



# **Competitive Employment Interview**

*February 2010*



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MAINE**  
Muskie School of Public Service

The Competitive Employment Interview was a concept of the Maine State Rehabilitation Council and is a joint quality improvement effort by the Maine State Rehabilitative Committee, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Adult Mental Health Services (OAMHS) and Department of Labor (DOL) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services (DVR), and Muskie School of Public Service. The purpose of the Competitive Employment Interview came out of a need to further develop our understanding on those influences that may be significantly improving an individual's opportunity to work competitively full-time.

## **Literature Research**

Existing literature examining the differences between full vs. part-time is limited. The Muskie School of Public Service conducted a literature review and found the following:

- Becker, Drake and Farabough suggest that work history and benefits counseling are factors when choosing between full and part-time employment.

Most clients in evidence-based supported employment obtain part-time jobs that are consistent with the person's skills and experiences. Clients tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and have longer job tenure when the jobs are consistent with their preferences (Becker, Drake, Farabaough, & Bond, 1996; Mueser, Becker, & Wolfe, 2001).

Most people choose part-time work at the beginning. Jobs for 5-10 hours a week are not uncommon. Many consumers choose to work part-time because of fears of losing benefits (e.g. government assistance checks, health insurance). Others who have not worked before, have not worked in a long time, or have had negative experiences when working in the past may also choose to begin working on a part-time basis. Over time people often increase the number of hours they work, but this again depends on the individual's choice. In order to decide how many hours a person wants to work, he or she needs accurate information about how his or her benefits will be affected. (Supported Employment for People with Mental Illness, Becker, Drake)

- Cunningham, Wolbert and Brockmeier concluded that differences in attitude and illness awareness may contribute to job sustainability and success in Moving Beyond the Illness.

Those individuals who are most successful at gaining and maintaining employment tend to have a clear perspective on their illness and the place of the illness in their lives more generally.

Although, it is unclear if attitude and illness management was a result of employment, the exploration of how individuals manage under difficult circumstances in the work environment is important.

Based on the research found in the literature review and experiences of individuals on the Maine State Rehabilitative Committee, the council focused on four factors to explore to understand factors influencing full vs. part-time competitive employment.

## **Hypothesis**

Based on the supporting literature and feedback from the Maine State Rehabilitative Committee, questions on the Competitive Employment Interview were written to better understand the following:

- Positive work history based on individual choice promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health.
- Benefits counseling promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health.
- The management of an individual's mental health promotes full-time competitive employment.
- Full-time competitive employment promotes an improved attitude to view oneself "as a person with an illness rather than the illness being the person."

The Maine State Rehabilitative Committee wanted questions to be open and to capture the voice of those individuals working full and part-time. The role of the interview was to guide individuals to "tell their story" not to limit their responses in a standardized approach. Therefore interview questions were written to prompt individuals in talking about their influences and experiences in obtaining employment.

## **Maine's Mental Health and Long Term Vocational Services**

The DHHS Mental Health and Long Term Vocational Support Policy and Procedure Manual states that the purpose of long-term employment supports is to "provide persons with psychiatric disabilities with the post employment support necessary to keep a job and/or tuition reimbursement necessary to increase career options."

For many individuals with a mental health diagnosis in Maine, his or her exploration for employment starts with DVR. DVR has a critical role in providing employment assessment, job development and placement. Once an individual has secured employment, and is stabilized in his/her job, DHHS provides the long-term employment support. However, not all individuals requesting long-term supports will receive services from DVR. For individuals already working and meeting eligibility requirements, a request for long-term vocational supports may be made to maintain his/her current employment.

Currently, the number of individuals competitively employed full-time and receiving OAMHS long-term vocational supports is small and poses a challenge in determining the factors contributing to full vs. part-time employment.

Due to the small number of individuals currently working full-time, it is recommended that the Competitive Employment Interview be used as part of an ongoing, multi-year evaluation to better understand the factors influencing full-time competitive employment for individuals receiving OAMHS long-term employment services.

## Competitive Employment Interview Methodology

### Selection of Participants

DHHS OAMHS selected a total of one hundred forty-three (143) individuals to participate in the Competitive Employment Interview. Individuals were selected on the following criteria:

- Individual had a mental health diagnosis
- Individual was receiving Long Term Vocational Support Services from OAMHS
- Individual was competitively employed between the dates of April 1, 2009 and June 15, 2009

Of the one hundred forty-three (143) individuals selected, twenty-three (23) individuals were working full-time and one hundred and twenty-three (123) were working part-time. Full-time employment was defined as at least 32 hours per week, and part-time was defined as less than 32 hours per week.

