

GAIN: THE BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

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810 OVERVIEW

Vocational assessment is the process by which a professional assessor develops an individualized employment plan which leads a participant to employment based on the evaluation of the participant's existing skills, education level, employment interests and goals, vocational assessment test results and local labor market information. DPSS contracts with professional vocational assessors to provide required services to participants throughout the County. Vocational assessment takes place during the third week of the Orientation/Job Club/Vocational Assessment (JCO) activity or as a stand-alone activity after Appraisal or after JCO, if the participant did not complete assessment in JCO.

811 KEY POINTS

- The GN 6130, "Assessment Activity Agreement," is used when assigning participants to a vocational assessment and a post-employment career assessment.
- The GN 6014, "GAIN Vocational/Career Assessment Summary Employment Career Plan," includes the activities and services that will move the participant quickly into employment.
- A GAIN participant can participate in any GAIN-approved activity for the duration of his/her 48-month CalWORKs time limit.
- During Appraisal, or at any time a participant self-declares or there is a concern that a mental health, substance abuse situation exists, case management staff refer the participant to a clinical assessment.
- Participants who are employed part-time are referred to a vocational assessment and assigned to a concurrent activity to meet minimum weekly WtW participation hours. This rule also applies to a two-parent household in which both parents are working part-time but have not met the minimum WtW participation hours (i.e., both parents can be referred to vocational assessment).
- Participants who find unsubsidized full-time employment (32/35 or more hours per week) and request Post-Employment Services are referred for a career assessment.
- Vocational assessment is not required for an approved Self-Initiated Program (SIP), unless the case manager determines that a vocational assessment is necessary to assign the participant to concurrent activities to meet the minimum WtW participation hours.
- Vocational assessors will utilize screening tools to determine if a participant is in need of mental health, substance abuse or domestic violence services or treatment.

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812 POLICY

.1 Assessment Activities

Assessment activities should include the following:

- .11 Obtaining the participant's work history and evaluating his/her employment skills, knowledge, interests and ability through appropriate vocational testing.
- .12 Reviewing the participant's educational history and evaluating present educational competency level.
- .13 Discussing the participant's need for supportive services.
- .14 Identifying the participant's employment goal in the context of necessary skills and prevailing local labor market conditions.
- .15 Developing a mutually agreed upon employment plan and identifying the education, training, job search, work experience and supportive services needed to achieve the employment goal.
- .16 Determining the time that it will take to achieve the goal.
- .17 Evaluating the participant's physical limitations, mental conditions or any barriers, such as substance abuse or domestic violence, that limits the participant's ability for employment or participation in WtW activities.
- .18 Identifying the available resources to complete the Employment Plan.
- .19 Refer participants to vocational assessment as a stand-alone activity when appropriate as a stand-alone activity.

.2 Referral to Assessments

.21 Vocational Assessments

Referral to a vocational assessment is appropriate under the following conditions:

.211 Orientation/Job Club/Assessment (JCO)

When unsubsidized employment is not found within the first three weeks of JCO, the participant is referred to a vocational assessment at the end of the third week. Vocational assessment is completed at the beginning of the fourth week. However, the participant must continue participating in JCO until its completion.

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.212 Self-Initiated Program (SIP)

The GSW finds out that the participant's SIP is less than the required 32/35 WtW participation hours and decides that a vocational assessment is necessary to assign the participant to concurrent activities to meet the minimum requirement.

.213 Part-time Employment

When the participant finds a part-time job, it is necessary to assign the participant to concurrent activities to meet the minimum WtW participation hours. This rule also applies to a two-parent household, when both parents are working part-time but have not met the minimum WtW participation of 35 hours, i.e., both parents can be referred to a vocational assessment.

.214 Nineteen-Year Old Participants Entering GAIN

A nineteen-year old participant not previously enrolled in Cal-Learn entering GAIN without a high school diploma or its equivalent may not have to attend JCO first, if the participant agrees to attend school to obtain his/her high school diploma or its equivalent.

.22 Assessment as a Stand-Alone Activity

GSWs must make referrals to vocational assessment as a stand-alone activity, if the participant meets one of the categories below during their appraisal interview or after the completion of Job Club if for any reason he/she did not complete Assessment in Job Club.

.221 Part-time Employment

Participants entering GAIN with part-time employment must be referred to stand-alone assessment for assignment to a concurrent activity to meet the required minimum 32/35 WtW hours of participation.

.222 Self-Initiated Program (SIP)

SIP participants enrolled in their activity less than 32/35 WtW participation hours.

.223 Nineteen-Year Old Participants Entering GAIN

Nineteen-year old participants entering GAIN who were not previously enrolled in Cal-Learn, and do not have a high school diploma and request to continue their secondary education or its equivalent.

.224 Direct Referrals

Participants may be directly referred to assessment, if the GSW and the participant determine the participant will not benefit from the Job Club portion of JCO. The participant still needs to attend Orientation.

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.23 Post-Employment Career Assessments

A participant shall be referred to a Post-Employment Career Assessment when he/she finds a full-time (32/35 or more hours per week) job and requests Post-Employment Services. A career plan will be developed between the participant and the assessor to provide services that promote job retention and career advancement. ([See Chapter 1000 - Post-Employment Services](#))

.24 Clinical Assessments

Screening will be conducted at the first vocational assessment or career assessment to identify the need for Mental Health (MH), Substance Abuse (SA) and Domestic Violence (DV) counseling/treatment services. No screening is required if the participant has been previously screened, unless specifically requested by the GSW. If the participant is receiving supportive services, ensure a copy of the GN 6014 (GAIN Vocational Assessment Summary and Employment Plan) is shared with the Specialized Supportive Services provider.

Section A – “Completed by GSW” on the GN 6006 (Service Provider Referral form). If the participant requires SA treatment, the GSW is to indicate with a “Y” or “N”. The GSW may also indicate in the additional comments section whether the participant is receiving MH, SA or DV services.

