



Customized Self-Employment

Building on Dreams, Desires and Determination

A Project Funded by a Wisconsin DHS ARPA Grant

ODC's Mission:

Empowering people with disabilities to achieve their work and life goals

This project:

- Supports ODC's transformational journey to community employment
- Builds ODC's capacity to serve individuals interested in starting a business
- Expands employment options for people, including people with the most significant challenges
- Closes a gap – currently there are few providers offering customized self-employment in Wisconsin
- Addresses complexities in funding that can make the process challenging



CSE offers a unique avenue of empowerment to people with disabilities who face barriers to traditional employment. It can foster independence, flexibility and a sense of purpose.

*Self-employment is one of the **most customizable** employment strategies for employing people with disabilities. Self-employment is well **aligned with** current economic **trends in the US** – including the gig economy. It also offers vocational rehabilitation agencies a **creative and flexible** way to increase the employment of people with disabilities, including those categorized as having the most significant disabilities.*

- Joseph Joes, ED for the Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement at Drake University.

Why Customized Self-Employment is Underutilized

CSE is a viable employment strategy that is not new. It has been an option in Wisconsin for almost two decades.



- People don't know it's an option



- System complexity – an unclear or inconsistently applied funding model



- The myth that people have to “go it alone” and be able to perform all aspects of the business themselves



- Creating and launching a business plan can feel overwhelming

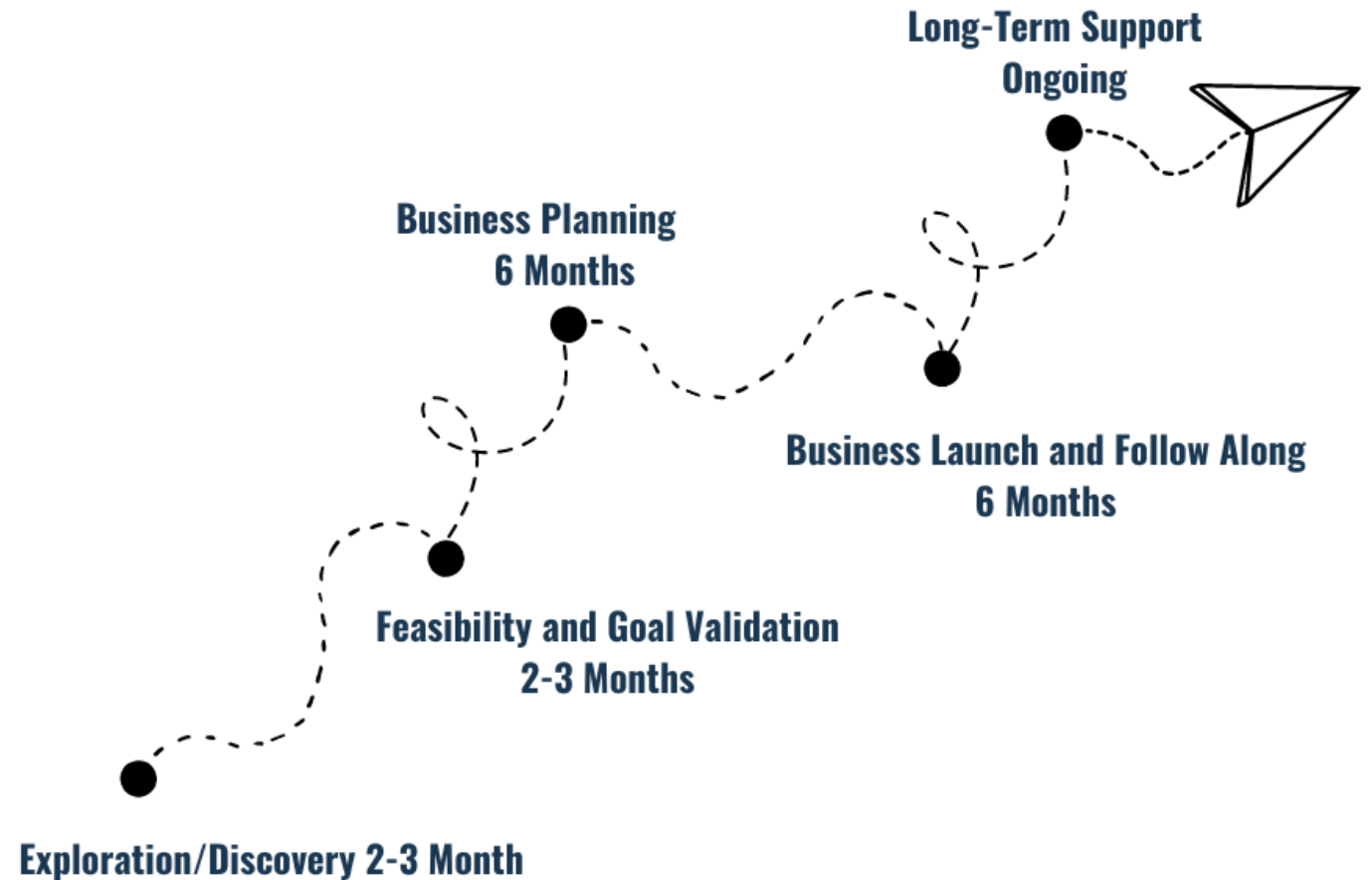


- Concern about the impact on benefits

CUSTOMIZED SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Individualized. Supported. Self-Directed.

The Path to Self-Employment



My name is Katie. I am from Central Wisconsin and have always had a passion for creating my own jewelry. In working with Opportunity Development Centers, I was given the opportunity to start my own small business. Katie's Korner is proud to offer a charming, hand-crafted selection of necklaces, bracelets and earrings for adults and children of all ages.

katie's
k^orner



I hope you enjoy your purchase.
Thank you for supporting my small
business!

Kathryn Hart



Jenni-fur's Pet Beds Plus

Hi, I am Jennifer.

I have a passion for fashion and love creating my own unique look. This creativity led me to discover my love for making beds & accessories for pets. Jenni-fur's Pet Beds Plus offers hand-made pet beds and bandanas that your pet will love.



Come in and
check out my
handmade items!
I am sure you will
love them
all!







MC MILL CREEK CUTLERY

Handmade Knives and Cutting Boards

Hunter Obst: 715-340-6802 Email: obsthunter@gmail.com



My name is Hunter Obst and I am 27 years old. I grew up in Stevens Point, Wisconsin where I attended SPASH. As a child, I enjoyed being outdoors and working with my hands. I also practice whip cracking and target practice with a bullwhip.

My grandfather made bowie knives and taught my father knife making skills. My Dad started showing me how to make homemade knives and I eventually learned other methods through online videos and books. I have excelled at these skills as a craftsman and I am now able to offer cutting boards to my line and sell my work.

I create cutting boards in multiple colors and styles and each one is unique. I hope you like them as much as I enjoyed making them!





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Public Speaking



Contact Information

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Opportunity Development Centers, Inc. (ODC) is a private, not-for-profit agency whose mission is “to empower people with disabilities to achieve their work and life goals.”