DHHS Office of Quality Improvement Services mailed recruitment letters to all 143 eligible participants. The letter contained the following:

- An explanation on the purpose of the employment interview
- An explanation that participation in the interview was voluntary and confidential
- A consent form for the individual to sign and return. The consent form allowed the individual to “opt out” of the interview or to participate in the interview. If the individual volunteered to participate in the interview, he/she was asked to request the type of interview they preferred.
- A 1-800 contact telephone number to the DHHS Office of Quality Improvement Services for questions or clarifications.
- An offer of a \$10 gift card to Wal-Mart for volunteering their time

*For more information on the methodology and recruitment of individuals for the Competitive Employment Interview please see Attachment A in the appendix.*

### Responses

Of the one-hundred forty-three (143) individuals, twenty-nine (29) individuals returned the consent form (Table 1).

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Requested Face-to-Face Interview	2	N/A
Requested Telephone Interview	0	11
Requested Survey be sent in the mail	1	11
Consented to contact but did not list type of interview preferred	1	0
Requested that no contact be made	0	3
Total	4	25

## What People Said: Interviews and Written Surveys

### Demographics

A total of sixteen (16) individuals participated in the Competitive Employment Interview (*See Table 2*).

- Fourteen (14) were working part-time at the time of the interview
  - Due to more than three-quarters of the answers missing, one part-time written survey was omitted from the analysis. This resulted in a total of thirteen (13) individuals participating in the part-time interview or written survey.
- Three (3) were working full-time.

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Telephone or Face-to-Face Interview	2	7
Written Survey	1	7
No survey administered - No longer working	0	3
No survey administered - No response to call/letter	1	3
No survey administered - No show	0	1
No survey administered - Refused	0	1
Total	4	22

### Part-time

Of the thirteen individuals working part-time:

- Six were male and seven were female.
- Four individuals were between 25 and 34 years of age and nine were between 35 and 64.
- Five individuals were from Cumberland County, four individuals were from Kennebec County. Aroostook, Sagadahoc and Somerset Counties each had one person.
- Four individuals reported that his/her job fell in the category of “General Labor.” Categories of “Restaurant” and “Retail/Sales” each had two people, while “Customer Service,” “Hospitality,” “HealthCare,” and “Professional Service” each had one person reporting.
- Ten individuals reported that his/her wage was between \$7.25 and \$9.49 per hour. One person reported \$7.24 or less and one person reported between \$9.50 and \$11.99.
- One person reported that s/he was self-employed.

### Full-time

Of the three individuals working full-time:

- Two individuals working full-time were female and one was male.
- One individual was between 25 and 34 years of age and two individuals was between 35 and 64.

- One individual was from Androscoggin, one from Sagadahoc and the other individual was from York County.
- Two individuals reported that his/her job fell in the category of Healthcare and one individual reported that his/her employment was a Professional Service.
- One individual reported that his/her wage was between \$9.50 and \$11.99 one reported his/her wage at \$15.24 and \$19.24 per hour and the remaining individual reported his/her wage at \$19.25 or more per hour.

## In My Words

<p><b>Positive work history based on individual choice promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health</b></p>
---

*“Please describe your present job”*

### **Part-time**

#### Working with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, or Elders

- Four individuals reported that his/her duties included supports and services to individuals in a person’s private home, daycare setting or nursing home facility
- Of those 4 individuals
  - One works 11-20 hours per week
  - Two work 21-30 hours per week
  - One works more than 30 hours per week
- The four individuals have been working at their position between three and 10 years
- Of the four individuals
  - One individuals secured their position with the support of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - One had volunteered prior to being hired
  - One had experience and certification
  - One gained employment through an informal network

#### Cleaning/Janitorial

- A total of four individuals reported that their responsibilities included dusting, cleaning and mopping
- Of those four individuals
  - Three work less than 10 hours per week
  - One works 21-30 hours per week
- The four individuals have been working at their position between one and ten year
- Of the four individuals, all reported that Vocational Rehabilitation Services assisted in their employment

#### Other

- One person reported that s/he works in a restaurant setting and has been employed between three and five years. The individual currently works more than thirty hours per week and had the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation Service in gaining employment.
- One person reported working in a retail setting and has been working at that job between three and five years. S/he currently works 21-30 hours and had the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in gaining employment.