During Appraisal or at any point in the program if a participant self-declares an existing MH issue, SA or DV problem which impairs his/her ability to find employment, displays inappropriate behavior or appears to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol, the service provider will notify the GSW. The GSW will end the JCO or other component assignment and will refer the participant directly to a clinical assessment. ([See Chapter 1200, Section 1260 and 1270](#))

.25 Assessment Activity Agreement (GN 6130)

The GN 6130 is used when assigning participants to a vocational assessment or a career assessment. For all participants, except those who complete the vocational assessment component during JCO, the assessment appointment shall be scheduled within five (5) workdays of the date the assessment activity agreement is negotiated with the participant. If the selected assessor cannot schedule an appointment for the participant within the timeframe date, the GSW and the participant are to select another vocational assessment provider. The GSW may reschedule the appointment of vocational assessment within five workdays from the date of signing the assessment activity agreement.

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All referrals to assessment must indicate the amount of time left on the CalWORKs 48-month clock in the "comments" section of the GN 6006 (Service Provider Referral form).

When referring the GAIN participant to assessment, the GSW must inform the GAIN participant of the availability of third party assessment if the GAIN participant does not agree with the assessor on the development of an employment/career plan. It is essential that the participant fully concurs with the outcome of the assessment process.

.251 Three-Day Rule

- (a) The participant has three work days after signing the Assessment Activity Agreement to reconsider the proposed terms before the contact is considered final. The three-day period begins on the work day after the participant has signed the agreement. After the three-day period, the assessment activity agreement is considered final.
- (b) If a participant is unable to keep his/her appointment due to:
 - a) unforeseen circumstances (e.g., the participant becomes ill and requests to reschedule or delay his/her vocational assessment by one week);
 - b) the supportive services are not feasible; or
 - c) the participant requests to reschedule his/her appointment. Such changes invalidate the original assessment activity agreement. The GSW and the participant will need to sign a new assessment activity agreement.
- (c) The participant may only request one reschedule of the assessment appointment with the GSW. The request must be made prior to the day and time of the appointment.
- (d) GSW must provide the participant with a return appointment during the assessment referral appointment. The appointment needs to be scheduled within three (3) business days of the expected return date of the employment plan from the assessor.

.26 Time Frames

The assessment shall be completed within five (5) work days following the date of the assessment appointment. The assessment results and employment plan must be received by the GSW no later than ten (10) work days following the assessment appointment. The assessor is required to retain a copy of the assessment results and employment plan for five years.

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.27 Notification from Assessor

The assessor will notify the GSW by phone and follow-up with a GN 6007, Notification of Change from Service Provider, when the following situations occur:

- .271 The participant does not keep a scheduled appointment to start the vocational assessment;
- .272 The participant calls to reschedule the assessment appointment; the assessor shall request the GSW take the rescheduling action; and/or
- .273 The participant needs a change in supportive services in order to meet the requirements of the agreed upon GN 6130, assessment activity agreement.

.3 Informed Choice

During the development of the employment plan, the assessor shall discuss the assessment results and other relevant information to assist the participant in formulating a personal employment plan. Following the assessment, the GSW shall review the same information with the participant at the time the WtW plan is signed.

.4 Career Ladder Concept

The participant shall be informed of the entry-level wages in his/her chosen occupational field and the opportunities for advancement in that job or a related field. GSWs shall reinforce the concept of "a job, a better job, a career," with GAIN participants at every appropriate opportunity.

.5 GAIN Vocational/Career Assessment Disposition (GN 6013) and GAIN Vocational/Career Assessment Summary/Employment/Career Plan (GN 6014)

Upon receiving the GN 6013 and GN 6014, in which an individual employment plan has been developed for the participant, GSWs are to immediately schedule an appointment with the participant for the purpose of referring the participant to one or more of the recommended post-assessment activities, using a WtW Plan - Activity Assignment (WTW 2).

The employment plan must specify the employment goal to be attained under the program, as well as the optimal assignment(s) to achieve the employment goal. The goal of the employment plan must be to lead the participant to employment and self-sufficiency.

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GSWs are to follow the recommendations specified in the vocational assessment employment/career plan within reason and in the best interests of the participant. However, if the GSW and the participant believe that a component not listed in the employment/career plan is better suited for the participant, the GSW shall phone the assessor to discuss a change in the plan. The assessor is not required to document the changes in writing. The GSW is to document the changes via GEARS MGPA screen.

.51 Assessment Payments

Employment Plans will be delivered by the assessor to the vocational assessment liaison. The liaison needs to distribute employment plans and sign vocational assessors' logs to verify receipt of employment plans. GSWs are to ensure a payment invoice is generated to the assessor by updating GEARS MGAR screen, upon receiving the GN 6013 and the GN 6014 from the assessor indicating the participant has completed assessment. The GSW needs to review the GEARS Assessment Referral Maintenance (MGAR) screen to confirm the invoice was generated. The Designated Deputy Regional Director (DRD) and/or Regional Director (RD) can update GEARS to generate the invoice if the assessment was completed and the case is in the X-File, previously-issued invoice has been blocked, and/or payment has been made to an incorrect service provider.

.6 Post-Assessment Activities

The employment plan will indicate whether or not the assessor recommends concurrent basic education and Vocational assignments and specify the services required. The GSW is to assign the participant to concurrent or sequential activities based on the employment plan. Vocational assessors shall recommend work experience assignments as part of the employment plan whenever appropriate. This is done:

- .61 To allow participants with little or no work history attain real work experience.
- .62 To help participants understand the behaviors and skills expected by employers.
- .63 To accumulate real-world work experience for participants to include in their job resumes.

A participant may be referred to a basic education component if it is specified in the participant's vocational assessment employment plan. The plan will indicate basic education only if the basic education is required to achieve the primary or secondary employment goal.

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Post-assessment activities include, but are not limited to, job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment, training in employer-specific job skills in a classroom or on-site setting, including training provided by local community-based programs, adult school programs, community colleges, ROP's (Regional Occupational Programs), work experience and community service. The employment plan may also specify concurrent or sequential participation if basic education is necessary.

Work experience is a paid/unpaid vocational component that enhances and renews job skills, builds work habits or expedites the transition to unsubsidized employment. The number of hours a participant is to participate in a work experience assignment will be based on the employer's need but is not to exceed 32 hours per week for one parent households or 35 hours per week for two-parent households.

