Federal Assessment Resources

There are several assessment resources that are free and open for use provided by federal agencies.

The CareerOneStop website includes a section on Assessments at www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Assessments/self-assessments.aspx.

This site describes how assessments can be helpful and provides three free online assessments as part of the site:

- The Interest Assessment is a quick 30-question assessment that identifies an individual's interests and matches them to careers
- The Skills Matcher identifies an individual's skills and matches them to careers that use those skills
- The Work Values Matcher is a card sort that helps identify the qualities that are most important to an individual in a career and the type of place to work

There is also an online Interest Profiler within the My Next Move website at www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip.

In addition, the Competency Model Clearinghouse within CareerOneStop has a searchable Resource Database at www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/FindResources/search.aspx. This database contains information on and links to a variety of assessments, both public or open and private, related to several activities and topics including career exploration. Try using various keywords or phrases, such as "career assessments," or "soft skills assessments" to refine your results.

The Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) is a web-based tool that offers an approach to creating a plan for clients that summarizes their strengths and barriers, and makes recommendations on placement into work activities and work supports. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, the OWRA Tool offers social service agency caseworkers and staff services for clients through five modules, including a detailed, comprehensive assessment of client's strengths, barriers, and work readiness.

In addition, OWRA generates a Self Sufficiency Plan (SSP) and Work Readiness Resource (WRR) that offers a customized pathway using information from the Intake and Assessment Modules. The SSP highlights client strengths, suggests recommendations for reducing client barriers, and encouraged customized referrals and recommendations to address barriers. In addition, the WRR is available to help case workers and participants explore resume writing, soft skill development, interests, abilities, labor market information, and other important elements of employment and career pathways.

For more information, see peerta.act.hhs.gov/content/online-work-readiness-assessment-owra.

Evaluating and Selecting Assessment Tools

There are quite a few assessment tools available in the marketplace, many of which are proprietary and have associated costs. When reviewing potential assessments for use there are a number of variables to look for:

- **What audience was it designed for use with?** Try to identify assessment tools that are designed for use with adults, employer, and workforce development applications rather than with K-12 students.
- **Does the assessment have linked learning materials?** Particularly for soft skills assessments, if gaps are identified, it is helpful to have associated materials or resources to help develop needed skills.
- **How many and which skills or competencies are assessed by the tool?** There can be a wide variation among tools in this regard. Sometimes a tool may be described as assessing soft skills when perhaps it may focus more on foundational academic skills such as numeracy and literacy. As a useful reference, the Building Blocks model in the Competency Model Clearinghouse outlines and describes three tiers or groupings of foundational competencies including: Personal Effectiveness, Academic, and Work Readiness. For more information, see www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/competency-models/building-blocks-model.aspx.
- **Does the tool assess elements that you think are relevant for the population and local economy you are serving?** For example, given the emphasis on online learning and work currently, you may want to look for tools that include an assessment of digital literacy or digital skills, or for a separate additional assessment of digital skills to administer.

As mentioned above, the Competency Model Clearinghouse resource database is one place to search for information about available assessment tools.

Finally, it is usually helpful to use multiple assessments of different types in order to acquire a fuller picture of an individual's strengths and needs, sometimes referred to as "whole-person assessment." For more information see Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 21-07 *Effective Use of Assessment in the Public Workforce Investment System and Transmittal of Testing and Assessment: A Guide to Good Practices for Workforce Investment Professionals*.[1]

---

[1] wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2565