

# The Blurb

Blurb 32:

## **Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, Part I: What is Pathways to Self-Sufficiency?**

### **Brand New Tools, Brand New Focus**

As many of you are already aware, Welfare Reform is underway and significant changes have been occurring in the TAFDC program. So, what's up next you ask? **Pathways to Self-Sufficiency!**

In a nutshell, Pathways to Self-Sufficiency is an initial and ongoing assessment tool designed to better identify a clients' strengths and employment challenges, and to help our clients move toward economic self-sufficiency.

Over the next few weeks you're going to be exposed to a lot of new information about Pathways. So, before you go to your classroom training, read your training materials, and anxiously anticipate future *Blurbs*, let's look at some of the major elements of Pathways:

1. An easier method of identifying where a client's workplace skills are strongest and where challenges may be preventing them reaching economic self-sufficiency
2. Strengthened referral procedures to help connect clients to the appropriate ESP activities and refer them to the appropriate agencies and / or DTA specialists
3. A new focus on helping exempt ESP eligible clients work to minimize their barriers to economic self-sufficiency in order to improve their family's overall quality of life.

Over the course of the next few weeks, there are going to be several comprehensive trainings and reference materials that will introduce you to Pathways to Self-Sufficiency.

As classroom trainings and TAO visits are occurring, *The Blurb* is going to help reinforce training by featuring some of the major aspects of these new program changes. So keep your eyes peeled for more *Blurbs* to stay up-to-date!

# The Blurb

Blurb 33:  
**Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, Part II: PSS Assessment**

## What is the “PSS Assessment”?

The answer to that question is actually simpler than you think! Since the Pathways workflow is really just a more robust version of the ESP Services workflow you’re accustomed to using, you can think of the PSS Assessment as a more in-depth, and personalized ESP assessment.

Once the TAFDC case is approved, clients who are subject to the TAFDC Work Program Requirement or who are volunteering in a work activity must have a PSS Assessment completed. The new PSS Appointment letter will be used to invite clients to complete the full assessment.

The PSS Assessment is designed to help capture details about your client’s strengths, the barriers that may be preventing them from achieving self-sufficiency, their cooperation, and your client’s progress in obtaining employment.

Over the next few *Blurbs*, we’re going to look a little deeper into the PSS Assessment.

# The Blurb

Blurb 34:

## Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, Part III: PSS Assessment - Strengths

### How is the PSS Assessment going to identify strengths?

The PSS Assessment is a cooperative effort between you and your client. As a case manager, you are the one facilitating the PSS Assessment, but the tool itself requires your client to participate in identifying their challenges and strengths.

Through a series of questions, the assessment will help identify and capture your client's self-identified strengths. For example, some strength-based questions pertain to the client's:

- Social network
- Computer skills/technical training/certificate(s)
- Multi-lingual abilities
- Work experience
- Verbal/written communication abilities
- Organization skills

Depending on how your client answers, you will capture additional information (eg: recording *what* additional language the client speaks when they answer 'yes' to the multi-lingual question).

**This will identify the types of ESP activities that may be best for your client and provide DTA with vital data to identify service needs for the Department and our clients (such as CIES program types).**

# The Blurb

Blurb 35:

## Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, Part IV: PSS Assessment - Challenges

### How is the PSS Assessment going to identify challenges?

During the PSS Assessment we are not only identifying a client's strengths, but potential challenges to economic self-sufficiency as well. Much like when we are focusing on strengths, the PSS Assessment questions that pertain to challenges rely on client self-identification. Some of the questions you will cover with your client relate to:

- A lack of locally available jobs that he or she is qualified for/lack of work experience
- Child care/transportation issues
- Homelessness
- Past or present substance abuse issues
- CORI/legal issues
- Limited English skills
- Lack of skills and training
- Someone causing problems so he or she cannot go to work/school/training?

Depending on how your client answers, you may have to capture additional information (such as explanations to certain 'no' answers or answering the "what are you doing to find housing?" question when your client answers 'yes' to the "Homelessness (are you homeless)?" question) and depending on the barrier, you will be able to supply further information and/or issue a **BEACON referral** to DPH, DMH / MassHealth, HCEC and Mass211.

# The Blurb

Blurb 36:  
**Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, Part V: PSS Assessment – Services and Referrals**

## **Services, Referrals, and Specialists**

The PSS Assessment captures information about what services the client has used in the previous year and any possible referrals that may need to be made.

In this section of the PSS Assessment, you will ask your client about what services they have used in the past year such as:

- Housing Assistance/EA
- Food Pantries
- Child care
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and/or Free Tax Prep
- Women and Infant Children (WIC)
- School Breakfast/Lunch Program
- Their One-Stop Career Center
- Fuel Assistance
- Domestic Violence Services

This section also asks about any referrals made to a DTA Specialist such as a CAC, SSS or DV Specialist.

The answers to all of the questions in the assessment will be used as a jumping off point for ongoing discussions to help the client reach economic self-sufficiency.

**The EDP that will be printed and signed at the end of the PSS Assessment has been redesigned to reflect these new questions and answers, so there will no longer be a need to complete a separate Transition Plan!!!**