When the GSW refers a participant to a post-assessment WtW activity, a copy of the GN 6013 and GN 6014 are forwarded to the service provider to show the participant's work history, vocational interests and skills, and any barriers to employment.

.7 Third-Party Assessments

When the assessor and GAIN participant are unable to reach an agreement on the development of an employment/career plan, the assessor shall inform the GSW, using a GN 6013 and a GN 6014. The GN 6013 and GN 6014 must be forwarded to the GSW within five (5) work days from the date of such findings.

- .71 Upon receipt of the GN 6013 and GN 6014, the GSW immediately schedules an appointment with the participant to discuss and resolve assessment difficulties and, if necessary, refer the participant to a third-party assessment. A third-party assessment shall be provided by an assessment agency on the GEARS assessment provider inventory other than the original assessment agency. The appointment must be scheduled within ten (10) work days from the date of receipt of the GN 6013 and GN 6014.
- .72 When the conflict cannot be resolved by the GSW, appropriate vocational assessment documents/forms are referred to a designated third-party assessor. Referral to a third-party assessment is made by telephone, followed up in writing using the WTW 10, Request for WtW third-party assessment.
- .73 The third-party assessor reviews the documents submitted along with the WTW 10 and makes a minimum of one contact (normally via telephone) with the GSW, the original assessor and the GAIN participant to discuss the areas of disagreement.

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Note: The third-party assessment is a partial assessment, since the assessor is not re-testing the participant.

- .74 The third-party assessor may determine that some additional testing is necessary in order to make a decision on the area(s) of disagreement.
- .75 The third-party assessor's decision shall include a written description of the area(s) of disagreement, summary of findings, conclusions and a decision on the appropriate employment/career plan for the participant. The participant shall not be required to enter into other post-assessment activity contracts until the results of the independent third-party assessment are known. The third-party assessor's written decision should be received by the GSW within 15 work days.
- .76 The third-party assessor's decision is binding. If the participant disagrees with the third-party assessor's decision, he/she has the right to request a state hearing.

.8 Reassessments

.81 Purpose

If a participant completes the activities specified in his/her WtW plan and remains unemployed, a vocational assessor must review the WtW plan and determine if any revisions are necessary to reach the goal of unsubsidized employment. This reassessment may also involve determination of a new employment goal and corresponding plan.

A referral for vocational reassessment may also occur whenever it is deemed appropriate by the GSW. The instance would be on an exception basis. Such a referral for reassessment by the GSW requires a Deputy Regional Administrator/Regional Administrator's approval. Grounds for reassessment may include but are not limited to:

- .811 Special circumstances, not previously identified, that would preclude the participant from completing the WtW plan, e.g., allergy to materials in the training/work environment;
- .812 Unavailability of the training or other activities called for in the WtW plan; and
- .813 A participant finds a part-time job (20 hours or more but less than 32/35 hours per week) during the assigned WtW activities such as vocational training, and he/she decides to change the employment goal and training plan as specified in the employment plan. However, if the participant decides to continue the training pertaining to the employment goal specified in the employment plan, no reassessment is necessary.

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.82 Selection of Assessor

.821 To the extent possible, the participant shall be sent back to the assessor who completed the original assessment.

.822 If the reassessment is conducted by a different assessor, the GSW must mail a copy of the original assessment results and the WtW to the assessor in advance of the scheduled reassessment appointment date.

.83 Time Frames

The time frames and minimum requirements for scheduling and conducting reassessments are the same as those applicable to the initial assessment outlined above.

.9 Partial Assessment

A partial assessment is an incomplete assessment when specific information gathering and testing activities have been completed. These activities must, at a minimum, include the following:

.91 Vocational interview;

.92 Interest inventories (a minimum of one);

.93 Structured observation and behavior checklist;

.94 Multi-aptitude test batteries (a minimum of one); and

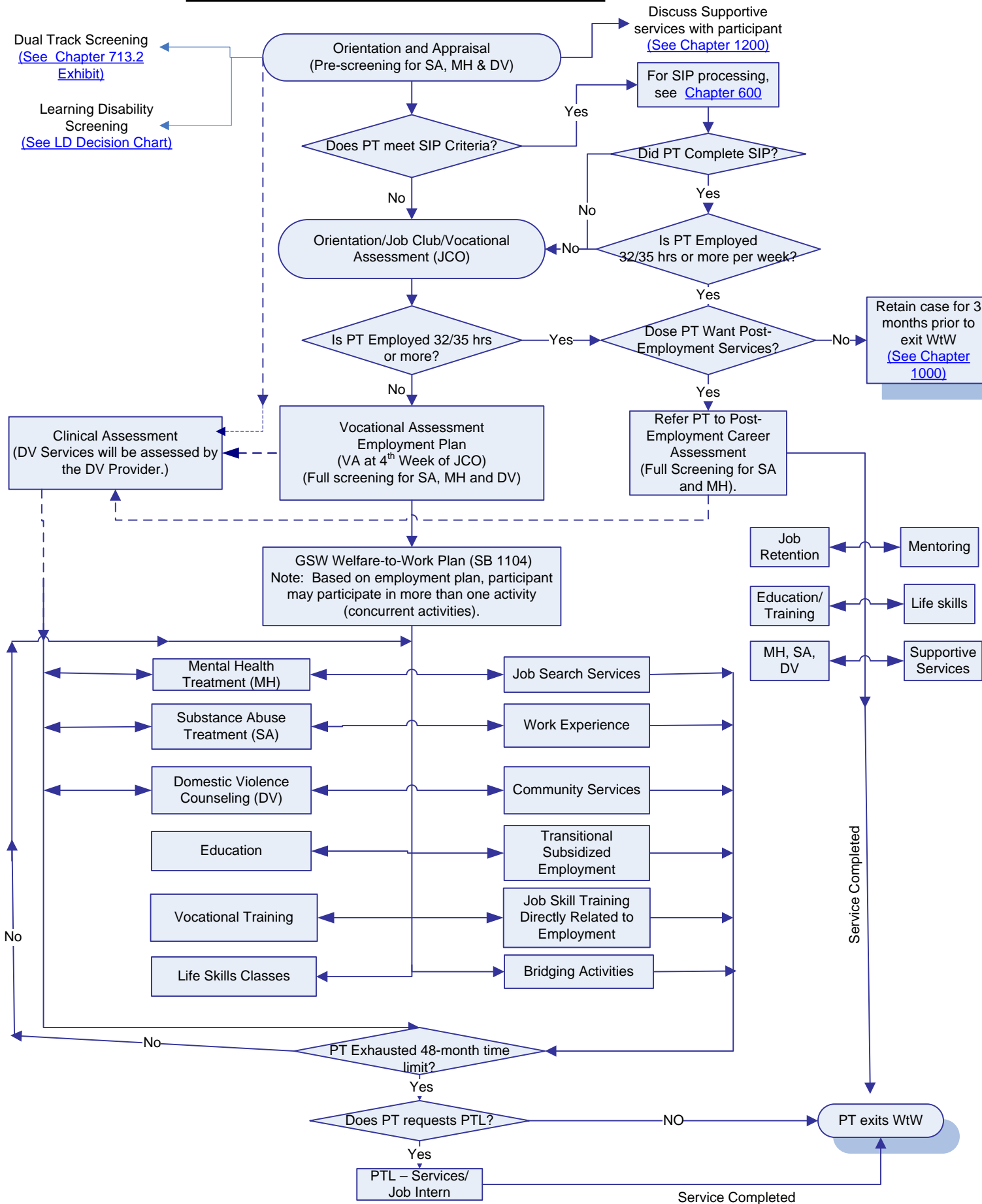
.95 Work samples (optional).

