



SESSION 5: Employment

OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize clients with employment opportunities in the United States.
2. To give an overview of how to look for employment.
3. To give an overview of employer expectations and employee rights.
4. To give an understanding of the clients' paycheck and tax deductions.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Flipchart

Markers

Workplace values exercise "What are your Skills?" (attachment 10)

"Sample Resume" (attachment 11)

"Sample Job Application" (attachment 12)

"Sample W-4" (attachment 13)

"Sample Paycheck Stub" (attachment 14)

"Sample W-2" (attachment 15)

The Way to Work video, Refugee Works (order form, attachment 16)

HOW TO DO IT

DISCUSSION

- Discuss, using the following questions:
What type of work did you do in Somali/Kenya?
How did you find work in Somalia/Kenya?
What are causes of unemployment in Somali/Kenya?
What do you see as possible causes of unemployment in the United States?
What type of work would you like to do in the United States immediately/in 10 years/in 20 years?

OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

- Discuss the wide variety of employment opportunities in the United States; identify different fields of employment (i.e. agriculture, education, customer service, law). Give an overview of any local industries that may provide employment opportunities.

- Discuss starting level positions. When refugees enter the United States, often they must take employment outside of their chosen profession; sometimes farmers work as dishwashers, lawyers as maids, until they can build their skills or assets to move to their chosen field.

HOW TO FIND EMPLOYMENT

- Discuss where to access job listings, for example, local newspapers, the Internet, employment offices.
- Review the following interviewing tips:

Practice/role play prior to the interview

Be on time

Dress professionally

Make eye contact with the interviewer

Smile and show enthusiasm

Bring government/state-issued identification

Bring a resume

- Ask clients to identify marketable skills (attachment 10). (optional)
- Create a resume for the client, using the sample resume (attachment 11). (optional)
- Familiarize client with a job application, using sample job application (attachment 12). If client is able to write in English, have the client practice filling out the information. (optional)

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

- Discuss employer expectations in the United States. Review the following:

Be on time

When on break, watch the time: Minimum break requirement vary from state to state – know what breaks the employer permits, and follow the guidelines.

Follow the dress code: In some situations, for safety reasons, women may have to wear a shorter veil tied back. Some businesses require that employees wear uniforms.

Follow safety and company rules: Know the rules and follow them.

Respect your supervisor and other employees: Businesses often have a diverse range of employees – the law considers men and women of all ethnicities and religions to be equal. It is important to respect both supervisors and colleagues.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- Discuss employee rights in the United States. Laws regulating the employer/employee relationship vary from state to state. Familiarize yourself with the laws in your state, and discuss with your clients – specifically the following:

Protection from discrimination: most states have laws and regulations created by state legislatures prohibiting hiring and dismissal based on discrimination, including based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age, and disability.

Compensation: discuss state minimum wage, overtime and comp time, tips, vacation pay, and sick leave (including injury and workman's comp policies). Review what compensation is mandatory, and what benefits may vary from workplace to workplace. Also, explain the importance of understanding individual company policies.

HOW TO MOVE UP IN THE JOB FIELD

- Ask clients to identify barriers to satisfactory employment – barriers may include lack of education, work experience, certification, and knowledge of the English language.
- Develop possible strategies to overcome these barriers. Review the following strategies:

Learning English: Knowing English will greatly expand employment options.

Education: In the United States, adult education is quite common. Having a GED or college degree will greatly expand employment options.

Work hard: Work hard, regardless of whether the client likes your present job. Doing good work may result in a salary increase or a promotion, and a letter of recommendation may be a valuable tool.

PAYCHECK

- Discuss wages. The employer will determine the client's pay period – it is common for employers to write a check to their employees on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis.

TAXES

- Discuss taxes – the government requires all residents of the United States to contribute money – in turn, the government uses this money to provide services to residents.
- Use the sample W-4 form (attachment 13) and the sample paycheck stub (attachment 14) to review the following topics:

W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate: When you accept a job, the employer will ask that you fill out Form W-4, The Federal Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate. This form tells the employer how much federal income tax to withhold from the employee's wages. It is important to fill this form out properly in order to avoid having to pay out money when it is time to file taxes.

Paycheck deductions: Deductions from the paycheck will include:

Federal withholdings
 State withholdings
 Social Security and Medicare
 Benefits and health insurance premiums (if applicable)

Income tax: All residents of the United States have to file federal, state, and local taxes every year by April 15th. Explain to your clients the importance of saving the W-2 forms (attachment 15) that will come in the mail. Clients may be eligible to receive assistance in filing their taxes – they may also be eligible to receive tax credits based on income, number of children.

NOTE to CO Facilitator

Filing taxes can be a confusing procedure for new arrivals. You may wish to research the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), as well as other tax credits that may save your clients money. You may wish to research and connect your clients with tax assistance services – such programs as the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which provides free tax help to low income (under \$35,000) individuals, and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program which provides free tax help to people 60 and over. Call 1-800-829-1040 to locate local VITA and TCE sites.

Video

- Watch *The Way to Work* (*The Way to Work* order form, attachment 16) (optional)