Common Assessment for employment related needs

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
1. Context

Transformation of Employment & Training Services
First announced in Budget 2012, and reaffirmed in Budgets 2013-16, the integration and transformation of employment and training services is a key government initiative that will transform Ontario’s employment and training system to better meet individual’s needs, improve outcomes and ensure resources are being targeted most effectively.

As part of this transformation, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) is developing a number of system features that will enhance service delivery capacity and planning.

One of these system features is a common assessment process that will provide a more consistent method of assessing employment and training needs of individuals and matching them to an appropriate level of service.
2. Common Assessment

Definition and Commitments
What is “Common Assessment”?

“Common Assessment” refers to the development of more consistent methods of assessing the employment and training needs of individuals and matching them to appropriate services.
Common Assessment will ensure that:

- Resource allocation is coherent and proportional to need (i.e., appropriate intensity of services required to improve individual outcomes in the most efficient manner).
- Individuals with a range of employment barriers receive the right services at the right time.
- Access to employment and training programs and services is equitable and consistent.

Common Assessment is intended to complement existing service provider expertise & professional judgement in making service decisions and is not intended to replace more detailed assessment or diagnostic tools already in use.
3. Design

Research Findings and Recommended Strategic Objectives
Co-design approach
The tool is being co-designed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and municipalities
An external consultant was selected to provide technical advice on the design of a common assessment tool.
Consultant’s Key Research Findings

**Statistical Model**
There is no perfect model or set of characteristics for determining employment success. A statistical model will achieve a high rate of success.

**Action Planning**
Staff abandon profiling tools that provide little or no value-add for action planning.

**Outcome Focus**
Staff and clients are more supportive of a tool that focuses on an individual’s strengths and positive outcomes rather than barriers or challenges.

**Engagement**
Individuals are more engaged and cooperative if they answer the questions themselves.

**Support**
Life stabilization issues exist at all levels of service intensity and are not necessarily predictors of long-term unemployment.

**Work Structures**
Traditional standard full-time employment opportunities, emerging and alternative work structures are gaining popularity.
# Research Conclusions

Use a profiling tool to direct individuals to a level of service intensity, rather than individual programs.

A profiling model is effective if it is the mandatory first step in getting employment assistance.

Long-term unemployment in Ontario is due to a mismatch of workers’ skills to jobs available; older workers remaining in the labour market longer; and the less likelihood of an interview beyond six months of unemployment.

Work-life success comes from learning to manage lifelong work changes.
# Recommended Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implement Common Assessment Tool and Work-Life Action Plan Application</th>
<th>Human-centered tool design</th>
<th>Provide added benefit for staff</th>
<th>Provide added benefit for individuals</th>
<th>Ensure organizational supports are In place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tool to triage individuals to a level of service intensity</td>
<td>Strengths-based tool that includes individuals’s soft skills and data needed for action planning</td>
<td>The tool triage function should free staff to focus on individuals most in need</td>
<td>Action plan and resources organized to ensure success for individuals</td>
<td>Thorough training for staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide specific information for action planning</td>
<td>Life stabilization issues addressed as potential sources of interference</td>
<td>Tool should reduce duplication through discontinuation of other similar front-end tools</td>
<td>Tool designed for learning and planning purposes even by those not immediately seeking employment</td>
<td>Build communication strategy and branding of the tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool should be piloted in various locations around province</td>
<td>Position individuals for success in diverse work environment</td>
<td>Coaching aspect of tool should strengthen staff-client relationship</td>
<td>Strengthen individual’s ability to proactively manage ongoing work-life changes</td>
<td>Policy changes; work-life related terminology, alternative work structures etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Common Assessment Pilot

Components, Four-Phase Approach and Timeline
Pilot Components

1) A jobseeker assessment tool that would allow individuals to identify their employment and wraparound service needs;

2) A statistical model that serves as the foundation for the tool’s predictive accuracy in streaming individuals to services of appropriate intensity;

3) A Work Life Action Plan – which is a shared online space for staff and clients to collaborate on action planning; and,

4) Connectivity between the tool and existing information systems, including the Employment Ontario Information System.
Four-phase Work Plan

**Discovery**
Initial phase to develop an understanding of user needs for the client facing assessment tool, work-life action plan, data integration needs and how this new digital service will align with existing business (i.e. cross ministry).

**Alpha**
Create a lightweight prototype of the client facing assessment tool and the work life action plan that can be tested with different users. This will help to refine the understanding of the user needs.

**Beta**
Build a working version of the system that can be tested with a dedicated user group. Rapid system releases should occur during this phase to help refine the understanding of the user needs through each iteration.

**Launch**
The pilot phase to test the full suite of tools that can be validated and refined with a the pilot group. Scheduled system releases should occur during the pilot phase to help refine the understanding of the user needs through each iteration.
timeline

- **DISCOVERY Phase**
  - April 2017 - July 2017

- **ALPHA Phase**
  - August 2017 - December 2017

- **BETA Phase**
  - January 2018 - Sept 2018

**Launch PILOT**
- October 2018 - September 2020
  - Pilot monitoring, evaluation and adjustments
  - Further design and development, based on evaluation findings

**Full Implementation**
- October 2020
PMCARG

PMCARG has been established to support Common Assessment project teams in the development and execution of specific deliverables in the key areas of: digital solutions, service delivery and alignment, business process modernization and contract management.
PMCARG Objectives

**Champion** and promote the benefits of the Common Assessment initiative

**Contribute** technical subject-matter expertise to deliverables across each of the phases in the project’s lifecycle

**Participate** directly in various activities to determine system requirements and user needs

**Conduct** system testing of the Common Assessment Tool and Work Life Action Plan

**Act** as a consulting body to help steer the project’s direction
PMCARG Roles & Responsibilities

Map client pathways and developing an understanding of user needs

Assist in the gathering and documenting of design and business requirements and key performance indicators

Conduct site-level research on existing services and recommend potential improvements to support project

Test rapid prototypes and validate against business requirements

Align common assessment work with existing work within respective business areas

Make technical design and implementation-related recommendations
Any questions?

Send them along to: commonassessment@ontario.ca