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813 DECISION CHARTS

.1 Vocational and Career Assessment

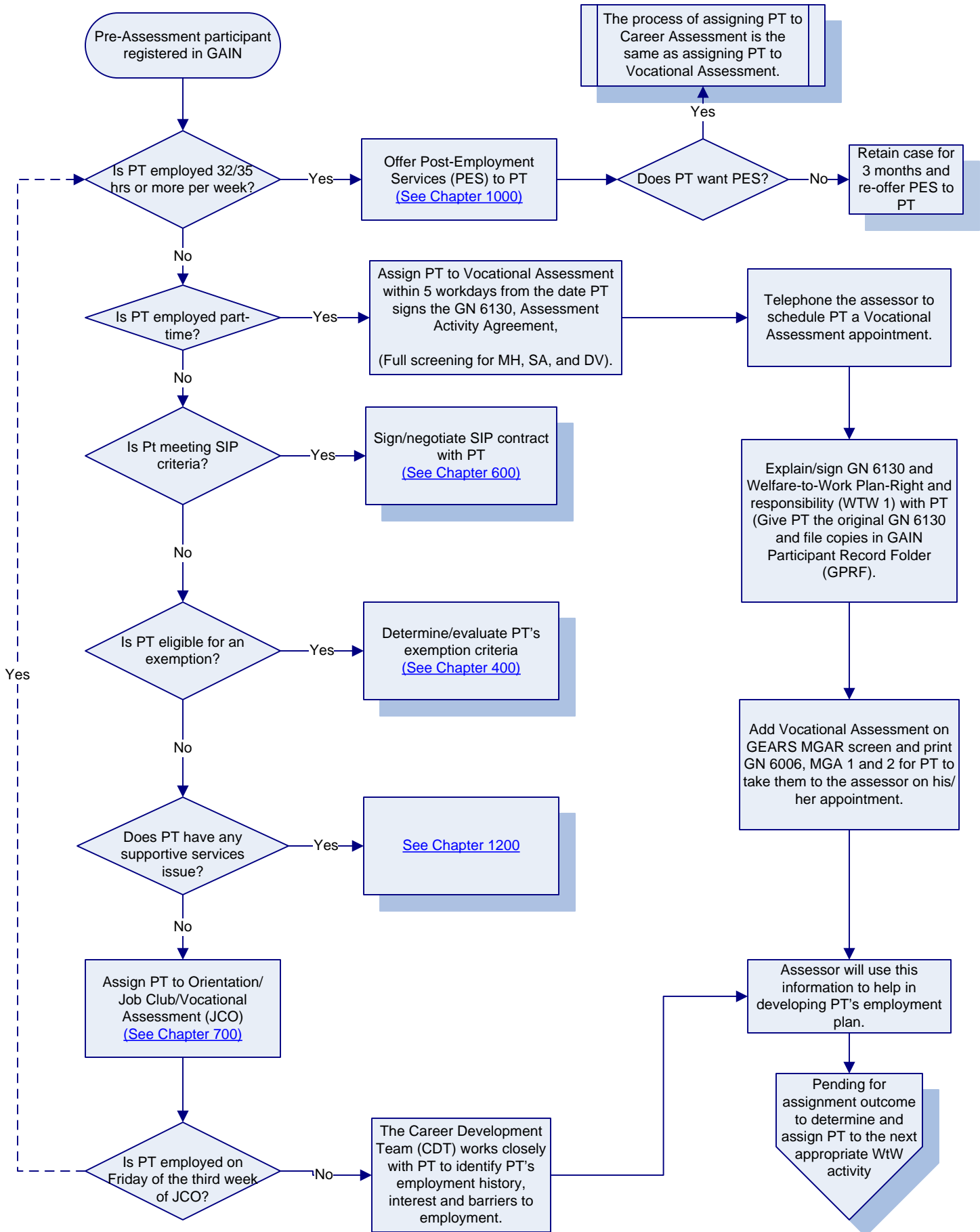
.11 Vocational and Career Assessment Decision Chart



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813.1 Vocational and Career Assessment

