance with small business development.

[Toolkit:](#)

<http://www.toolkit.com/>

Articles, tools, and links for business startups.

[Entrepreneur.com:](#)

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/>

Small business research, articles, tools, links.

Credit:

Three National Credit Institutions

You are allowed to obtain your credit report **free** once a year. This report will not include your credit score- there is a fee for the actual score:

1.) Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

<http://www.equifax.com/home/>

2.) Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742

<http://www.experian.com/>

3.) TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289

<http://www.transunion.com/corporate/home.page>

*If your wallet is lost or stolen you should immediately report it (and a list of its contents) to the 3 organizations above **and**, to:*

Social Security Administration (fraud line): 1-800-269-0271

myFICO:

<http://www.myfico.com/>

Information about credit scores, how to improve credit scores, effects of low credit scores, etc. They also have the BEST calculators.

Annual Credit Report:

<https://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp>

This central site allows you to request a free [credit file disclosure](#), commonly called a credit report, once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

Asset Builders:

<http://www.assetbuilders.org/>

Money Conferences held around the state. There are often scholarships available-- although the registration is very low

Financing and Taxes:

[Wisconsin Department of Commerce:](#)

<http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/>

Services and assistance to promote economic development

[Minority Business Development Loan Program:](#)

Provides financial assistance for the start-up and expansion of minority- owned businesses in Wisconsin.

[IRS - Internal Revenue Service](#)

<http://www.irs.gov/>

[Wisconsin Department of Revenue:](#)

<http://www.dor.state.wi.us/>

Tax information and forms for the State of Wisconsin.

Government Sites:

[Veterans Business Development](#)

<http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/ovbd/index.html>

[Business Wizard:](#)

<http://ww2.wisconsin.gov/state/wizard/app/LoadIntro>

Determine licensing, permitting and regulatory requirements, Obtain necessary application forms, Identify available state resources, Access other valuable business-related information.

[US Patent & Trademark Office](#)

<http://www.uspto.gov/>

[US Business Advisor:](#)

<http://www.business.gov/>

Provides a single access point to government services and information to help the nation's businesses with their operations.

[USDA Rural Development:](#)

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Promote economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools

[Employment Support for People with Disabilities - Social Security:](#)

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/>

Provides information on employment supports and options for individuals receiving disability benefits.

Assistive Technology/ Equipment:

Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Plan (TEPP)

Helps people with disabilities buy specialized equipment they need in order to use basic telephone services. (608)231-3305 Voice (800)251-8345 TTY (in Wisconsin)

<http://psc.wi.gov/consumerinfo/assistancePgms/tepp/tepp-ind.htm>

WisLoan Program

The WisLoan program offers loans for assistive technology. 414/226-8306 or toll-free at 1-877/463-3778

<http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/wistech/wisloan.htm>

Wisconsin Telework Loan Program

Helps individuals with disabilities obtain computers and other equipment needed to work from remote sites or home. 1-877-463-3778

http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/telework_brochure.pdf

WisTech: Wisconsin Assistive Technology Program

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/wistech/index.htm>

Benefits and Work Incentives

[Start-up USA](http://www.start-up-usa.biz/)

<http://www.start-up-usa.biz/>

Start-up USA is a partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University and Griffin-Hammis and Associates, LLC funded through the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The website provides technical assistance and disseminates resources to individuals interested in pursuing self-employment. Website includes online webcasts and other resources.

Social Security Considerations for Small Business Owners with Disabilities

A comprehensive guide designed by Griffin and Hammis Associates to educate and serve as a resource to entrepreneurs with disabilities and their families/support professionals. Many helpful resources and links are included.

<http://www.griffinhammis.com/publications/SSAConsiderations.pdf>

PASS Planning Information

www.passplan.org and www.passonline.org

WorkWORLD™

WorkWORLD™ is decision support software for personal computers that is designed to be used by people with disabilities, advocates, benefit counselors, and others. The software helps people find employment-based paths to higher net income through the best use of Federal and State work incentives and benefits. www.workworld.org

Appendix 7

Business Within a Business Model

Business within a Business: A business within a business is another self-employment strategy. In this situation, the individual with a disability runs his or her business within the physical setting of an established business. Typically the person operating her business within a host business will pay a rental fee of some kind (either a flat rate or percentage of sales) to the host business. This is not a wage position and the person's income is from selling a product or service within the "host" business.

The Business within a Business strategy can be particularly effective for individuals who might experience barriers with marketing (due to finances, time or support). Business within a Business should be negotiated with a potential host business that provides complimentary products or services. The negotiation should result in a win-win for both businesses, including shared customers and immediate exposure for the micro-business to existing customers of the host business, increased revenue for the host business through rent or percentage, increase in customer numbers or satisfaction with the new convenient access to the micro-businesses products or services, etc).

Examples of Business within a Business:

A woman who wants to make custom jewelry could arrange to set up her business within a local gift shop to sell her jewelry. The shop would provide the physical space for a percentage of sales while the consumer selling the jewelry owns her own business and is responsible for tracking and reporting her self-employment income.

A person who wants to start a promotional button making business locates his business within a local print shop. The button maker would purchase graphic design services from the printer for some of his button customers, and the print shop, no longer having to outsource promotional buttons, could satisfy their customer need for a fast turn-around on orders.

A person who has skills in making coffee and espresso drinks but needs support with cash handling and management locates a coffee cart in a local bakery in a high foot traffic area. The two businesses share customers, all sales are rung through the bakery cash register and the bakery pays out sales to the coffee cart owner (minus a percentage of sales for sharing space and ringing up orders). After receiving this sales payment each week from the host business, the coffee cart owner deducts her other expenses to determine her net earnings from self-employment.

Appendix 8

Business Planning Content

Included in this appendix are suggested activities to assist in the development of the business plan. These activities are broken down by section according to the business plan outlined on [Page 70](#).