- One person reported working as a general laborer and has been employed in that position between one and two years. S/he works less than 10 hours per week and had the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in locating the job.
- One person reported working as an office support person and has been employed in that position between three and five years. S/he works less than 10 hours per week and volunteered in that position before being hired.
- One person reported being self-employed as a fashion and jewelry designer. S/he has been self employed more than 10 years and works a varied schedule.

### **Full-time**

- One person works as a special education teacher in a public school. S/he has worked there for five years and obtained the job by submitting a resume. S/he has a bachelor's degree and has vocational rehabilitation/long-term employment services.
- One person works with individuals with special needs. S/he obtained the job by jobsinme.com and has worked in the position for 2 years (mostly part-time, only two months in full-time). Previously to full-time s/he worked part-time within the same agency. S/he has a college degree and has the support of vocational rehabilitation/long-term employment services.
- One person works with patients and nursing staff to coordinate patient discharges at a skilled nursing facility. S/he found out about the job from a former supervisor and has been employed in her current position since Fall of 2009. Previous s/he had worked in a different skilled nursing facility. S/he has attended college and has the support of vocational rehabilitation/long-term employment services.

### **“Tell us about your work experiences before this (current) job”**

#### **Part-time**

Individuals reported a variety of jobs for past work history.

- Three individuals providing supports to individuals in their home, daycare or nursing home facility field have had a history of working with children or geriatric population.
  - One individual was certified as a Certified Nursing Assistance early in his/her work history and has consistently worked in the field
  - One individual's first job was as assistance in a home-based child care facility and has also worked consistently in the field.
- Seven individuals reported that his/her first work experience was working with a parent or as part of a family business.
  - One individual began “cleaning houses with mom.” Also cleaned, painted and washed windows at an elementary school. “Found this job with parents help”
- Two individuals reported that his/her first job was in newspaper delivery or selling comic books.
- Most individuals viewed their challenges and successes in work as a means to discover what they liked or didn't like about the job responsibilities or job environment.
  - Having jobs with difficult supervisors, lack of supervision, or too much supervision

- “didn’t like my boss, gave me too much work. I told him off and quit”
  - Two individuals were laid off from a paper mill
  - Having jobs not supported by family members
    - One person obtained work as a dishwasher “my mom insulted me about the job, she didn’t like it, dirty work.”
  - Having difficult work schedules
  - Transportation challenges
    - ‘employer considered him “unreliable” because he had trouble getting to work’
  - Two people reported an interrupted work history due to mental health symptoms
    - One person reported leaving his/her position after 14 years because of a diagnosis of Schizophrenia.
    - One person reported working full-time for one-half years when his/her mom died, “I got depressed and then went part-time.”
  - One individual had a career in the fashion industry and decided to become self-employed as a fashion designer after his/her mental health diagnosis
  - Two individuals spoke about their job history and substance abuse recovery as one journey
    - ‘challenges were “growing up”’
- Individuals reported finding work through different sources
  - Three positions were located through the assistance of an employment specialist or Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Five positions were obtained through informal networks or cold calling i.e. family, “Help” sign in the window, want ads
  - Two positions were obtained by volunteering in a non-paid position prior to being hired.

### **Full-time**

- One person worked part-time at a daycare s/he found through an ad in the newspaper. Worked in the library at college through a work study program.
- One person started working by delivering newspapers and then worked at two factory positions prior to completing a BA program in college.
- One person started volunteering in a Family Violence Project during his/her last year of college.

### ***“Tell us how you originally became interested in working”***

#### **Part-time**

- Three individuals reported wanting to work for financial reasons
  - “I had to pay bills”
  - “Extra spending money”
  - “To make a living”
- Three individuals indicated that the desire to work was encouraged from family
  - “Work ethic came from dad”
  - “I was expected to work”

- “It was a family business”
- One person said that working keeps him/her “from being depressed.”
- Three people reported
  - “It gives me something to do besides stay home.”
  - “Something to do.”
  - “To occupy my time and keep me involved in the community.”
- The individual self-employed said that s/he had always “studied the Sears Roebuck catalog to think and study the designs.”

**Full-time**

- One person said that “I was always encouraged to work.”
- One person reported that “To have a buck in my pocket, my father probably pushed it, saving for college.”
- One person said “I feel useful to the community. It helps me give back to the community what was so freely given to me.”