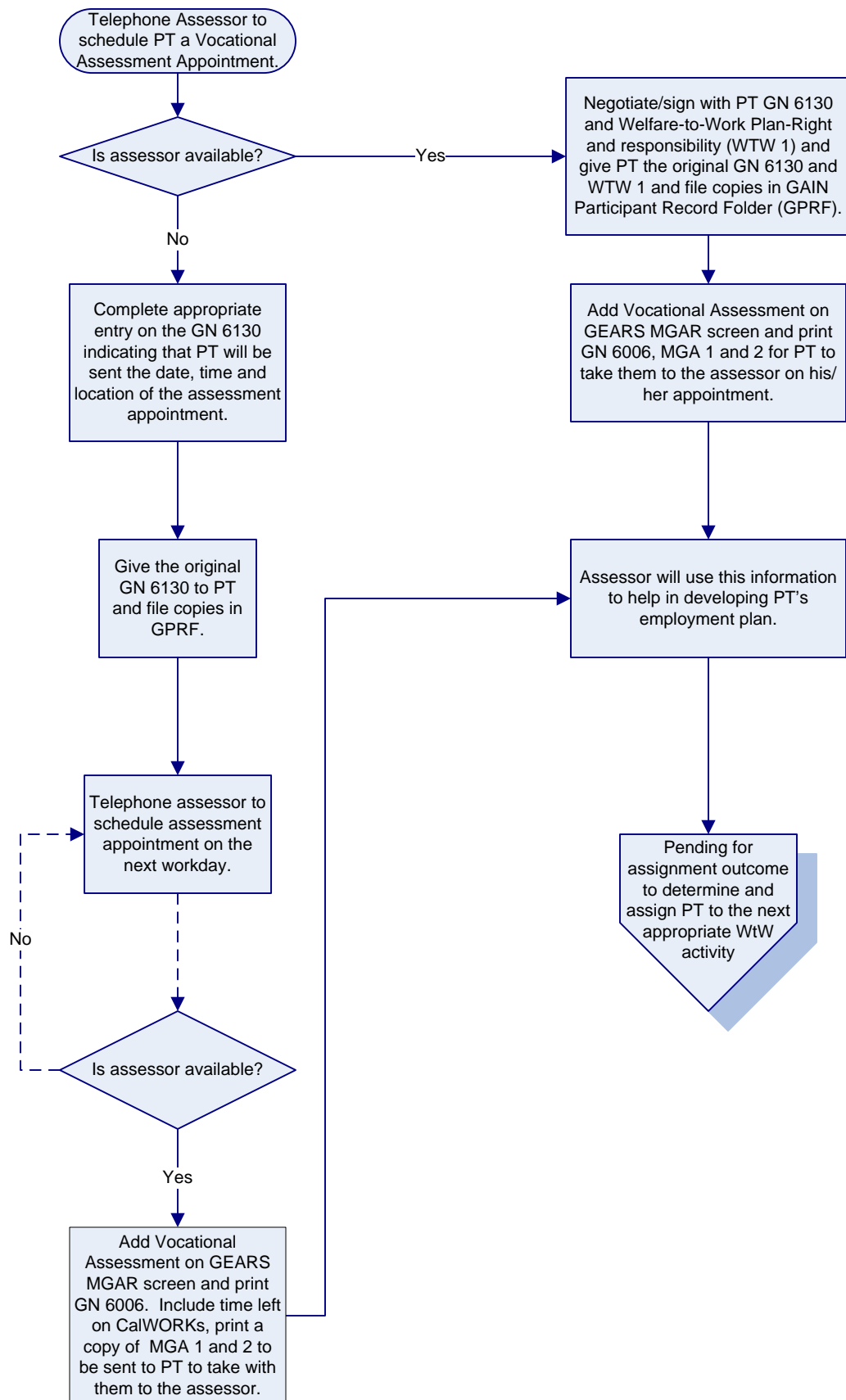
.12 Assign Participant (PT) to Vocational/Career Assessment Decision Chart



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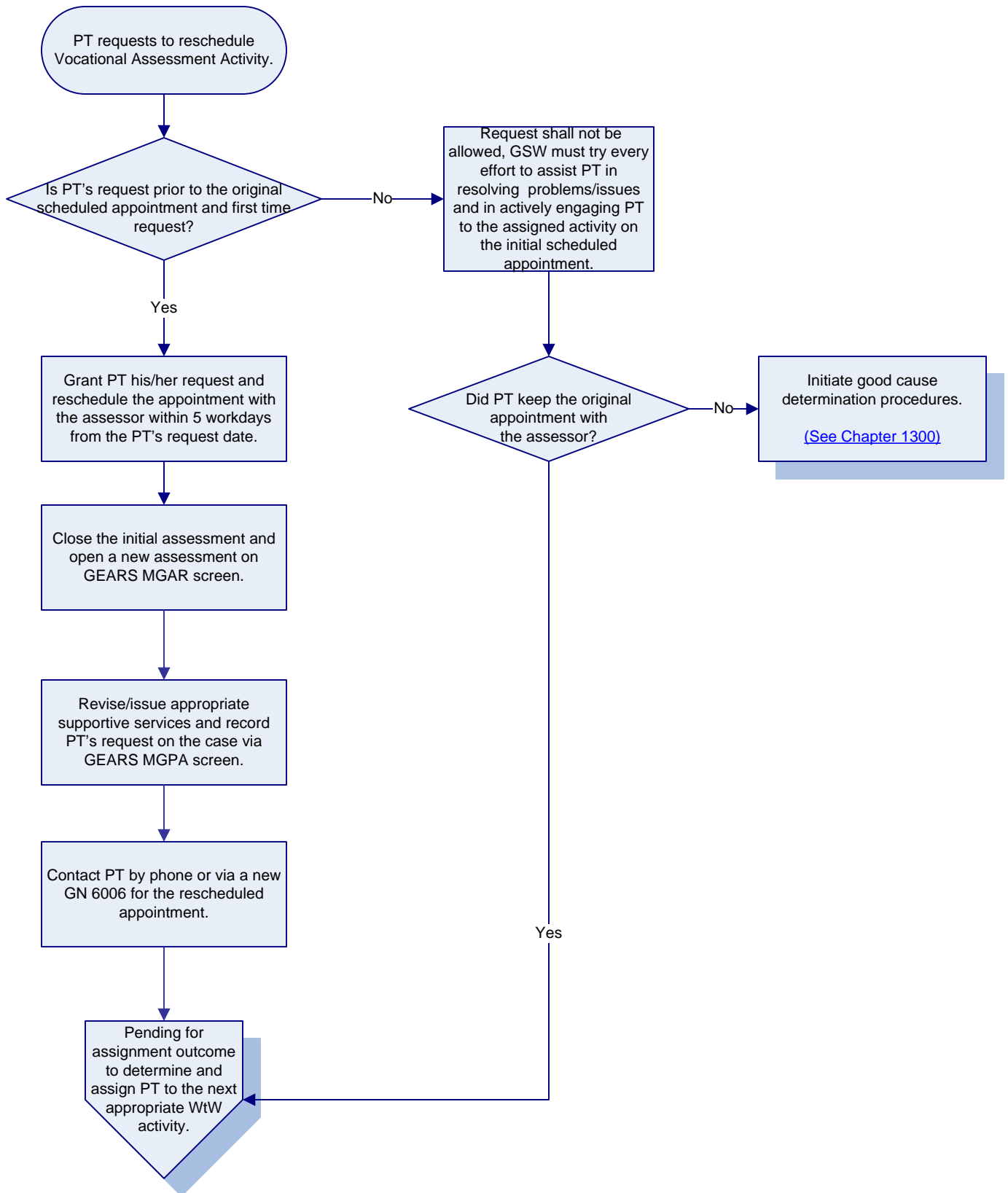
813.1 Vocational and Career Assessment