Business Summary & Product/Services

Suggested Activity List:

- Write a detailed description of your products and services.
- Plan when and how your products and services will be sold.
- Research your competition by conducting a Competitive Analysis. The following link contains a competitive analysis template: www.score.org
- Identify who your customers are. (i.e. your Target Market)
- Identify 3 things that make your business unique and different from the competition. Write these down.
- Name your business. You might want to do some research on the internet on how to name a business.
- Determine the costs to create your products or provide your services (For Costs of Goods Sold - include supply/product costs, as well as owner's time of *at least* \$10 per hour).
- Determine other expenses associated with maintaining the business (examples include insurance, marketing materials, permits, internet/phone, website maintenance, miscellaneous expenses, etc).
- Put costs/expenses information into a breakeven analysis spreadsheet. The following link contains a profit and loss projection template: www.score.org
- With the market and financial research you have done above, determine the pricing of products and services based on costs to produce, owner's time and the competition.
- Imagine the next three years of your business. Establish 2-3 attainable goals for your business.

Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- What resources or community members can you connect with to assist with business planning?

- Do you face challenges to the “traditional” manner of operating such a business model (e.g. transportation, communication, support needs, etc)? Explain.
- How will these challenges be addressed or the business operations be modified to help you and your business succeed? (Examples include adaptations/assistive technology, selling via the internet, creating “business to business” relationships or developing a “business within a business” model, and using business revenue to purchase business services - not job coach supports - like an employee, bookkeeper or marketing assistance). Explain.
- Given the size of your potential market, the costs associated with the business, and the breakeven sales level, are you able to sell this amount of products or services to achieve your income and work activity goals? Explain.

Create a Team Action Plan for Business Planning:

Based on the suggested activity list, create a team plan to make contacts and do research for business planning.

Actions Needed	Timeline	Who’s Responsible
1. 2. 3.		

Write the First Two Sections of Your Business Plan:

I. Business Summary

- ✓ A description of the business
- ✓ Why this business exists and why it will be successful. *(Including: a statement about feasibility and how it was determined - what opportunity exists in the market and/or your community that makes you think this business will be successful and how the business relates to your interests, skills and abilities.)*
- ✓ A list of business goals and objectives for the next three years
- ✓ A description of the challenges this business might face and how you will address them

II. Product & Services

- ✓ A detailed description of your products and services
- ✓ Findings from your competitive analysis
- ✓ A description of the unique features and benefits of the product or service and why customers buy it from you
- ✓ Information about the costs to produce the product or service and time it takes you to produce each product or service
- ✓ Pricing information for each product or service
- ✓ Where and how the product or service will be sold

The Marketing Plan

Suggested Activity List:

- Learn about your customers and why they would buy from you. Identify the characteristics and size of your Target Market. This can be done through informational interviews, informal customer surveys, and research at the library or on the Internet.
- Review the findings of your competitive analysis and determine what your competitive focus will be.
- Do some research about marketing and promoting a business. Decide on an overall marketing strategy for your business i.e. how will customers find out that your business exists?)
- Decide what basic marketing materials you will utilize (fliers, post cards, business cards, brochures, website, etc).
- Generate a list of potential contacts and target customers (for initial contact and for ongoing email/mail promotions).
- Gather details and costs on local advertising opportunities. Contact the Chamber of Commerce to get details.
- Make a list of local fairs/festivals or events that should be attended, dates, and registration deadlines.
- Consider Holiday and Seasonal opportunities.
- Recognize when income/sales might be the lowest and discuss with your BP Team what can be done to boost sales.
- Review your research and develop 2-3 marketing goals and objectives for your business.

Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- With your team, brainstorm a list of people you and your team members know who can be contacted about the business and perhaps become potential customers.
- Where do you run your errands or visit for fun? Are there any opportunities at these places to share your business information (cards, fliers, brochures, etc) or talk to others about your products or services?

- What activities or groups can you join so that you can make social connections and build your networks?
- How will you add your own “personal touch” to your products/services and marketing materials (something that customers will remember you by)?

Create an Action-Oriented Marketing Plan:

Based on the marketing strategies you have learned, create a plan with your team. Use this format below as a guide for team-planning.

Month	Action(s) Needed	Expected Outcome(s)	Who is Responsible?
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

Write the Third Section of Your Business Plan:

III. The Marketing Plan Outline

- ✓ A description of your target market (include size of market, target customer age, gender, income range, interests, etc)
- ✓ A description of your primary competitors and how your business compares
- ✓ Your competitive focus (price, quality, convenience, etc.)
- ✓ A list of your marketing goals and objectives for the business.
- ✓ A detailed description of each marketing, advertising and promotional method you will use. Including when and how these methods will be employed and the costs for each method (i.e. your marketing budget).

Marketing Tips:

- Practice your business introduction (the “Elevator Speech”).
- Talk about your business to everyone you know.
- Find new opportunities to expand your networks by going to community events, chamber networking events, volunteering your time or donating some of your products to community causes and fundraisers, and joining associations.
- Provide excellent customer service. Build relationships with your customers.
- Get feedback on, and closely edit, all marketing materials before you send them out.
- Research advertising opportunities and test market strategies in small batches before spending too much money.
- Take advantage of special holiday or seasonal opportunities related to your products or services.

Business Operations & Supports

The purpose of Business Operations and Support Planning is to analyze the tasks needed to carry out the business on a day-to-day basis, define the roles of BP Team members in supporting you with business tasks, and identify gaps in support. By engaging in this exercise, you and your support team members will become empowered to:

- Respond to the needs of the business (and the business owner) in a systematic and timely manner,
- Avoid duplicating the activities of other team members, and
- Effectively contribute to the sustainability of the business.

Suggested Activity List

- Imagine “a day in the life” of your business. Consider how you will sell your product, take orders, how you will receive payment, how you will pay your expenses, how you will communicate with your customers and handle feedback (both positive and negative).
- Determine where your business will be located and hours of operation.
- Identify who you will purchase supplies from for your business.
- Determine how you will track inventory, income and expenses.
- Break down the tasks involved in the business on a day-to-day, weekly, monthly and annual basis.
- Identify team members to support you most effectively.
- For gaps in support, consider ways to engage current supports differently for the business. Brainstorm what other resources in the community might be brought in to assist you (e.g. student interns, volunteers, family or friends).

