

# A Guide to Barriers to Employment

## Why do barriers to employment matter?

Barriers to employment define challenges that people may face in making a sustainable wage or furthering their education.

Programs document barriers to employment at intake because they provide the state with adjustments for performance with recognition that these students require more intensive services. Ultimately, documentation of these barriers helps Illinois make its performance goals from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

## What are the barriers to employment?

On the reverse of this page, you'll see the 11 barriers to employment recognized by the National Reporting System (NRS) and a description of each.

## How do I gather this information?

As you might imagine, asking people about these 11 barriers to employment requires trust and honesty. Look at the tips below for how to effectively gather the barriers to employment.

### *Explain the WHY*

Whether you are intake staff or a teacher, let the student know why you need to ask personal questions. For example: *Lynn, I will need to ask you some personal questions. Please answer honestly. The answers will help determine the services that we can provide you and how our program is funded. Are you ready to begin?*

### *Describe the HOW*

Understandably, a student may be concerned about how their personal information will be used. You can assure them that the information is bound by strict privacy standards. Let's build on the last conversation with Lynn: *Lynn, I will need to ask you some personal questions. Please answer honestly. The answers will help determine the services that we can provide you and how our program is funded. Your answers will not be shared with others. The information is entered into the computer. When it's reported to the government, that information will not be connected to your name. Are you ready to begin?*

### *Work as a TEAM*

Different members of your program staff have contact with students in various ways. An intake staff member often has first contact with the student. However, the teacher will have prolonged contact with the student and will build a rapport. Everyone in your program should be involved in collecting data, including teachers. Involve your teachers in the process by asking them to update a designated person when they hear of changes to a student's life as it involves the barriers to employment.

## The 11 NRS Barriers to Employment

Barrier	Definition
Displaced homemaker	Has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; is the dependent spouse of a member of the armed forces on active duty whose family income is significantly reduced.
English language learner, low literacy level, cultural barriers <b>ALL TITLE II PARTICIPANTS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY</b>	Limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language; an inability to compute and solve problems, or read write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job in the participant's family or in society; or a perception of him- or herself as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs, or practices that influence a way of thinking, acting, or working that may serve as a hindrance to employment.
Exhausting Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) within 2 years	Within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), regardless of whether he or she is receiving these benefits at program entry.
Ex-offender	Has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent act or requires assistance in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction.
Homeless or runaway youth	Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; primary nighttime residence not designed for regular sleeping accommodation; migratory child; under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from place of legal residence without permission.
Long-term unemployed	Has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks.
Low-income	SNAP, TANF, SSI, or public assistance; total family income not higher than poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level; free or reduced-price lunch; foster child; with disability and income is the poverty line; homeless participant; youth living in a high-poverty area.
Migrant and seasonal farmworker	Low-income individual primarily employed in agriculture or fish farming labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment or underemployment.
Individual with disabilities	Indicates that he or she has any disability, defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. <i>A student can self-disclose without official documentation.</i>
Single parent	Single, separated, divorced, or widowed with primary responsibility for dependent children under age 18 (including single pregnant women).
Youth in foster care or who has aged out of system	Person who is currently in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system.