## The management of an individual's mental health promotes full-time employment

### *“What are some challenges about working?”*

#### **Part-time**

- Eight individuals reported that their challenges were work related
  - Three find support in the supervisor or co-workers
    - One person reported that “getting used to the register” was a challenge. When s/he can not work something out, s/he will call the Manager.
  - One finds support in their faith
  - One finds support by listening to music at the job
  - Three find support in “doing the best I can”
- One person reported that his/her challenge was coping with traffic and other drivers and finds support in his/her informal system
- Four individuals reported challenges with their medication or mental health symptoms
  - Two find support in a formal relationship with his/her therapist or employment specialist
  - One person reported having panic attacks but finds support in his/her “faith in God.”
  - One person reporting “doing the best I can”
  - “Pills make me drowsy, have had to reduce hours to current.”

#### **Full-time**

- Individuals reported that their challenges related to situations at work
  - One said that s/he “needed to write tasks down so s/he doesn't forget”
    - Finds support by taking breaks to relax.
  - One said that “juggling schedules” is difficult
    - S/he said that taking a deep breath and stepping back helps him/her.
  - One person said that “it can be overwhelming. Social piece to talk to people”
    - S/he said that the “employment specialist has been helpful. Exercise and sleep helps”

***“Tell us how you have been able to deal with the challenges of working”  
(Who, such as...to help deal with stress)***

**Part-time**

- Five individuals reported four types of support
- Two individuals reported two types of support
- Six did not report any supports
- One person reported that his/her manager “kept his/her job when the individual was in jail for one month.”
- “Supervisor helps me with stuff”
- “Psychologist is helpful...do the best you can”
- One person reported that his/her ICM worker “helped with Medicaid and doctor appointments.”
- “My boss at the nursing home helps...jokes around a lot.”
- “Friend good to talk to, it is uplifting.”

<b>Types of Supports</b>	<b>Count of Individuals Reporting</b>
Family	5
Supervisor/Co-Worker	6
Support Group	2
Formal Mental Health Supports	7
Employment Support	4

**Full-Time**

- All three individuals working full-time indicated several types of support
- “We go out. Girlfriends. Visit foster grandmother. Family Support System”
- “Long-term supports help me make tough decisions.”
- “I have a supportive psychiatric doctor - I take my medications as directed”
- My supervisor is very supportive by keeping the team updated - offering help during busy times”

<b>Types of Supports</b>	<b>Count of Individuals Reporting</b>
Family	3
Supervisor/Co-Worker	3
Support Group	2
Formal Mental Health Supports	3
Employment Support	3

Benefits counseling promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health.
---

*Have you ever received (including now):*

	<b>Part-Time</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>
Sample Size	13	2
SSI	4	0
SSDI	8	1
MaineCare	12	2
Other	8	1
Employer Med	1	1
Employer Dental	2	1
Employer Vacation	5	1
Employer Sick	4	1
Employer Retirement	1	1

- Of the part-time individuals, eight (8) of the thirteen (13) reported talking to someone regarding benefits.
  - Five out of eight reported talking to someone about how work impacts benefits from Maine Medical Center. All five reported that the counseling was helpful.
  - One reported receiving benefits information from DHHS.
  - One received benefits information form Ticket to Work.
  - One that they figured it out themselves.
- Of the full-time persons:
  - One reported receiving benefits information from vocational rehabilitation/long-term employment services.
  - One reported that his/her family helped in learning it themselves and also worked with Maine Career Center.
  - One person reported talking with vocational rehabilitation/long-term employment specialist.
- All individuals reported that the benefits information was helpful.

***For part-time: “Would you like to work full-time?”***

- Of the twelve part-time individuals (13<sup>th</sup> is self-employed)
  - Three reported that they would like to work more hours
  - Nine reported that they do not want to work more hours
    - One individual was in school working towards a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology
    - One individual said that s/he did not want to lose social security benefits
    - Six reported that s/he would find it too stressful to work full time
      - “Feel I would get overwhelmed with more work”
      - “I often get tired in the afternoon and would find it more difficult working more hours.”
      - “Not barely able to work the hours I have now.”
      - “It would stress me out.”
    - One person said that s/he was already working enough

**Full-time competitive employment promotes an improved attitude to view oneself  
“as a person with an illness rather than the illness being the person.”**

*“Tell us what you wish you could do for work.”*

**Part-time**

Most individuals had goals for his/her employment

- “I would like to be a case manager”
- “Work with fire alarm systems or residential electric work”
- “I wish I could be a dietician/nutritionist”
- “Help out in an archive”
- “Currently working towards a Bachelors Degree”
- “I like janitorial”
- “Working with kids”
- “Education, learning different things in school. Neurology and Nursing”

Only two individuals listed barriers to their goals.