- Determine what services will you pay for with business income? (marketing help, bookkeeping, taxes, back-up workers, etc)
- Describe your involvement in each business related task and how you are supported. Use the format below as a guide to plan with your team.

	My Tasks	Paid supports	Natural Support	Fee for Service Business Services
Product Creation or Ordering				
Product Sales				
Service Delivery				
Marketing				
Money Management and Bookkeeping				
Inventory Management				
Other				
Other				

Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- Do you (and your BP Team) feel you are involved in your business to the greatest extent possible? Describe plans that you and your team have for this.
- What training or adaptations are necessary to ensure that you are involved in your business to the greatest extent?
- What people and community resources can be connected with (now and in the future) to help support/sustain the business? Make a list below.
- Consider the ratio of paid support hours to your participation in the business. How does this support model compare with the likely support you might receive in traditional supported employment?

Write the Fourth Section of Your Business Plan:

IV. Operations and Support Outline

- ✓ A description of the business location and hours of operation
- ✓ Point of sale for the product/service and methods of payment accepted
- ✓ Customer service and satisfaction policies
- ✓ List of supplier information
- ✓ Procedures for tracking inventory, income and expenses.

- ✓ A description of each support team member, the strengths they bring to the business and how they support you (e.g. job coaches, financial/tax/accounting support, marketing support, etc).
- ✓ A description of a typical week of business operations; how you are supported and what you do independently.

Legal Considerations

Consumers receiving SSI and Medicaid should be aware that for Limited Liability Companies (LLC), S Corporations, and C Corporations business assets may be considered as personal assets. This should be explored further by the consumer and his/her BP Team.

Social Security Administration's Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS) Work Incentive and Business Structure: (from www.workworld.org)

- Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS) only applies to unincorporated for-profit businesses that produce "net earnings from self-employment" in the "trade or business" exclusion, such as sole proprietorships and partnerships.
- Corporations do not produce self employment income inherently. Corporations by nature pay wages to the employees and shareholder distributions or dividends to the owners - although corporations can (yet generally do not) pay self-employment income to the owners.
- A corporation is by definition a separate legal entity and SSA counts the owner's share of a corporation as a resource, which cannot be excluded for PESS.

Suggested Activity List:

- Determine the appropriate business structure by reading information about business structures, contacting the Small Business Development Center Answerline (800)940-7232 or arranging a free consultation with a lawyer through the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs Network's Business Assistance Program (www.wenportal.org)
- Register your business name. Use the County Register of Deeds Office for Sole Proprietorship or the WI Department of Financial Institutions for an LLC.
- Open a business checking account. (\$100 or more could be needed for this depending on your bank).
- Determine the need for a *seller's permit* by contacting the WI Department of Revenue.
- Determine the need for special business permits (e.g. for food preparation or delivery businesses and vending) by using the Wisconsin Business Wizard online or contacting the local SBDC office.

- Evaluate the need for business liability insurance and/or bonding. Contact a local insurance agent(s) to get quotes.
- If you plan to use independent contractors or employees, contact the Department of Workforce Development regarding the use of independent contractors, unemployment insurance and worker's compensation requirements.
- Learn about self-employment taxes. Arrange a tax consultation with a CPA or tax preparer. Review information and publications available on the IRS website to learn about business expenses and self-employment taxes.
- Develop a bookkeeping system that accounts for monthly income and expenses, and collecting and remitting sales tax (if applicable). Plan to save receipts and retain money to cover self-employment income taxes. This can be done on a software program like QuickBooks or by using a simple paper and file method.

Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- What systems and supports will you and your BP Team put in place to ensure that the business adheres to the necessary legal requirements over the long-term?
- If needed, is there a family member that can assist you in obtaining and renewing insurance, permits, taxes, etc. rather than provider agency staff? (Consider staff turnover.)
- Using business revenue, can you pay for assistance from a bookkeeper and tax preparer? (If so, this service would be considered a business expense.)

Create a Team Plan to Address Legal Considerations:

Based on the suggested activity list, create a team plan to make contacts and do research for legal considerations.

Action Needed	Timeline	Who's Responsible
1.		
2.		
3.		

Write the Fifth Section of Your Business Plan:

V. Legal Considerations

- ✓ Date the business was established, the chosen business structure and the reason(s) for this structure
- ✓ Location of business bank account and any special procedures you and your BP Team have made for banking procedures (due to guardianship, etc)
- ✓ Permit and licensing requirements for the business, including where to get them, when to renew them, the initial and renewal costs. (e.g. Food and Drink Permit, Sellers Permit, etc)
- ✓ If applicable, the plan for use of independent contractors or employees including compliance requirements for wage reporting, unemployment insurance and workers compensation
- ✓ Business insurance needs, premium costs and coverage amounts
- ✓ A description of the tax reporting requirements to the IRS and to the WI Dept of Revenue
- ✓ Income tracking, reporting and bookkeeping methods

Business Structure Basics (adapted from WI.gov Build Your Business and the IRS)

Sole Proprietorship:

- A single individual owns and operates the business
- There is no legal separation between the individual and the business
- No legal formalities are needed to establish the business
- The proprietor owns all of the assets and is entitled to all of the profits of the business obligations. There is no shield from liability (other than insurance coverage)
- IRS Tax Filing: Schedule C and SE Form with annual 1040. May be responsible for Estimated Tax on a quarterly basis

General Partnership:

- Two or more persons own and operate the business
- Usually created by formal agreement but a written agreement is not necessary (however, it is recommended)
- Like the sole proprietorship, the owners are liable for the legal actions and debts of the business
- A partnership must file an information return annually with the IRS
- IRS Tax Filing: Partners are not employees, so do not get a W-2. Rather, they complete K-1s (IRS form 1065) for the partners

Limited Liability Company:

- Can be owned by an individual or an unlimited number of individuals
- Similar to a corporation, owners have limited personal liability for the debts and actions of the LLC
- More like a partnership; providing management flexibility and the benefit of pass-through taxation
- Owners of an LLC are called members
- IRS Tax Filing: See IRS Publication 3402 for details