.13 Schedule Vocational/Career Assessment Appointment Decision Chart



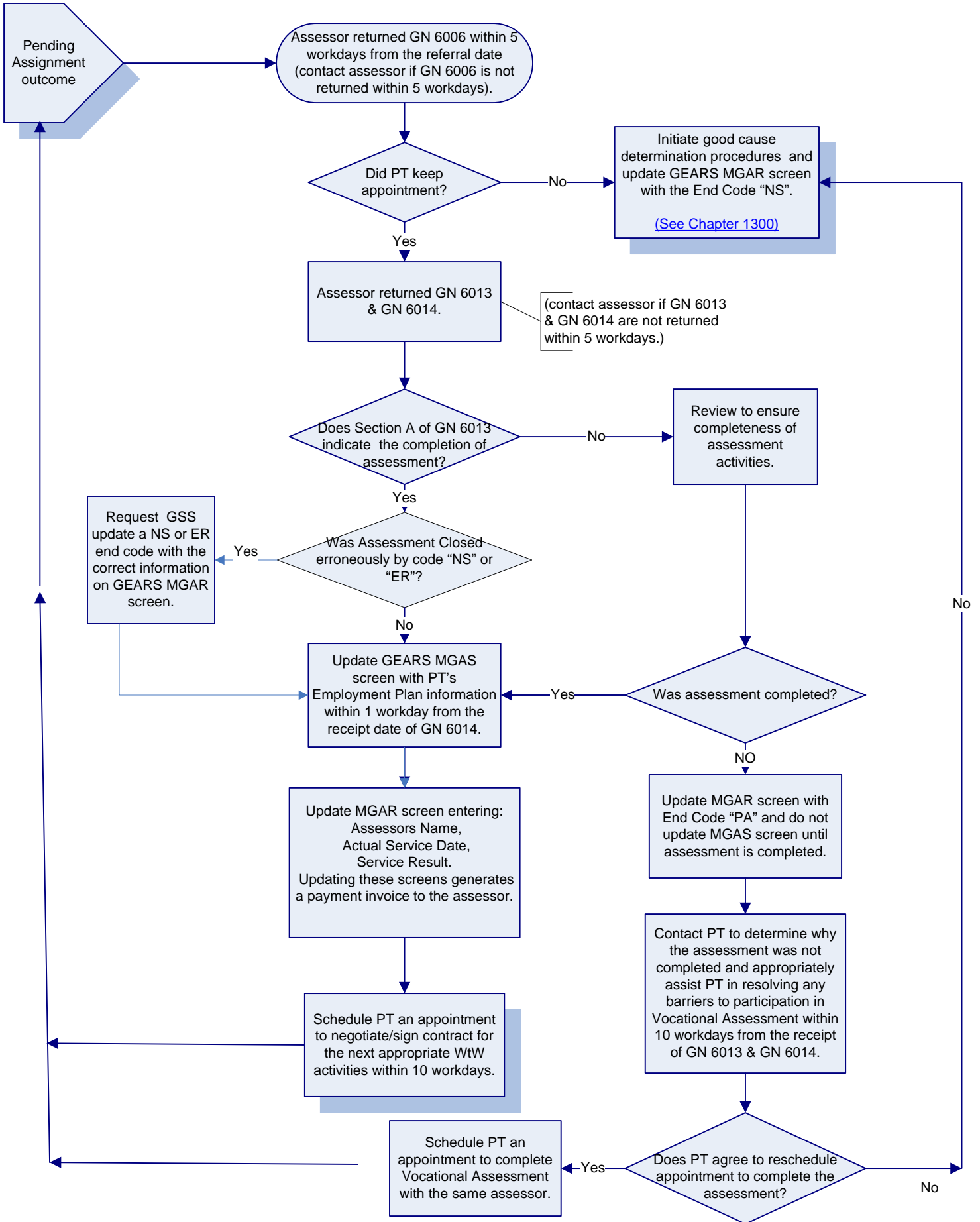
813.1 Vocational/Career Assessment

.14 Reschedule Vocational Assessment Decision Chart



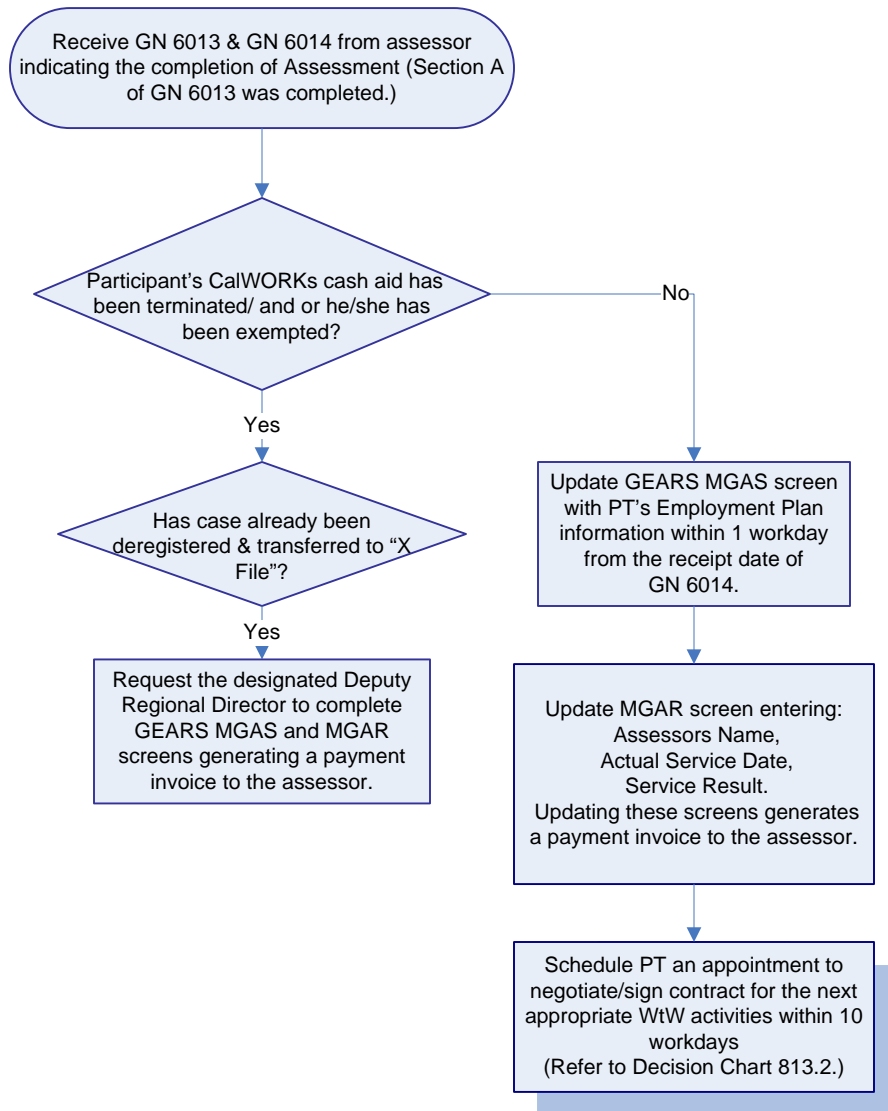