- Money to support additional schooling
- Difficulty with subject matter

**Full-time**

- One individual had a goal to be a librarian but did not want to pursue further schooling. S/he said that she was “sick” of school.
- One individual would like to pursue a grant to assist elderly individuals access the community. “So many elderly feel stuck in their community.”
- One individual said “learning and being able to teach people.”

*“Would you tell us about how work has made a difference in your life”*

**Part-time**

- Five individuals working part-time said that the finances were important.
  - “I own my own car. The money helps pay our bills.”
  - “Pays the bills”
- Six individuals said that it helps with his/her confidence.
  - “Make me feel useful and involved”
  - “I feel important doing something useful”
  - “It is important to work, I’ve accomplished something.”
- One person said that it helps in his/her recovery.
  - “Have car, can see my grandkids, help me use my time better, keeps me from drinking.”
- Two people said that it helps in connecting with people.
  - “Made friends.”
  - “Get out of the house, goal, socialize, self-worth.”

**Full-time**

- Individuals said that working full-time is good financially and provided confidence.
  - “I don’t want to depend on someone”
  - “Gives a focus, a schedule”
  - “I have become more confident”

## What Evaluators Heard

As mentioned earlier, the number of individuals participating in the Competitive Employment Interview is small, therefore, it was not expected that statistical analysis could determine what next steps would evolve in this multi-year evaluation. Adaptations in methodology and the interview questions are best learned from the individual voice; and those words heard or read by evaluators.

- Evaluators reported that the rapport established with individuals during the interview was important in creating a comfortable and welcoming environment for those individuals choosing to participate in face-to-face or telephone interviews. Direct interviews allowed evaluators to hear responses from participants and provide prompts that could clarify or follow-up on participant thoughts or experiences. Although written surveys included prompts in the written survey, often responses were not clarified or followed-up by individuals completing the survey. In addition, written surveys did not allow participants to clarify a question when misunderstood.
- Evaluators participating in direct interviews found that people wanted to tell their story.
- Evaluators reported that people often paused when asked his/her purpose in working. Responses focused on financial and social, however, responses did not focus on an individual's career development or future employment. Evaluators' were not sure how to interpret the responses and are considering if the lack of purpose is a mental health related experience or one of socio-economics and poverty.
- Interview questions should be more strength based and focus on how individuals work and manage their lives. Evaluators found that people want to share their successes. People were focused on how they approach work, therefore, evaluators recommend questions that collect challenges within the individual's story of overcoming the barriers.
- Interview questions focused too much on external supports and suggest questions that focus on the individual characteristics. Evaluators heard individuals talking about their internal drive, motivation and work ethic. This was presented as a strong characteristic for many of the individuals interviewed.
- Evaluators suggested that more positively reinforcing statements might have assisted in setting the context for individuals.

## Next Steps

As mentioned earlier, the number of individuals participating in the Competitive Employment Interviews is small, therefore, statistical analysis cannot determine what differences or similarities exist between those individuals competitively employed full-time vs. part-time. Emphasis on the individual voice and evaluator experience can best support next steps in a multi-year evaluation.

## *Hypothesis*

Areas of focus for this evaluation included:

- Positive work history based on individual choice promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health.
- Benefits counseling promotes full-time competitive employment for individuals with mental health.
- The management of an individual's mental health promotes full-time competitive employment.
- Full-time competitive employment promotes an improved attitude to view oneself "as a person with an illness rather than the illness being the person."

**Recommendation:** It is suggested that next steps focus on areas to better understand how individuals obtain and maintain full-time employment. Evaluators stressed the stories of internal drive, and motivation for individual's working. Therefore it is recommended that the scope of the interview tools be narrowed to better assess the following areas:

- The management of an individual's mental health promotes full-time competitive employment.
- Attitude to view oneself "as a person with an illness rather than the illness being the person" promotes full-time competitive employment.

## *Methodology*

The Competitive Employment Interview allowed individuals to participate in the interview in a face-to-face interview, telephone interview or in writing.

**Recommendation:** It is suggested that future interviews are conducted by face-to-face or telephone interviews only. Direct interviews allowed evaluators to develop a rapport with individuals and to hear responses from participants to provide prompts that could clarify or follow-up on participant thoughts or experiences. Although written surveys included prompts in the written survey, often responses were not clarified or followed-up by individuals completing the survey. In addition, written surveys did not allow participants to clarify a question when misunderstood.

## *Interview Tool*

Evaluators perceived that individuals were eager to tell their story and talk about their successes. Evaluators also learned that motivation and internal factors were often referenced by individuals.

**Recommendation:** Revise questions to better gauge what works means to people

- Is working important to you?
- Why/why not or how so?