For legal resources and answers go to: www.legalexplorer.com

Did you know.....? If you sell a taxable product or service, a seller's permit allows you to buy all the inventory and supplies that go into your product or service on a tax exempt basis for resale. For Jack, a self-employed artist, this means he can buy his canvases, paint, mounting hooks, card making supplies, packaging and anything that is transferred to the customer at the point of sale on a tax exempt basis for resale. To learn about seller's permits, what is taxable, recordkeeping and much more, read the WI Department of Revenue Sales and Use Tax Information guide (Publication 201) at: www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/pb201.pdf

Financial Planning & Benefits

The financial and benefits planning phase of business planning for people with disabilities is perhaps the most complex part of the process, requiring the need for accurate information about various cash and public benefits that are intricate and intertwined. Throughout this phase of the process, is important to work closely with a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist to know what benefits you receive and how to utilize the Work Incentives available to you. You can access a benefits specialist by talking with your VR Counselor or support provider, or by going on-line for a state-by-state listing of the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) Programs at:

www.socialsecurity.gov/work/ServiceProviders/WIPADirectory.html

Many people with disabilities and their BP Teams have misconceptions about the ability for someone who receives SSI (Supplemental Security Income), MA (Medical Assistance) or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) to earn income. These misconceptions are usually rooted in the fear of losing the benefits that they had fought so hard to receive and which provide the funding for critical services. However, it is actually these same benefits that put individuals with disabilities at a particular advantage to become self-employed. Some of these advantages include:

- The ability to have a “cash cushion” with benefit income for living expenses during the business start-up phase.
- The availability of medical insurance through Medical Assistance and/or Medicare while self-employed.
- The ability to accumulate assets within the business beyond the personal asset limits imposed by SSI and MA programs under the Property Essential to Self Support (PESS) Work Incentive.
- The opportunity to infuse cash into the business for start-up and growth by setting aside otherwise countable income through a Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)
- The advantages of other SSA Work Incentives that allow the business owner to maximize his/her earned and unearned income.
- The ability to access programs through Vocational Rehabilitation and Long-Term Care to assist with business planning and start-up.

‘Social Security Considerations for Small Business Owners with Disabilities’ is a free booklet produced by Griffin & Hammis Associates.

Download your copy at <http://www.griffinhammis.com/selfemploy.asp>

Suggested Activity List:

- Contact a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist for a complete benefits summary and to learn about self-employment Work Incentives (PASS, PESS, Un-incurred Business Expenses, etc). (See *Resources & Web Links* section for a web link to a by-county listing of Benefits Specialists in Wisconsin.)
- Determine if a PASS Plan is feasible. For more information talk to a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist or visit www.passplan.org or www.passonline.org
- Make a list of necessary start-up equipment, services and supply needs. Gather information on the costs and suppliers for each item.

- Identify the known sources of start-up funding and amounts for start-up items. Eliminate or postpone the purchase of items that are not affordable upon start-up. Refine the business plan if necessary to “start smaller and grow.”
- Establish 2-3, financial goals and objectives for you business.
- From the cost, expense and pricing information gathered, create a 12- month projection of income and expenses (also known as a Profit & Loss Statement) and a Cash Flow Analysis for the business. Base the projected sales on the work activity goals and earnings expectations of the business owner. If PASS is being used, include PASS funds on the Cash Flow Analysis only (not on the Profit and Loss form). Profit and Loss and Cash Flow templates can be found at www.score.org
- Considering the income projections, discuss with your BP Team how this will affect your benefits mix. Consult with a benefits specialist as needed for accurate information.
- Contact your SSA Representative to inform them that you are starting a micro-enterprise. Ask about the reporting requirements. (*SSA requires that earned income be reported*).

Reporting your income to SSA:

1. Call your SSA representative to inform her that you are starting a business. Ask your representative what information she would like you to send in and how to send it. Write this information down.
2. If you have net earnings from self-employment of \$400 or more in a calendar year, you must complete the appropriate IRS tax forms each year for your business and submit a copy of these completed forms to the IRS and to your SSA representative.
3. *‘Even if you do not owe any income tax, you must complete Form 1040 and Schedule SE to pay self-employment Social Security tax. This is true even if you already get Social Security benefits.’* (quote retrieved from SSA.gov)

Person-Centered Planning Discussions:

- What concerns or fears about earned income and its affect on your benefits do you or your BP Team members have? How will you and your BP Team make a plan to move forward with the business planning and minimize these concerns?
- How will you contribute financially to your business start-up?
- Will family members be helping with start-up costs? Explain.
- How have you demonstrated that this business idea has been well thought out and has the ability to earn a good profit? Explain.

- Is DVR willing to contribute to the start-up of this business? What item(s) are you asking DVR to purchase and what is the cost?
- What SSA Work Incentives will you use now (or in the future) to maximize your income and assets?
- Can a PASS plan be used to purchase services or equipment that would help you grow the business and increase your monthly income? How have you demonstrated that this business has the financial potential for you to do this?
- How do you want to spend your income from the business? (Or do you want to save it?) What personal goals do you have that require money (weekly/monthly extras and fun stuff, vacations, buying a home, etc)?

Create a Team Plan for Benefits & Financial Planning:

Based on the suggested activity list, create a team plan to develop the business financials and utilize SSA Work Incentives

Action Needed	Timeline	Who's Responsible?
1.		
2.		
3.		

Write the Sixth Section of Your Business Plan:

VI. The Financial Plan

- ✓ Business financial goals and objectives
- ✓ List of start-up equipment and supplies (including costs). Make note of any equipment and supplies you currently own or plan to contribute to your business.
- ✓ List of sources for financial support
- ✓ Cost of Goods Sold Calculation
- ✓ Profit and Loss Statement for Year 1 and Year 2 (include Year 3 if needed for PASS Plan)
- ✓ Cash Flow Analysis for Year 1 and Year 2 (include Year 3 if needed for PASS Plan)

Business Plan Outline

Notes on preparation: Your business plan will probably see many “drafts” and incarnations over the months that you work on planning your business launch. The first time you sit down to write your business plan, you might find that you do not yet have all the answers to the questions below. That is ok. Just be sure to indicate your plans to get the answers. Then, once you have uncovered the answers, include them in the next “draft” of your plan. The best business plans are concise and easy to read; using bullet points, tables and charts, not long-winded narratives. Be sure to keep your plan organized and include any supporting documents and attachments at the end (examples can include a list of milestones or a detailed owner bio/resume, pricing sheets, invoices, marketing materials, pertinent articles about your business or market, pictures of your products, etc).