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813.2 Response to Assignment Outcome Decision Chart



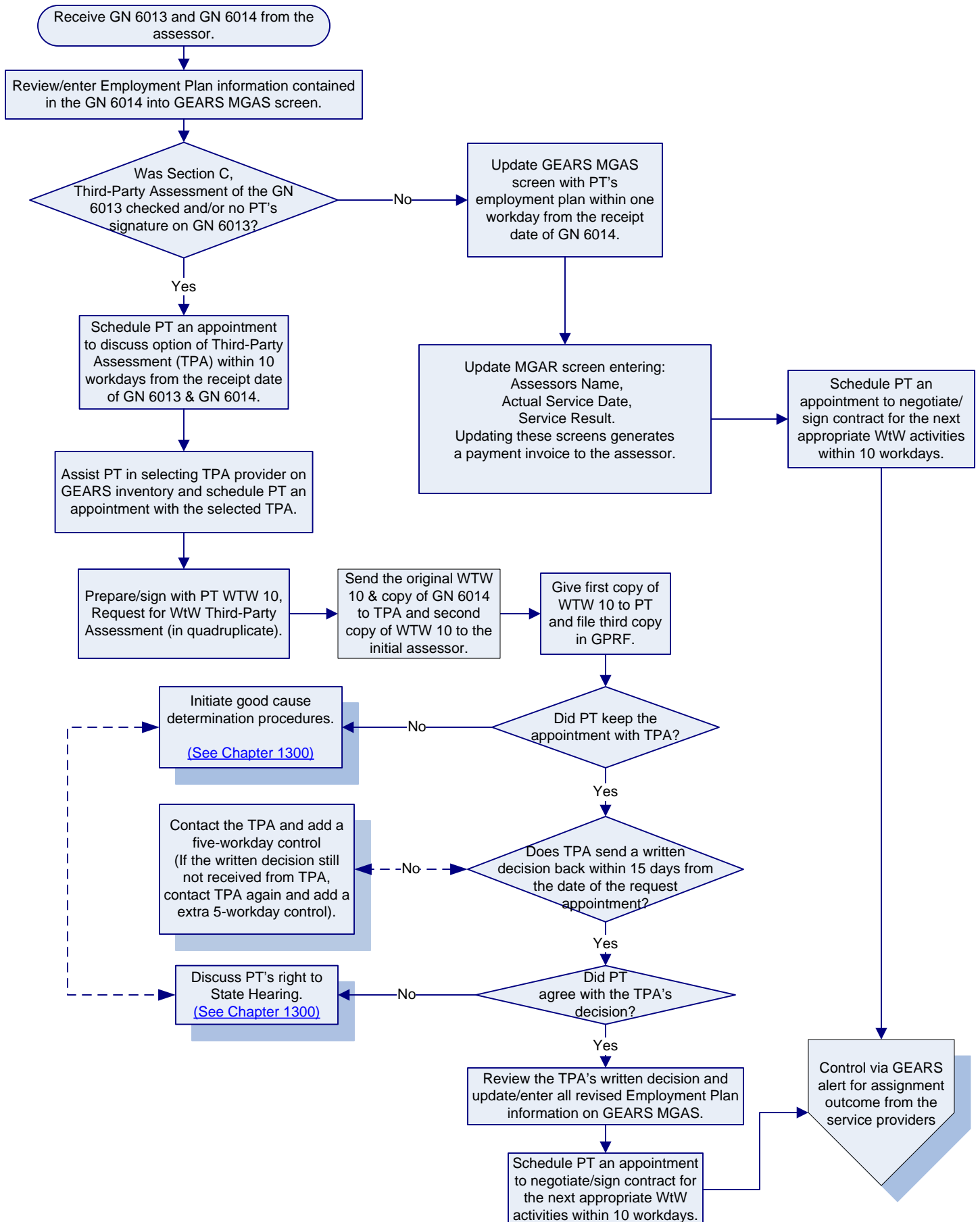
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813.3 Response to Assignment Outcome for Cases Transferred to X-File Decision Chart



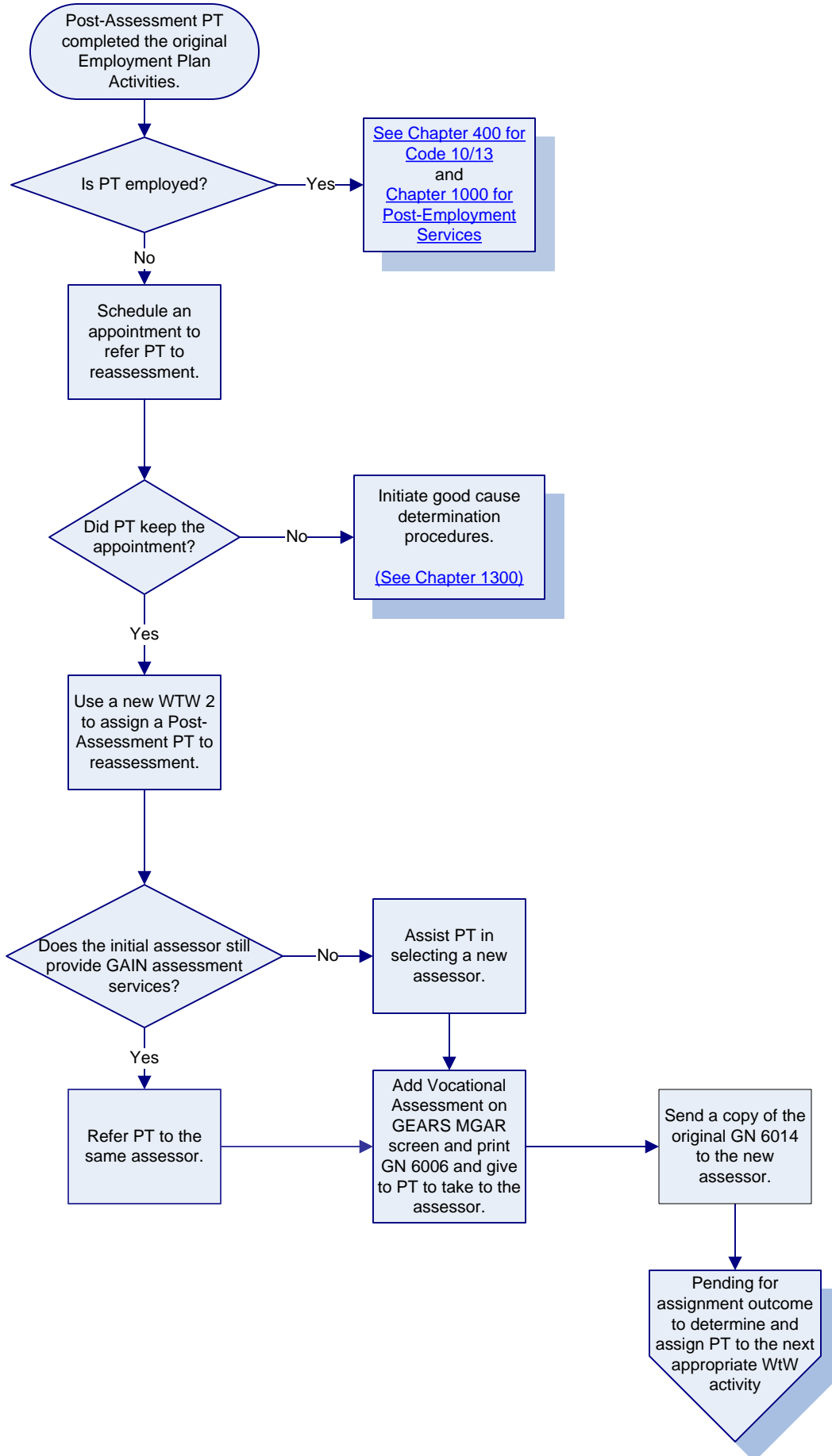
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813.4 Referral to a Third-Party Assessment Decision Chart



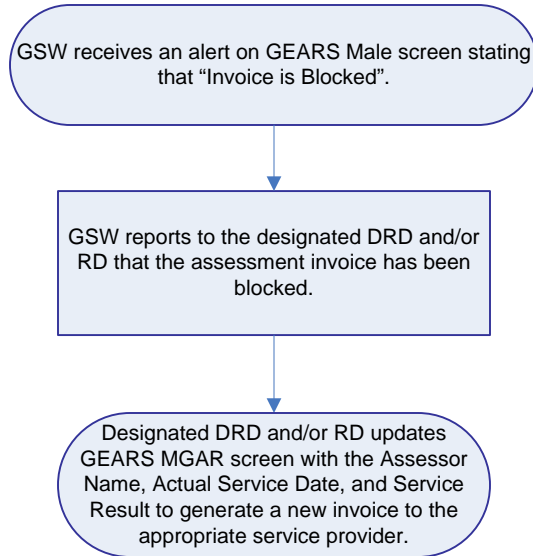
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813.5 Reassessment Decision Chart



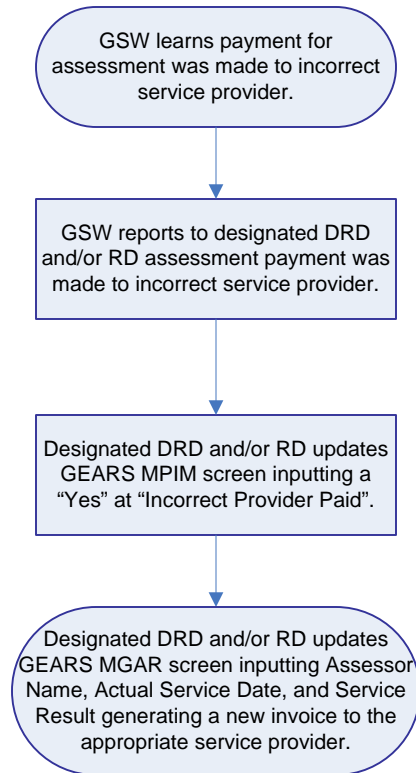
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813.6 Blocked Assessment Invoice Decision Chart



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813.7 Assessment Payment Correction Decision Chart



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813.8 Stand-Alone Assessment