Evaluators suggest that a strength-based interview tool could best collect individual experiences on how individuals manage their lives while working. More than half of the individuals working part-time did not want to increase his/her hours due to concerns of stress and symptomatology.

**Recommendation:** Instead of focusing on why individual's are not working full-time, can the tool better collect information to assess what motivator's bring people into full-time competitive employment despite fears of stress and symptomatology.

- How is it that you are able to work part-time /full-time when some other people who have a mental illness, do not work?
- Have there been times it has been difficult to work? Did you ever take a break? If yes, how did you get back into working? What helped?
- Why did you go back to work? How did you?
- What advice would you give about obtaining and maintaining employment to other individuals with mental illness?

## Attachment A

### Methodology

#### *Population*

DHHS Office of Adult Mental Health Services (OAMHS) selected individuals receiving DHHS Long Term Vocational Support Services (LTVS) and competitively employed between the dates of April 1, 2009, to June 15, 2009. Individuals were employed full-time or part-time. Full-time employment was defined as at least 32 hours per week, and part-time employment was defined as less than 32 hours per week.

#### *Recruitment*

DHHS Office of Quality Improvement Services (OQIS) mailed recruitment letters to 143 eligible participants. Twenty-three of the 143 individuals were receiving LTVS services and working full-time. The remaining 123 individuals were receiving LTVS and working part-time. The letters explained the purpose of the employment interview, asked for volunteers, and provided a consent form. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were included in the mailing. OQIS also mailed a letter endorsing the project from the Consumer Council of Maine.

In an effort to inform Community Rehabilitation Providers of the study and the recruitment process, OQIS sent a copy of the recruitment letters to OAMHS Regional Team Leaders and The Bureau of Rehabilitation, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

Individuals were asked to submit consent forms authorizing follow-up contact to OQIS. The authorization form, located on the back of the recruitment letter, identified:

- type of interview (telephone, face-to-face or written)
- name
- telephone number
- best day/time of week to contact
- permission for a Muskie School of Public Services representative to contact them to arrange an employment interview

The form sent to individuals competitively employed full-time included the information listed above and the following additional information:

- face-to-face interview
- preferred interview location
- permission to, or not to, audio tape the interview

#### *Settings*

##### Full-time

Participants employed full-time determined the interview setting. Specific locations included a person's home and a local Career Center conference room.

### Part-time

Participants employed part-time were interviewed over the telephone by an interviewing team or provided a survey to respond by mail.

### ***Arranging the interviews***

Muskie School staff contacted all respondents by telephone. Each person was reminded of the employment interview letter sent to them by OAMHS and asked if they wanted to participate. Respondents who were no longer working or did not want to participate in the employment interview were thanked, and mailed a \$10 Wal-Mart Gift Card.

Respondents who agreed to participate in the employment interviews stayed on the telephone while Muskie School staff reviewed the USM Employment Interview Consent form and answered any questions. Respondents were asked if they wanted the interview questions and the USM consent form mailed to them prior the interview and all said yes. After the telephone call, a letter was sent to each participant outlining the date and time of the interviews, the office contact information of the Muskie School interviewer, a \$10 Wal-Mart Gift Card, the interview questions and the USM consent form.

### Full-time

The letter to the individuals working full-time also confirmed the location of the interview.

### Part-time

Individuals working part-time were informed that the interviews would be conducted over the telephone and by an interviewing team. The team included the Muskie School staff they were talking with, and a representative from the DHHS Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA). The USM Employment Interview Consent: Telephone form included information about the interviewing team.

### ***The Competitive Employment Interview***

Interview questions were predetermined and sent in advance to all participants. Probes, follow-up questions, reflective comments and empathic statements were used to encourage participants to continue, clarify, and elaborate.

The interviewer(s) were prepared to inquire about support systems, refer to local resources, and/or stop the interview if requested or necessary.

All participants acknowledged receipt of the letter, the USM Employment Interview Consent Form, interview questions, and the \$10 Wal-Mart Gift Card. The USM Employment Interview Consent form was reviewed at the beginning of each interview.

### Face-to face

The two face-to-face interviews were “pilots” with the intent of learning how well the interview questions were phrased. Interviewees were asked, and agreed to provide feedback on the interview questions. They also agreed to answer any new questions at a later date, if any new ones were added. Both of the two interviewees provided feedback on the interview questions.

The first interviewee suggested adding a new question in order to obtain more information and depth. This question was added to the survey after OQIS and the USM Internal Review Board approved adding the new question. The question was added as sub- question to question # 5 as:

- How have these opportunities shaped your view of yourself?

