

## Key Considerations for Program Structure

During consultations, employment providers also explained how they deliver programming. Based on their insights, the EMPower program adopted the following structure:

### Group Programming Paired with Individualized Case Management:

Program staff delivered the module training in a group setting, while scheduling weekly one-on-one appointments with each client to review program content (e.g., reviewing the clients resume) or to provide wraparound support as needed (e.g., assistance with finding housing).

This approach combines the advantages of both group and individual settings. Group sessions offer peer learning and create a supportive environment for clients to share their experiences, while individualized case management ensures that each client receives personalized support when needed.

### Modular Structure with Built-in Flexibility

A key takeaway from the consultations was the necessity for a modular structure to set participants up for success. The program was designed so that participants could complete the 8 modules independently, in any order. This flexible design accommodates unexpected interruptions (e.g., mental health crisis, housing instability, lack of childcare, etc.), ensuring that those who miss a session can continue the program without impeding their overall progress.

In practice, the pre-employment component of the program spanned 12 weeks, with only 8 weeks dedicated to training. The additional weeks provided participants with dedicated time to catch up on missed modules (which the staff would review with them one-on-one if needed) or to apply for job opportunities and complete any pending certifications. This structure allowed the participants to remain engaged and supported in the program while recognizing that life can present challenges.

### Hybrid Format for Accessibility

The program also utilized a hybrid format of in-person and online session to accommodate diverse learning needs and reduce any barriers to access such as transportation and childcare, which were identified as major barriers in other employment programs. Additionally, to enhance accessibility, computers were made available for participants who needed them for virtual sessions.

### Consistent Scheduling

Consistent scheduling, ideally five days a week, mimics workplace routine, helping participants develop essential skills for the workplace, such as time management. Those who were consistently late or absent without a valid reason were removed from the program.