I. Business Summary

- ✓ A description of the business
- ✓ Why this business exists and why it will be successful. (*Including: a statement about feasibility and how it was determined - what opportunity exists in the market and/or your community that makes you think this business will be successful and how the business relates to your interests, skills and abilities.*)
- ✓ A list of business goals and objectives for the next three years
- ✓ A description of the challenges this business might face and how you will address them

II. Product & Services

- ✓ A detailed description of your products and services
- ✓ Findings from your competitive analysis
- ✓ A description of the unique features and benefits of the product or service and why customers buy it from you
- ✓ Information about the costs to produce the product or service and time it takes you to produce each product or service
- ✓ Pricing information for each product or service
- ✓ Where and how the product or service will be sold

III. The Marketing Plan Outline

- ✓ A description of your target market (include size of market, target customer age, gender, income range, interests, etc)
- ✓ A description of your primary competitors and how your business compares
- ✓ Your competitive focus (price, quality, convenience, etc.)
- ✓ A list of your marketing goals and objectives for the business.
- ✓ A detailed description of each marketing, advertising and promotional method you will use. Including when and how these methods will be employed and the costs for each method (i.e. your marketing budget).

IV. Operations and Support Outline

- ✓ A description of the business location and hours of operation
- ✓ Point of sale for the product/service and methods of payment accepted
- ✓ List of supplier information
- ✓ Procedures for tracking inventory, income and expenses.
- ✓ A description of each support team member, the strengths they bring to the business and how they support you (e.g. job coaches, financial/tax/accounting support, marketing support, etc).
- ✓ A description of a typical week of business operations; how you are supported and what you do independently.

V. Legal Considerations

- ✓ Date the business was established, the chosen business structure and the reason(s) for this structure
- ✓ Location of business bank account and any special procedures you and your BP Team have made for banking procedures (due to guardianship, etc)
- ✓ Permit and licensing requirements for the business, including where to get them, when to renew them, the initial and renewal costs. (e.g. Food and Drink Permit, Sellers Permit, etc)
- ✓ If applicable, the plan for use of independent contractors or employees including compliance requirements for wage reporting, unemployment insurance and workers compensation
- ✓ Business insurance needs, premium costs and coverage amounts
- ✓ A description of the tax reporting requirements to the IRS and to the WI Dept of Revenue
- ✓ Income tracking, reporting and bookkeeping methods

VI. The Financial Plan

- ✓ Business financial goals and objectives
- ✓ List of start-up equipment and supplies (including costs). Make note of any equipment and supplies you currently own or plan to contribute to your business.
- ✓ List of sources for financial support
- ✓ Cost of Goods Sold Calculation
- ✓ Profit and Loss Statement for Year 1 and Year 2 (include Year 3 if needed for PASS Plan)
- ✓ Cash Flow Analysis for Year 1 and Year 2 (include Year 3 if needed for PASS Plan)

Appendix 9 Business Plan Submission Checklist for the Counselor

*All items on this checklist are to be completed by the counselor prior to submitting the business plan to the review committee.

- Consumer and Counselor have assessed that the proposed employment goal is appropriate and consistent with a consumer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choices *including any other identified barriers*, with or without accommodations. List here the date this was case noted in IRIS: _____.

- The feasibility activities/study were conducted and the consumer and BP Team agreed that the proposed business is feasible. This determination has been case noted. List here the date this was case noted in IRIS: _____.

- DVR counselor has confirmed that all potential comparable benefit sources have been explored and identified. (See [Appendix 1.](#)) List the date when this was case noted in IRIS: _____.

- DVR counselor has reviewed the business plan, utilizing [Appendix 10](#) BP Checklist, and has case noted their support or non-support of the business plan. List here the date this was case noted in IRIS: _____.

- DVR counselor has reviewed the relevant DVR policy and fee schedule with the consumer. See [Appendix 1.](#) List the date when this was case noted in IRIS: _____.

- Along with this submission form, the counselor should have provided the designated business plan review committee member/internal reviewer with copies of the following:
 - o completed business plan
 - o Any attachments or relevant information

Appendix10 Customized Self-Employment Business Plan Checklist

Business Plan Checklists are a useful tool for evaluating the business plan and for informing the potential business owner and their BP Team members how DVR will evaluate the completeness and contents of the plan. We recommend providing the potential business owner/team a copy of this checklist when they begin to develop the business plan. This check list should become part of the potential business owner's file.

Business Summary Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Description of owner(s); including interest in owning a business, specific skills/strengths that will be utilized in the business		
Statement of how feasibility was determined		
Clearly stated goals and objectives for the business and business owner		

Products & Services Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Products and Services are explained in detail		
Competition has been analyzed		
Research inspires confidence that customers will pay the products price		
Pricing is justified given the costs and time to produce		
Details about where and how the product/service will be sold		

Marketing Plan Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Description of the market (area, size, trends, etc)		
Description of the target customer		
Business image is described with a clearly stated competitive focus		
Clearly stated marketing goals and objectives		
Promotional strategy; including details about each promotional tool/method to be used		

Operations and Support Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Business location and reason for its selection		
Point of sale is described, including methods of payment accepted		
Suppliers are identified		
Description of inventory systems		
Description of bookkeeping systems		
Business owner(s) roles and responsibilities		
Business Team is identified; including specific roles and responsibilities and duration/frequency of supports provided		
Services that will be outsourced (such as bookkeeping, maintenance, marketing, etc) are identified		

Legal Considerations Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Business structure and rationale		
Business account has been opened		
List of licenses and permits required; including initial and renewal costs and procedures		
If applicable, a plan is described for the use of independent contractors and/or employees		
Tax reporting requirements/procedures are listed		
Describes business insurance needs and source(s)		
Plans have been made to track and report income		

Financial Plan Checklist		
Item	Needed	Included
Clearly stated financial goals and objectives		
List of all start up equipment and supplies		
Sources of financial support identified		
Business owner's financial contribution to business is described		
Cost of Goods Sold is calculated		
Profit & Loss Statements for year 1 and 2		
Cash flow statements for year 1 and 2		
Impact on SSI/SSDI and other benefits is summarized		

Supporting Document Checklist (Optional)		
Item	Needed	Included
Example marketing materials		
Sample invoices, pricing sheets, pictures of products, etc.		
Team plan for implementation & timelines		
Business owner bio/resume		
Other:		

Appendix 11 Social Security Benefits

Consumers receiving SSI and Medicaid should be aware that for Limited Liability Corporations (LLC), S Corporations, and C Corporations business assets may be considered as personal assets. This should be explored further by the consumer and his/her BP Team.

The following information is from the [Social Security Administration](#) website
(As posted in May 2008)

A. Social Security Administration - PASS plan

What is a PASS?

- It is an SSI provision to help individuals with disabilities return to work.

How does a PASS help someone return to work?

- SSI eligibility and payment amounts are based on income and resources (things of value that the individual owns).
- PASS lets disabled individual set aside money and/or things he or she owns to pay for items or services needed to achieve a specific work goal.

How does PASS work?

- Applicant finds out what training, items or services are needed to reach work goal.
- Can include supplies to start a business, school expenses, equipment and tools, transportation and uniform requests.
- Applicant finds out the cost of these items and services.
- PASS can help person save to pay these costs. PASS lets person set aside money for installment payments as well as a down payment for things like a vehicle, wheelchair or computer if needed to reach work goal.

How do you set up a PASS?

- Decide on work goal and determining items and services necessary to achieve.
- Can get help in setting up plan from a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor; an organization that helps people with disabilities; Benefits Specialists or Protection and Advocacy organizations who have contracts with SSA; Employment Networks involved in the Ticket to Work program; the local Social Security office or anyone else willing to help him or her.
- Contact local SSA office; SSA work site or some third parties shown above to get a [PASS form \(SSA-545-BK\)](#) to complete.
- Bring or mail it to the Social Security office.

- SSA usually approves plans prepared by VR
- **If goal is self-employment, there must also be a business plan**

What happens to the PASS?

- SSA sends PASS to SSA employees who are trained to work with PASS.
- PASS expert works directly with the applicant. PASS expert looks over the plan to see if work goal is reasonable
- SSA reviews plan to make sure that items and services listed on PASS needed to achieve the work goal and reasonably priced.
- If changes needed, the PASS expert discusses with the applicant.
- If PASS not approved, can appeal the decision.

PASS Cadre Location	Jurisdiction	Toll-free Number	Local Number
St. Paul, MN	Minnesota, Wisconsin	800-551-9796	651-290-0304 ext. 3009 or 3040

For more information visit <http://www.ssa.gov/>

B. Social Security Administration- PESS

Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS) (SSI eligible)

How does PESS help you? We do not count some resources that are essential to your means of self-support when we decide your continuing eligibility for SSI.

What is not counted? We do not count your property if you use it in a trade or business (for example, inventory) or use it for work as an employee (for example, tools or equipment), regardless of the value or rate of return. Other use of the items does not matter.

We do not count up to \$6,000 of equity value of non-business property that you use to produce goods or services essential to daily activities, regardless of the rate of return. An example is land used to produce vegetables or livestock solely for consumption by your household.

We do not count up to \$6,000 of equity value of non-business income-producing property if the property yields an annual rate of return of at least 6 percent. An example is a rental property.

What type of resources do not qualify as PESS? We do not consider liquid resources; for example, stocks, bonds, or notes as PESS, unless you use them as part of a trade or business.

C. Social Security Administration- IRWE

Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE) (SSDI and SSI eligible)

How do IRWE help you? We deduct the cost of certain impairment-related items and services that you need to work from your gross earnings when we decide if your "countable earnings" demonstrate performance of SGA. It does not matter if you also use these items and services for non-work activities.

When will we deduct your IRWE? We deduct IRWE for SGA purposes when:

1. The item(s) or service(s) enables you to work;
2. You need the item(s) or service(s) because of a physical or mental impairment;
3. You paid the cost and are not reimbursed by another source such as Medicare, Medicaid or a private insurance carrier;
4. The cost is "reasonable", that is, it represents the standard charge for the item or service in your community; and
5. You paid for the expense in a month you are or were working.

How do we use IRWE to figure your SSI monthly payments? If you are receiving SSI benefits, we will also exclude IRWE from your earned income when we figure your monthly payment amount when you meet requirements 1 through 4 above, and you paid the expense in a month that you receive earned income or performed work while you used the impairment related item or services.

Can IRWE be deducted during a non-work month? In certain situations, we can deduct IRWE amounts for expenses paid before you start or after you stop work.

For more information visit

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/eng/guide-employment-supports.htm#5>

D. Social Security Administration - Unincurred Business Expenses

Unincurred Business Expense

SSI & SSDI -- "Unincurred business expenses" refers to self-employment business support that someone provides to you at no cost. In deciding whether you are working at the SGA level, we deduct unincurred business expenses from your net earnings from self-employment. Examples of unincurred business expenses are (1) a Vocational rehabilitation agency gives you a computer that is used in a graphic arts business; and (2) a friend works for your business as unpaid help.

For an item or service to qualify as an unincurred business expense:

- It must be an item or service that the IRS would allow as a legitimate business expense if you had paid for it; and
- Someone other than you must have paid for it.

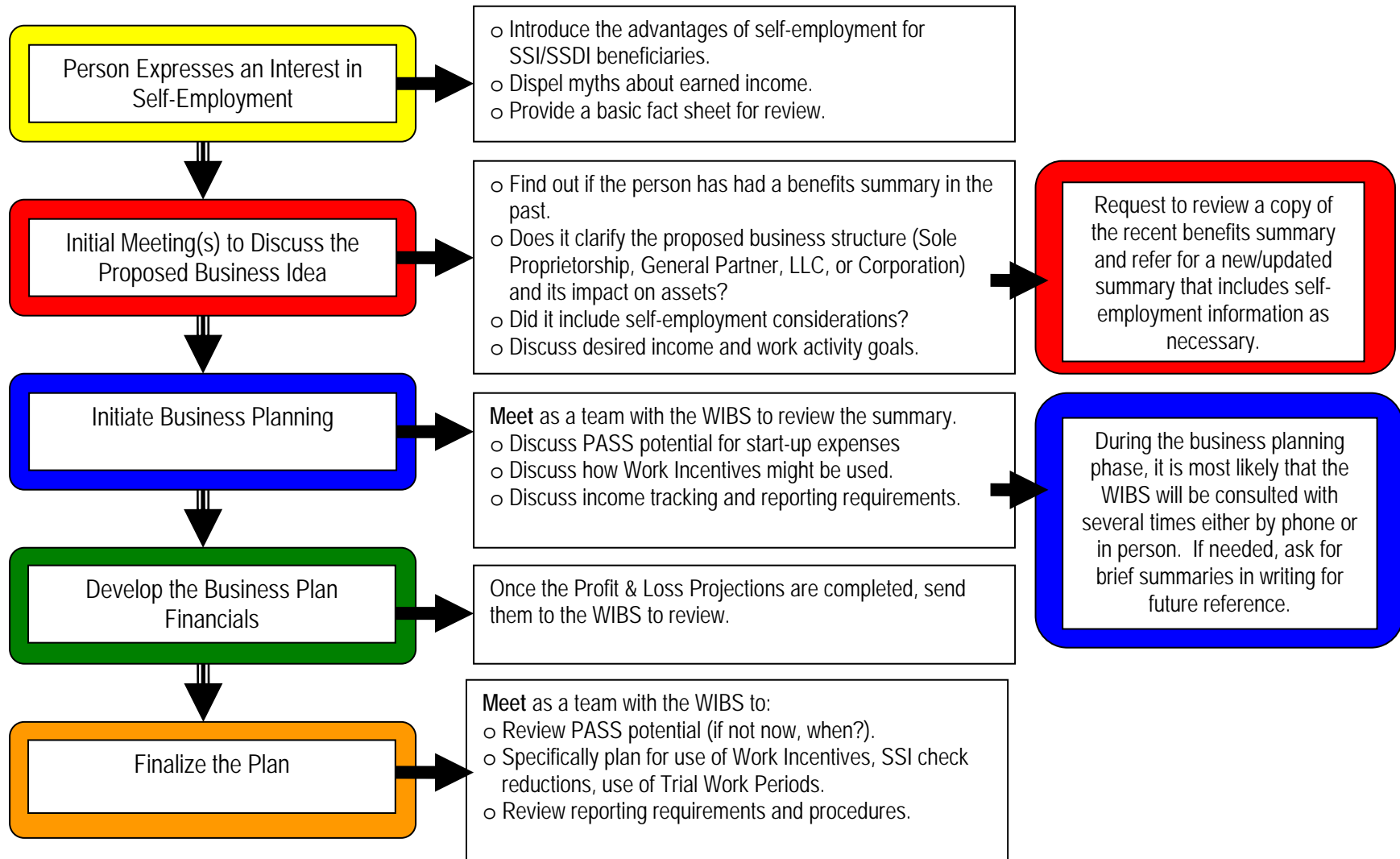
One way to identify an unincurred business expense is that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) does not allow you to deduct the cost for income tax purposes because someone gave you the item or services.

SSI -- We do not deduct unincurred business expenses from earnings when we figure your SSI payment amount.

For more information please visit <http://www.ssa.gov/>

Incorporating SSA Benefits Planning into the Business Planning Process

It is essential for potential business owners with disabilities to work closely with a Work Incentives Benefit Specialist (WIBS) in all phases of business plan development. A WIBS can be accessed by working with Vocational Rehabilitation or by contacting the Work Incentive Planning & Assistance (WIPA) program. A state-by-state listing of WIPA programs can be found at www.ssa.gov



Once the business is launched, the business owner should continue to consult with a WIBS as needed, especially if a PASS has been developed.

Critical Questions to ask a WBS about Self-Employment and Benefits

- What benefits is the consumer receiving? e.g.:
 - Medicaid and/or Medicare
 - Housing Subsidy
 - Food Stamps
 - Veterans Benefits
 - Energy Assistance
 - Pension or other private benefits
 - IDA Account
 - SSI and/or SSDI
 - Others?

- What self-employment work incentives could be available for the consumer based on the benefits they receive? And how are these linked to the prospective operations and financial outlook of the business?
 - Trial Work Period and Extended Period of Eligibility
 - Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)
 - Exclusion of business assets for SSI (formerly known as Property Essential to Self-Support/PESS)
 - Impairment Related Work Incentives
 - Blind Work Expenses
 - Self-Employment Subsidy (Un-incurred Business Expenses and Unpaid Help)

- What business structure is the person considering (sole proprietorship, general partnership, LLC, corporation) and what impact will it have on their benefits? If so, how will this be addressed?

- What will be the impact of Net Earnings from Self-Employment (NESE) on the consumer's benefits (based on the consumer's financial and/or work activity goals)?

- How will the NESE be accounted for (accrual vs. cash method) given the cash benefits the consumer is receiving?

- Identify the breakeven point and the number of self-employment work activity hours needed to breakeven if the person is receiving SSDI.

- Have Ticket to Work benefits been considered, particularly if there is or will be a cash incentive paid to the consumer?

Appendix 12

Customized Self-Employment Stories from Wisconsin

Example 1

Michael: owner of a bulk candy machine business

Michael had been working at a part time cleaning job with long term job coaching supports from a local provider. He wanted to work more, had an active Plan to Achieve Self Support (which was providing monthly funding for a vehicle, gas and insurance), and had additional hours of job coaching support each week authorized by the county. Michael's job search was turning up nothing until Michael's employment specialist met a man in the local community who was trying to sell 25 bulk candy vending machines. The employment specialist knew that Michael had the dream of owning a vending machine business, as Michael had attended seminars on vending in the past and occasionally showed him and others the vending machine catalogues he had saved.

The employment specialist had heard about helping people with significant disabilities own and operate a small business, so he contacted a consultant who specialized in this area. The employment specialist met with the consultant in April to learn more about the process. After getting some advice and resources, the employment specialist talked with Michael about the process and coordinated a meeting with Michael and his resource team (DVR Counselor, Job Coach, Job Developer, CSP Case Manager, and Michael's Social Worker) to introduce the idea and determine how this team could help Michael in the process. Team roles were discussed and it was determined that the employment specialist would assume the role of "Self-Employment Coordinator*" for Michael and his team. Michael's first resource team meeting was held in May. At the meeting, the team discussed the planning process, the milestones and outcomes needed, the challenges Michael might face in owning a business, as well as the strengths and assets he brings to the proposed business idea. After this meeting, the DVR counselor followed up with his supervisor, who had recently been involved in creating some funding guidelines for Customized (or Supported) Self-Employment after a pilot project in a nearby county. Next, the counselor amended Michael's IPE and authorized the employment specialist to do an assessment that would determine business feasibility and better identify Michael's challenges and assets to his self-employment goal. The employment specialist received technical assistance on how to do this kind of assessment from the consultant he had initially contacted to learn about self employment.

A month later (in June) a second team meeting was held. A former business owner, recruited by the employment specialist to be part of Michael's Business Planning Team also joined the meeting to provide advice and business insights. At the meeting, the employment specialist reported that the feasibility of the business looked promising because he had started contacting local business to host the machines and had already gotten confirmation to host over 1/3 of the 25 vending machines.

Through research and critical thinking, the employment specialist determined the potential profit margin of the business and the weekly gross revenue needed to reach Michael's earnings goals. The team brainstormed additional ideas and, based on DVR's process for business planning and basic person-centered planning strategies, determined the next steps of the process.

Another month passed and the Business Planning Team met for the third time. It was at this time that the employment specialist had:

- Developed a more complete picture of business feasibility
- Helped Michael determine his goals for business ownership
- Identified Michael's strengths, assets, and potential challenges for self-employment
- Defined supports (both current and needed) to address these challenges
- Identified Business Planning Team members and local resources for planning
- Compiled a list of ideas and recommendations to guide the planning process

A report on these findings was provided to DVR. Next, the DVR counselor authorized services to the employment specialist for business plan development.

Between August and October, the employment specialist worked with Michael and the Business Planning Team to complete the business plan. The employment specialist enlisted the help of a bookkeeper from his personal network to complete the financial projections for the business plan. The Business Planning Team met in September and again in October to review the plan's progress and determine next steps. The final plan was submitted for review in October and the team held a conference call with the plan review committee in November. Per the recommendation of the review committee, the Business Planning Team met once more to get specific about a plan for day- to-day supports, as well as marketing and bookkeeping support. A report detailing this plan was submitted to DVR in December, at which time the DVR counselor authorized the purchase of the machines, initial stocks and supplies for the business, and initial job coaching support during the follow along phase. The former owner of the vending machines provided some training to Michael and his employment specialist on how to put the machines together and service them. The former business owner that had been a member Michael's Business Planning Team provided guidance marketing advice to the employment specialist and Michael. Over the next few months, the employment specialist contacted local businesses and helped Michael place the machines. Reports on business progress and the initial job coaching support were provided to DVR monthly during follow along until case closure.

Example 2

Angela: sole owner and operator of a cleaning service

Angela was working with DVR to develop a small cleaning business. While she was developing her business plan, she began cleaning houses for pay and was beginning to generate income and grow a small customer base. Angela and her DVR counselor encountered conflict during the planning process. Angela was eager to get her business off the ground; often putting the "cart before the horse" and becoming

unfocused with her plan. She struggled to find a manageable starting point with her business. She wanted a business that would be small enough for her to maintain her mental health as well as balance her personal budget.

Given Angela's mental health barriers, the task of business plan writing was difficult. Coupled with the real and perceived conflicts she was encountering with DVR, Angela's progress was stalled and sidelined several times. Eventually the Client Assistance Program (CAP) became involved. After initial discussions between Angela, CAP and DVR, the CAP Complaint Investigator asked a consultant familiar with Customized Self-Employment planning to provide some technical assistance. A meeting was held with Angela, the DVR Counselor, the DVR Supervisor, CAP and the Customized Self-Employment consultant. At this meeting, a series of questions were asked to determine the progress that Angela has made, as well as identify her barriers and assets toward her self-employment goal.

Angela had privately hired a business plan writer to assist her; the business plan had been completed and reviewed by the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp. (WWBIC). However, both the DVR Counselor and CAP were concerned about the scope of the plan, which required significant investment and had rigorous revenue projections. In the meeting, it was also determined that Angela could potentially use a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) and could benefit from education about how self-employment income would impact her benefits. With the help of the Customized Self-Employment consultant and CAP, Angela and her counselor developed an action plan to move forward, which included DVR authorizing services with the business plan writer that Angela had worked with, to scale back the original business plan into something more manageable for Angela.

The business plan writer met with the DVR counselor, Angela, CAP and the Customized Self-Employment consultant. The business plan writer was unfamiliar with disability issues and DVR services, so discussion at the meeting focused on Angela's goals, her needs and the DVR process and guidelines for self-employment. The business plan writer agreed to work with Angela on DVR to create a plan customized to Angela's needs. CAP continued to assist Angela by coordinating some of the business planning activities with the business plan writer, DVR counselor and benefits specialist. Eventually, Angela's plan was brought down to a manageable scale and approved by DVR. In retrospect, Angela and her team agree that she could have benefited from a team approach and support early on in the process, before writing her business plan, so that she could better identify her strengths, interests, and barriers to her goal and determine a reasonable starting point for her business.