This sub- question was added after the very first interview.

The second interviewee also provided feedback on the interview questions. They suggested revising the newly added sub-question because it tapped into “core” issues and might create defensiveness. The question remained on the survey in order to assess whether to remove, revise, or retain the question in the future.

### Telephone

The telephone interviews consisted of an interviewing team comprised of a lead interviewer from the Muskie School, USM and a representative from the OCA. The team approach was utilized to increase inter-rater reliability, to increase confidence, improve consistency, and minimize subjectivity. The team determined in advance they would conduct interviews only if both interviewers were present. If for some reason one interviewer could not make a scheduled employment interview, the interview would be postponed. This occurred on one occasion and was successfully rescheduled.

The interviewing team met in a conference room at the Muskie School, USM Capitol Center office. Using a speakerphone, The Muskie School staff contacted the interviewee and introduced the representative from OCA. Before beginning the interview, all respondents indicated they received the letter, USM Employment Interview Consent, the interview questions and the \$10 Walmart Gift Card. The USM Employment Interview Consent form was briefly reviewed before asking the interview questions.

The interview questions were the same questions used with the face-to-face interviews with one exception: individuals working part-time were also asked about full-time employment. Please refer to Attachment B to review the interview questions.

The Muskie and OCA representative worked as a team during the telephone interview. The Muskie, USM interviewer asked the core questions. The OCA representative followed up with probing or clarifying questions while recording notes on the data coding form.

After the interviews, the interviewing team met, reviewed and summarized the notes, and then met again to review the summaries.

## **Provisions for subject and data confidentiality**

### Face-to-face

During the interview, the interviewer took notes and on one occasion, used an audio digital recorder, to record respondent’s answers. After the interview, the Muskie School interviewer copied the audio recording to an encrypted memory stick, known as “Iron Key” and immediately destroyed the data on the recorder. The interviewer transcribed the interview from the Iron Key

and recorded it on the data coding form. The Iron Key and all data coding forms were stored in a secure file cabinet at the Capitol Center office of the Muskie School, USM.

Telephone

All of the telephone interviews, note-taking, summary development and review of the notes and summaries occurred at the Muskie, USM Capitol Center office. The data coding forms and interview summaries were stored in a secured file cabinet at the Capitol Center office of the Muskie School, USM.

All of the employment interview data will be destroyed within fourteen days of completing the final report.

## Attachment B

### Employment Interview Questions

The core interview questions are listed below.  
Follow-up questions may be asked to clarify, describe and explain responses.

- 1. Please describe your present job.**
    - If you are working part-time, would you like to work more hours?
  - 2. Tell us/me about your work experiences before this job?**
  - 3. Tell us/me how you originally became interested in working?**
  - 4. Tell us/me how you have been able to deal with the challenges of working?**
  - 5. Would you tell us/me about how work has made a difference in your life?**
    - How have these opportunities shaped your view of yourself?
  - 6. Tell us/me what you wish you could do for work**
  - 7. Now we/I want to talk to you about Benefits:**
    - A) Have you ever (including now) received:
      - SSI
      - SSDI
      - Maine Care or
      - Other medical insurance
    - B) Employer benefits such as:
      - medical/health
      - dental
      - vacation
      - sick
      - retirement benefits
      - life insurance
      - other
    - C) Have you ever talked to someone about how working may impact your benefits?
- 8. Is there anything else you want to tell us/me about your employment experiences?**

Please tell us/me about yourself below:

Gender	Age Range	County of Residency	Job Category	Hourly Wage Range	Self Employed
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and over	<input type="checkbox"/> Androscoggin <input type="checkbox"/> Aroostook <input type="checkbox"/> Cumberland <input type="checkbox"/> Franklin <input type="checkbox"/> Hancock <input type="checkbox"/> Kennebec <input type="checkbox"/> Knox <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln <input type="checkbox"/> Oxford <input type="checkbox"/> Penobscot <input type="checkbox"/> Piscataquis <input type="checkbox"/> Sagadahoc <input type="checkbox"/> Somerset <input type="checkbox"/> Waldo <input type="checkbox"/> Washington <input type="checkbox"/> York	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service <input type="checkbox"/> General Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality (Hotel) <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Services <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant (Food Service) <input type="checkbox"/> Retail / Sales	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 7.24 or less <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 7.25 - \$ 9.49 <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 9.50 - \$11.99 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12.00 - \$15.24 <input type="checkbox"/> \$15.24 - \$19.24 <input type="checkbox"/> \$19.25 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Thank you for taking part in these interview questions. It is greatly appreciated.**

## Attachment C

### Employment Interview Data Coding Form

The interviews are intended to be open ended. Each interviewee will be asked the core questions. Probes and follow-up questions will be used to encourage participants to continue, to clarify, to elaborate, and to stay on topic. Anticipated probes and follow-up questions are listed below each core question. Probes may vary depending on the response.

#### 1. Please describe your present job:

What do you do (duties/responsibilities)?

- How long you have been there?
- How did you find/choose it?
  - Did anyone help you?
  - Who?
  - How?
- What do you like about it?
  - Can you give us examples?
- What are some challenges about working? (things that make it hard or difficult )
  - Can you give us examples?
- How do you get through the challenging times?
- How many hours do you work (full or part-time)

#### 1a. If working part-time:

Would you like to work more hours?

- If yes, what would need to work full-time?
- If no, why not?

#### 2. Tell us about your work experiences before this job?

(For each job...)

- What did you do (duties/responsibilities)?

- How long were you there?
- How did you find/choose it?
  - Did anyone help you?
  - Who?
- How many hours did you work (full or part-time)?
- What did you like about it?
  - Can you give us examples?
- What were some challenges?
  - Can you give us examples?
  - Transportation related challenges?
  - Social Security related challenges?
- Why did you leave?

**3. Tell us how you originally became interested in working?**  
(Why you wanted to work)

- Can you give me examples/ tell me more?
- How so?

**4. Tell us how you have been able to deal with the challenges of working?**  
(Supports; activities, interests help you to deal with stress?)

- Who, such as :
  - Family /friends
  - Co-worker/Supervisor/Employer
  - Support Groups
  - Mental Health Services/supports
  - Employment Supports
  - Community Work Incentives Coordinators, or CWICs, formerly known as “benefits specialists”
- What else helps?

**5. Would you tell us about how work has made a difference in your life?**

- Financially?
- Confidence?
- What else?
- Can you give me examples?
- How so?

**5a. How have all these opportunities (jobs) shaped your view of yourself?**

**6. Tell us what you wish you could do for work?**

- Can you give me examples?
- Tell me more?
- Have you ever talked to anyone about this?
- Why/why not?
- What do you think you would need to happen for you to be able to?
  - Training?
  - Education?

**7. Now we want to talk to you about Benefits:**

- Have you ever (including now) received...?
  - \_\_\_ SSI
  - \_\_\_ SSDI
  - \_\_\_ Maine Care or
  - \_\_\_ Other medical insurance
- Employer benefits such as:
  - \_\_\_ medical/health
  - \_\_\_ dental
  - \_\_\_ vacation
  - \_\_\_ sick
  - \_\_\_ retirement benefits

\_\_\_ life insurance  
 \_\_\_ other

- Have you ever talked to someone about how working may impact your benefits?
  - Who: \_\_\_\_\_ (relationship to you)
  - (If through an agency, organization) Where do they work? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Were they helpful? How?

**8. Is there anything else you want to tell us about your employment experiences?**

**Please tell us about yourself below.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>County of Residency</b>	<b>Job Category</b>	<b>Hourly Wage Range</b>	<b>Self Employed</b>
___ Male	___ 19-24	___ Androscoggin	___ Customer Service	___ \$ 7.24 or less	___ Yes
___ Female	___ 25-34	___ Aroostook	___ General Labor	___ \$ 7.25 - \$ 9.49	___ No
	___ 35-64	___ Cumberland	___ Grocery	___ \$ 9.50 - \$11.99	
	___ 65 and over	___ Franklin	___ Hospitality (Hotel)	___ \$12.00 - \$15.24	
		___ Hancock	___ Health Care	___ \$15.24 - \$19.24	
		___ Kennebec	___ Professional Services	___ \$19.25 or more	
		___ Knox	___ Restaurant (Food Service)		
		___ Lincoln	___ Retail / Sales		
		___ Oxford			
		___ Penobscot			
		___ Piscataquis			
		___ Sagadahoc			
		___ Somerset			
		___ Waldo			
		___ Washington			
		___ York			

**Thank you for taking part in these interview questions. It is greatly appreciated.**



*John E. Baldacci, Governor*

*Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner*

## Caring..Responsive..Well-Managed..We are DHHS

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Maine Human Rights Act. Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS's ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator, State House Station #11, Augusta, Maine 04333, (207) 287-4289 (V), (207) 287-2000 (TTY). Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in program and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator.