

JOB SEEKERS GUIDE



Worksheets & Tips for
Job Seekers & Career Changers

www.JobSeekersGuide.org

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Why Should You Manage Your Career?

Most people change careers — not just jobs — multiple times in their lifetime. In fact, baby boomers born between 1957 and 1964 held an average of 11 jobs from ages 18 to 44, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of these jobs were held from ages 18 to 27. Experts say that people who take charge of their work find benefits. They tend to find it easier to change jobs. They also tend to be happier in their work and personal lives.

[The need for career planning is ongoing.](#)

You'll need to act on your career plan repeatedly. Your exact actions depend on your own situation. This Career Planning Guide shows you how to take charge of your career. You can use it throughout your work life.

[Want to be successful and manage your career?](#)

Your **Job Seekers Guide** is a step-by-step process. It will help you to take charge of your career. The first step is **Manage Your Career**. Start here to make sure that you have the basics in place. Then, there are five steps to follow. Each section will have worksheets and tips. If you need to, you can revisit the steps in any order. You can use the exercises and tips from more than one step at the same time.





Managing Your Career: Build a Foundation

This section shows you what you need to think about *before* you start to job search. It gives you strategies on how to manage your career.

Build a Foundation helps you to start managing your career. Your foundation includes personal issues and work issues that affect your ability to do be a good employee.

Do you know what employers expect of their staff in the new world of work? For example:

- Be on time
- Always look for ways to do your job better
- Make sure that your personal life doesn't impact your job

Why should you build a foundation?

Employers tend to promote people who are good workers. Building your foundation will benefit you if you want to keep your job, are trying to move up, or are looking for a different job.

Know the basic expectations of career management. You'll be better prepared for job changes.

Is a Job the Same as a Career?

It sometimes seems like the terms "job," "occupation," and "career" mean the same thing. In fact, they have very different meanings.

For this guide we will use those terms to mean the following:

- A **job** is a specific position, or work for which you get paid. Example: an engineering technician at XYZ Company.
- An **occupation** is a type of job with the same characteristics. Example: physicians, teachers, or scientists.
- A **career** is a lifelong journey that lasts your whole life. You build skills, knowledge, and experiences. It includes education, training, work experience, and community involvement. It includes school and work. It also includes unpaid work and hobbies.

Setting goals helps you move from a bunch of jobs to a career. Successful people tend to set short- and long-term goals. They think about what they can do now to achieve their goals in the future.

What's the difference between an occupation and an industry?

Your **occupation** is what you do, or a type of job. Your **industry** is where you do it, or a type of business.

A janitor is an occupation that is found in most industries. Health care is an industry that employs many occupations. You can find doctors, accountants, and janitors in health care.

You need to know the difference between an occupations and industries. It will help you know what type of work you want to do, and where you want to work. It will also help you how you can prepare for that work. Plus, you will be better at your job search.

What Is Career Management?

Career management is a lifelong process. It means creating goals for your work and personal life. It also means working towards your goals. Career management is more than just what you do to find a job.

Why should you manage your career?

The job market is not the same as it used to be. Today's economy is global. This impacts what employers want from workers. The types of work and training that you can pick have also changed.

Having career goals helps you decide what to do when the economy changes. The next two pages show what job seekers and employees face today.

How do you manage your career?

Manage Your Career is at the center of the career-planning model. The other steps in this model help you know how to manage your career.



When you manage your career:

- You learn to flow with the changes that occur in your work.
- You commit to lifelong learning.
- Every now and then you think about your skills and interests.
- You have a “can do” attitude.
- You take charge of your career.

The New World of Work

Are you prepared to be successful in the new world of work? Sometimes people expect that they will get one job and stay there for their entire work life. Or they expect their employers to take care of them. Or, they have trouble dealing with a job loss.

Today's world of work means that you are responsible for your career.

Be prepared. Learn about the ways the work world used to be. And be prepared to be successful with how it is today. Learn about the benefits of goal setting (see the **Create a Plan & Set Goals** section, page 33).

The Job Market	
How it used to be:	How it is today:
1. Earn a high school diploma; more school or job training was not required.	1. More jobs call for a degree or training past high school.
2. Most people rarely needed to use job search skills.	2. Everyone needs to keep his or her job search skills sharp.
3. Compete for jobs only with local job seekers.	3. Job seekers compete for jobs with people all over the world. Employers can move to another country. More workers can live away from their work. They use a computer to check in with their employer.

Relationship Between Employers and Employees	
How it used to be:	How it is today:
1. Employees did not plan to change jobs or companies too often. Employers did not trust those who change jobs every few years.	1. Employees tend to change jobs every few years. Each move brings more skills and opportunities.
2. Employer = Caretaker. Companies laid off workers only when things were bad. Workers planned to be in one full-time job long term.	2. Layoffs are more common. Workers see employers as customers. Full time employees act as contractors. Part-time positions are more common.
3. Employees stayed with one employer for a long time to get good benefits. Employers paid benefits based on how long you worked and your wage.	3. Employees take their retirement plans with them when they change jobs. Workers are in charge of their own retirement plans.

Employment Realities

How it used to be:

How it is today:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workers had one career their whole life. They worked for one company long term. 2. Employees could predict how and when their pay and work duties would increase. 3. Employees would do exactly the work an employer told them to do — and no more. 4. There were many manual labor jobs in the production industries. 5. Most people worked full time for one employer. 6. Employees who worked hard and were loyal got good pay and job security in return. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workers have many careers and jobs in their lifetime. 2. Workers create their own career paths within one or many employers. They have more say in their own pay raises or change in duties. 3. Job duties change more often or match projects. Employers want workers who think for themselves. 4. More jobs are in the service or knowledge industries. Workers need to be creative. They need to provide good customer service. They also need technical skills. 5. Employees might work full time or part time. They might be short-term or contract workers. They may work for more than one company at once. 6. Employees need to work hard and take charge of their own career goals. They get pay and training from many employers. |
|---|---|

Motivate Yourself in the New Work of Work

- M **Manage your own work life:** You are in charge of your career.
- O **Options and opportunity:** Be aware of your choices and be ready to act on them.
- T **Training never ends:** Keep updating your skills and learning about your career field.
- I **International mindset:** Value different cultures. Think about the economic and work trends in other countries. Think about how they affect your work.
- V **Value all work:** It shows that you place worth on your time and yourself.
- A **Achievement:** Do the best job possible, set and realize your goals.
- T **Technology:** Know how to use computers. Stay current with new technology.
- E **Economics:** Understand how the economy affects you. It impacts the job market and your career field.



Take Care of Yourself

How serious are you about being successful?

Successful people know the importance of taking care of themselves. This means taking care of your personal life. Get enough exercise and sleep. Eat healthy foods. Belong to a social or spiritual group. Spent time with your family. Set a regular schedule. Get regular checkups.

Self care means being prepared to work.

- Do you have transportation ready?
- Do you have child care arranged?
- Do you have health care resources?
- Do you have stable housing?

People new to managing their careers may need help. Don't be afraid to ask for it. Your community may have programs to help. You can ask about health care, child care, or housing programs. Ask at your public library or use the resources on this web page:

www.careeronestop.org/Audience/Professionals/CCA/SupportServices.aspx

Self care means making good choices.

Sometimes you have many options. What kind of job is best for you? Should you go to school? If so, what kind of school? Should you move to find a better job? It is easy to feel overwhelmed.

It may be helpful to write down all of your options. Make a list. Then weigh the pros and cons of each choice. If you have too many good options, you can rank them in order. Someone close to you can help you with this list.

When you need to make a decision, use “**Weigh Your Options**” (Exercise 6.1) on the next page.

Weigh Your Options (Exercise 6.1)

Everyone makes decisions every day. Some decisions are easy. Some decisions are more complicated. It is easy to feel overwhelmed. If you cannot make a decision, use this exercise.

Directions: An important decision starts by listing the options you are considering. Then list the pros and cons of each option. Which of your options have more pros than cons? Rank them in order by which ones have the most pros for you (1 = highest). It may help if you ask someone else to look over these options.

Decision: _____

Options	Pros	Cons	Rank
A.			
B.			
C.			
D.			
E.			

Manage Your Finances

Do you know how to make good choices with your money? Do you have the skills needed to save or make a budget?

No matter how much – or how little -- money you have, you can keep track of how much money you have coming in. Pay attention to what you are spending it on. Know how much you need to save for the future.

Here are some tips for staying financially healthy while looking for work:

- Start with a **reality check**. Think about which of your career choices will pay you enough money. You need to pay for housing, car payments, health care and other bills. Use the "**Value of Your Dollar**" exercise on the next page (Exercise 6.2).
- Learn how to **manage your credit and debt**.
- **Create a Personal Budget** (Exercise 6.3). You can plan your spending. Use calculators and online tools. Talk to a financial counselor.
- **Save part of your money** for emergencies and long-term goals.

On the next few pages, you'll find Value of Your Dollar (Exercise 6.2) and Personal Budget (Exercise 6.3). These exercises will help you to plan and prioritize how you use your money.

Budgeting Tips & Resources:

www.smartaboutmoney.org

www.mymoney.gov

Value of Your Dollar (Exercise 6.2)

What do you most value? Do you spend your money and time on these items? Use this exercise to help you focus your money and time on what's most important to you.

Directions: Read over the list below. Put a one (1) beside the things most important to you. Put a two (2) by the things you consider somewhat important and a three (3) by things that are not important to you.

Values List		
___ Religion/Spirituality	___ Education	___ Travel
___ Saving Money	___ My Own Business	___ Jewelry
___ Family	___ Health	___ Cultural Events
___ Sports	___ Job Success	___ Food
___ Insurance	___ Friends	___ New Car
___ Pay off Debt	___ Clothes	___ Owning a Home
___ Entertainment	___ Children	___ Technology Devices
___ Other: _____	___ Other: _____	___ Other: _____

Now put your money where your mouth is. Remember this list when choosing how you spend your money. If you don't have enough money for what you want, add them to your future goals.

[How to create a personal budget.](#)

Make plans for your money that fit your needs today and in the future. If you are not working, make a budget anyway. You can use an occupation that is a good fit for you now. If you need ways to find an occupation, look at the **Explore Careers** section (page 26).

Make copies of a “Personal Budget” on the next page (Exercise 6.3). You can create a budget to use now. Then make others that show how much money you might earn and spend in a few years. See how your money plans change when you add or cut expenses. You can also change your income to make a different budget.

[Look at your current budget.](#)

If you are married or have children, plan your money together.

- Do you have enough for savings and the things you need?
- Can you spend less on the things that are “nice to have” but not needed?
- Where can you cut costs?

Sometimes people eat out less or buy fewer supplies. Sometimes people learn to live without cable TV or use a cheaper cell phone. If you have long-term goals, think about how to budget for them. See the **Create a Plan & Set Goals** section of this guide to help you (page 33).

Personal Budget (Exercise 6.3)

Directions: Use this exercise to make plans for your money that fit your needs today and in the future. Think about how much you spend in each of the categories below. Take a good look at your spending habits. Base this budget on your net monthly income, not your gross monthly income.

Occupation _____

Typical Wage \$ _____

Monthly Income	
Gross monthly income is your pay. This is before taxes are taken out: Multiply (x) your hourly wage by the number of hours you work in a month. Or divide (÷) your annual salary by 12.	\$ _____
Payroll deductions are items removed from your take-home pay. They include Federal and State taxes, Social Security plans, and insurance costs. They are usually 30 percent of your gross income.	\$ _____
Other income sources can include family support, disability, or Social Security checks, and other regular payments to you.	\$ _____
Net monthly income is your total take-home pay, minus (-) payroll or other deductions. Use this <i>number for your monthly budget</i> .	\$ _____

Monthly Expenses	
Housing includes rent or mortgage payments. It is best if it is no more than 30 percent of your income.	
Food expenses vary for everyone. Include eating out, coffees, and snacks.	
Utilities are the services to run your home. They include electricity, heating, and telephone. They can also include Internet service and cable TV.	
Transportation costs include public bus or train fares. It can be car payments, gas, and insurance. Also add in car repairs and state fees.	
Savings are money you put in reserve. It can be in a bank account or investments. You need savings for emergencies, big purchases, and retirement.	
Clothing includes work and casual clothes, shoes, and coats. Include accessories. If you don't buy clothes every month, guess what you spend each year. Divide that number by 12.	
Entertainment is the money you spend for fun. It can include movies, DVD rentals, music, books, and video games. Think about what you spend every week on fun things. Multiply this amount by four (4) to get a monthly average.	
School payments include tuition, student loans, books, and supplies.	
Debt is money that you owe. It includes credit card bills and other expenses.	
Miscellaneous expenses are all the other things you might buy. It includes your cell phone, cosmetics, household supplies, pets, and medical costs.	
Total Monthly Expenses =	\$ _____
Net Income minus (-) Monthly Expenses =	\$ _____

Deal with Changes

Changes in your work life can be stressful for anyone. You may be a new job seeker or career changer. You may be facing a lay off. This information can help you with work changes so you will not be as stressed.

Job security is not certain in this **New World of Work** (see page 4). You may lose your job through no fault of your own, or with little or no warning. It's a good thing that you do not have to face these changes alone.

Where to find support.

You may have things in your life that you are not sure how to handle. Support services can help you with child care, health care, transportation, and other needs.

Go to the library. Or you can use the Internet, or find a career coach that can help you.

- Find local, state, or federal social services near you.
- Connect with family and community services.
- Join employment programs that fit your unique needs.

Work Transition Tips & Resources:

www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/

www.iajvs.org/iajvs_network_services.htm



Assess Yourself

This section shows you how to find jobs that match your skills, interests, and values.

What is self-assessment?

An assessment helps you learn about yourself. There are several assessment tools provided on these pages. These tools will ask questions to help you learn about yourself, and occupations that fit you.

These tools will not tell you what to do. They help you explore options and decide for yourself.

Why should you assess yourself?

Assessments allow you to spend time thinking about yourself and to make plans. It is important to know which direction fits you before you look for a job or go to school. After you've assessed yourself:

- You'll make better career and school decisions.
- You can present yourself better to employers.
- You can show employers and schools how your interests, skills, and values fit the job or program.
- You save time and money in your job search.
- You'll be better at your work or school duties.
- You'll have more confidence and happiness.

The need for self-assessment is lifelong.

When you are ready for a new job or thinking about going back to school, take another assessment. You may find that your skills, interests or values changed. Use assessments to help you explore new options.

Start by exploring your work skills. Use the information on the next page to help.

Know Your Work Skills

A skill is being able to do a certain task. Examples of skills:

- Having good *people skills* means that you can get along well with others.
- Someone with *repairing skills* can fix things well. They are also able to learn how to fix new things.

Skills are learnable. You can gain or expand skill with practice or training. That's why it's important to assess your skills at all phases of your career. Some of your skills can transfer from one job to others.

How do you know what your skills are?

First, do a skills assessment online, like the one on ISEEK (www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment). Or, you can talk with a career coach or go to your library for helpful resources.

You can also use the Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/). Look at occupations that interest you and look at the skills. Do you have these skills?

Think about some of your favorite skills. Think about a time when you did something you were proud of. Which skills did you use?

Use the list of **Common Transferable Skills** on the next page to help identify your skills. Then use "Match Your Skills to Occupations" (Exercise 1.1, page 18) to write down your skills.

Skills Resources:

www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment

www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Skills/

www.myskillsmyfuture.org

Common Transferable Skills

Read over these skills and think if you have or need to gain any of them.

Skill Set	Description	Examples
Basic Skills	These are skills needed by almost all workers. These skills are very important to have. Writing, for example, is a basic skill that gets you into a good job. Not having it can keep you out of a good job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn new things • Listening • Math • Reading • Science • Speaking • Think critically
People Skills	These are some of the most needed and wanted skills. They're sometimes called "soft skills." These skills help people to work well with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of others • Coordinate with others • Help others • Negotiate • Persuade • Teach others
Management Skills	All workers need these skills, not just managers. Employers hire people who can keep track of projects, money, and their time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage money • Manage people • Manage things • Manage time
Systems Skills	Can you understand how parts and wholes work together? For example, could you see what would happen to your company if a certain employee left? Or how a new tax law might change prices at the grocery store? Then you have systems skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate a system • Evaluate an organization • Understand a system • Make good decisions
Technical Skills	Technology includes computers and equipment. Computers are common in most workplaces. People in all occupations should know how to work with technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose tools • Control quality • Install equipment • Install programs • Maintain equipment • Check equipment • Operate equipment • Repair • Troubleshooting

Match Your Skills to Occupations (Exercise 1.1)

You should know what work-related skills you already have and how good you are at each. Find occupations that match the skills you want to use. You'll use this list to help you explore careers.

Directions: Write down a list of your skills: personal, transferrable, and occupational. You can use the skills listed on pages 17. Look at those skills and list your top 10 skills on the first table below.

Then, compare those skills with occupations. You can find occupations related to your skills at the library. Ask for the Occupation Outlook Handbook. Or, find online skill assessments on the bottom of this page. You can ask people close to you for feedback. Write down occupations that match your skills on the second table below.

Your Top 10 Skills

Do a skills assessment and then write down your top skills.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Occupations that Match Your Skills

Do a skills assessment, then write down 5-10 occupations that are a good fit with your skills.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Match Your Interests to Occupations

Before you choose a career or start a job search, you should know which careers match your personality. Picking the right job increases your chances of future job satisfaction and career success.

You should know what kinds of activities are interesting to you. You'll use this list of activities to help you explore careers. The interest assessment on the next page lists several activities.

How to use an interest assessment.

Taking an interest assessment can help you understand which careers might be the best fit for you. An interest assessment will give you a broad list of career options that match your interests.

The "Match Your Interests to Occupations" exercise on the next page is a short interest assessment. Here's how to use the assessment:

- Fill in the circles next to the activities that you like to do.
- Then, add the columns at the bottom of the exercise. Write down the number of filled circles for each letter.
- The letters with the most circles are your interest code. Most people have a 2-3 letter interest code, also called a Holland Code.

After you've completed the assessment, go to page xx to find out about each interest type and how they match occupations.



Match Your Interests to Occupations (Exercise 1.2)

Directions: Read each statement. Fill in the circle next to the activities that interest you.

I Like To						
...do puzzles		<input type="radio"/>				
...work on cars	<input type="radio"/>					
...attend concerts, theaters, or art exhibits			<input type="radio"/>			
...work in teams				<input type="radio"/>		
...organize things like files, offices, or activities						<input type="radio"/>
...set goals for myself					<input type="radio"/>	
...build things	<input type="radio"/>					
...read fiction, poetry, or plays			<input type="radio"/>			
...have clear instructions to follow						<input type="radio"/>
...influence or persuade people					<input type="radio"/>	
...do experiments		<input type="radio"/>				
...teach or train people				<input type="radio"/>		
...help people solve their problems				<input type="radio"/>		
...take care of animals	<input type="radio"/>					
...have my day structured						<input type="radio"/>
...sell things					<input type="radio"/>	
...do creative writing			<input type="radio"/>			
...work on science projects		<input type="radio"/>				
...take on new responsibilities					<input type="radio"/>	
...heal people				<input type="radio"/>		
...figure out how things work		<input type="radio"/>				
...put things together or assemble models	<input type="radio"/>					
...be creative			<input type="radio"/>			
...pay attention to details						<input type="radio"/>
...do filing or typing						<input type="radio"/>
...learn about other cultures				<input type="radio"/>		
...analyze things like problems, situations, or trends		<input type="radio"/>				
...play instruments or sing			<input type="radio"/>			
...dream about starting my own business					<input type="radio"/>	
...cook	<input type="radio"/>					
...act in plays			<input type="radio"/>			
...think things through before making decisions	<input type="radio"/>					
...work with numbers or charts		<input type="radio"/>				
...have discussions about issues like politics or current events				<input type="radio"/>		
...keep records of my work						<input type="radio"/>
...be a leader					<input type="radio"/>	
...work outdoors	<input type="radio"/>					
...work in an office						<input type="radio"/>
...work on math problems		<input type="radio"/>				
...help people				<input type="radio"/>		
...draw			<input type="radio"/>			
...give speeches					<input type="radio"/>	
	R	I	A	S	E	C

Match Your Interests to Occupations (Exercise 1.2 continued)

Directions: Add the columns from the bottom of the previous page. Write down the number of filled circles for each letter here.

R = Realistic	Total: _____	S = Social	Total: _____
I = Investigative	Total: _____	E = Enterprising	Total: _____
A = Artistic	Total: _____	C = Conventional	Total: _____

Your 2-3 Letter Holland Code Interest Profile

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R	<p>Realistic people are DOERS.</p> <p>They are often good at mechanical or athletic jobs. They like to work with things like machines, tools, or plants and they like to work with their hands. They are often practical and good at solving problems.</p>
I	<p>Investigative people are THINKERS.</p> <p>They like to watch, learn, and solve problems. They often like to work by themselves, tend to be good at math and science, and enjoy analyzing data.</p>
A	<p>Artistic people are CREATORS.</p> <p>They like to use their creativity and come up with new ideas. They usually want to work with less rules or structure. They enjoy performing (theater or music) and visual arts.</p>
S	<p>Social people are HELPERS.</p> <p>They like to work directly with people rather than things. They enjoy teaching, counseling, or curing others. They are often good public speakers with helpful, kind personalities.</p>
E	<p>Enterprising people are PERSUADERS.</p> <p>They like to work with other people. They often like to influence, persuade, or perform for people. They like to lead. They tend to be assertive and enthusiastic.</p>
C	<p>Conventional people are ORGANIZERS.</p> <p>They are very detail oriented and like to work with data. They are often organized and good with numbers. They are also good at following instructions. They also like working in structured situations.</p>

Occupations that match your interests.

Directions: Use the Internet, your library, or talk to a career coach to find occupations that match your interests. Write down occupations that match your interests here.

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Your Work Values

Job satisfaction comes from having a job that meets your needs and fits your values. The "Match Your Work Values to Occupations" on the next page has a list of work values. It includes things people often want or value in their job.

Not all these values will be met each day. It is important to choose an occupation that meets most of your work values. You're more likely to enjoy your job. You will also be more motivated to succeed.

How to discover your work values.

- Use the work values exercise on the next page to rank the values that are most important to you.
- At the bottom of the page write down your top three values.
- Next, talk to a career coach or go online to find occupations that match your work values. The list on O*Net (www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Work_Values/) list is a small list of occupations that are available. Don't worry about finding the exact occupation for you. Look for ideas of occupations that match your work values.
- Write down the occupations that match your values on page 24.

Assessment Resources:

<http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/>

http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/Work_Values/

www.careerinfonet.org/employabilitycheckup

Match Your Work Values to Occupations (Exercise 1.3)

Directions: Read each statement below. Rate the value on a scale of 1 (High) to 5 (Low) on how well the statement matches your values. Add work values not listed which are also important to you.

Work Value	Description	Rating
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to use your strongest skills and feel good about your work • Being challenged and doing interesting work • Learning and gaining new skills 	
Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to decide what work you do • Supervising your own work • Being creative and finding new ways to do things 	
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to move up and be a leader • Being able to direct and influence others • Having an important or prestigious job 	
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along with your boss, coworkers, and customers • Working with diverse people of many cultures and backgrounds • Helping and caring for other people 	
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a boss that stands behind their employees • Access to the right tools, training, and resources needed to do your job 	
Working Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having good work conditions • Being well paid and having good benefits • Having a job with low risk of a change in pay or work duties • Having a variety of things to do on the job 	

Your Top 2-3 Work Values (use the "work value" word above)

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Occupations that Match Your Values

Use the Internet, library, or talk to a career coach to find occupations that match your work values. You can use O*NET's *Advance Search* to match your work values to occupations.

<http://online.onetcenter.org/>

Directions: Write down occupations that match your work values here.

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Put Your Assessments Together

Look at the occupations you listed in Exercises 1.1 (page 18), 1.2 (page 20), and 1.3 (page 23). These occupations match your skills, interests and work values. List the occupations that show up on two or three of your assessment lists. *These occupations are a good place to start as you think about your next career goal.*

Occupations that Best Match Your Assessments (Exercise 1.4)

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.



Explore Careers

The **Explore Careers** section will help you learn about occupations.

Do you know what your skills, interests and work values are? Then you are ready to explore occupations. If not, go back to the **Assess Yourself** section (page 15) to find out more.

You should know which occupations match your goals before you apply for jobs. Exploring careers will help you to find these occupations.

Why You Need to Explore Careers

You'll find accurate information about your work options and places to work.

- You'll know what type of education or training you need.
- You'll learn how and where to apply for jobs.
- You'll make networking contacts who can help you when you're ready to look for work.
- You'll learn about trends in the job market that can affect your career planning.

What Career Changers Need to Know

Job seekers have many options. You can look for a new job that is similar to your last job. You can work in the same occupation and in the same industry. You might look for job that is in the same occupation, but you would work in a different industry. Or you could work in a new occupation and in a different industry.

Choosing to look for a job in an occupation different from your old job, or in an different industry is called "changing careers." To find out more about the differences between jobs, occupations, and industries, go to page 2.

Here are some things you need to know about yourself and the job market before you change careers:

- **Research the trends.** Some industries are less likely to lay off people than others are. Some industries, like health care, are growing and will need more workers in the future. Find out which occupations and industries in your area are growing (www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/ExploreCareers.aspx).
- **Learn about salary ranges.** Before you choose a new occupation or industry, you should know the expected pay and benefits. Talk to a career coach, or use an accurate source from the library or the Internet to find salary information (www.careeronestop.org/SalariesBenefits/Sal_default.aspx).
- **Transfer your skills.** Know which of your skills you can use in other occupations and industries. Review the list of **Common Transferable Skills** (page 17). Look at your list of skills from your skills assessment. See your "Match Your Skills to Occupations" (Exercise 1.1, page 18).
- **Network.** It's a good idea to make connections with people working in different occupations and industries. They can help you find out which employers are hiring people with your skills. Go to page 60 for more about networking.

What are Career Clusters?

Career clusters are one way to group occupations. Careers that use the same knowledge and skills are in the same cluster. Every career that you can think of is in one of 16 career clusters. Each cluster can include hundreds of different careers.

Using clusters can help you to look at few career choices without focusing on only one occupation. If you target one specific career choice too soon you might miss other options that might be a good fit for you.

The 16 Career Clusters
• Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
• Architecture & Construction
• Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
• Business, Management & Administration
• Education & Training
• Finance
• Government & Public Administration
• Health Science
• Hospitality & Tourism
• Human Services
• Information Technology
• Law, Public Safety & Security
• Manufacturing
• Marketing, Sales & Service
• Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
• Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Career Cluster Resources

www.careerclusters.org/16clusters.cfm

www.onetonline.org/find/career

Find Career Information

Use the "Occupation Research Summary" worksheet on the next page to keep track of your research.

How to find career information.

- Look through detailed career profiles and videos (www.careerinfonet.org/occ_intro.asp).
- Learn about the in-demand and fastest-growing occupations in your area.
- Talk to people working in your chosen fields to get inside information. Go to page xx to find out about networking and informational interviews.

Starting your research.

Start with occupations you listed in "Occupations that Best Match Your Assessments" (page 24). First, pick the occupations you know about or that seem interesting to you.

Want to look into different occupations? Look at the Career Clusters to see related occupations (page 28). For each occupation you choose, pay attention to:

- the skills
- education or training needed
- the median or average pay, and
- the demand for the occupation in your area



Occupational Research Summary (Exercise 2.1)

It is helpful to track your occupational research in one place. You can compare them and see which ones are the best fit for you.

Directions: Look at the “Occupations that Match Your Assessments” (Exercise 1.4). Write these occupations on this table. You may need to use extra paper. Research these occupations. Write down the overview, education needed, wages, and job outlook. Also, write down pros and cons that are important to you. Using what you learned in your research, rank your top occupations. Put a one (1) next to the most interesting and 10 next to the least.

Occupation (from Exercise 1.4)	Overview of Occupation	Education/Training Needed (degree, license, apprenticeship, etc.)	Wage Ranges & Job Outlook	Other Pros and Cons to Consider	Rank

Career Exploration for Ex-Offenders

There are good jobs available for people with felony records. Ex-offenders must pay attention to how to look for jobs. There are some jobs that people with certain criminal records cannot have. Because of your record, employers may be wary of you. There are employment and training programs to help people with criminal records.

Part of a successful life after prison is getting and keeping a job. Besides being paid, having a steady job can also give you:

- An employment history that can help you find even better jobs down the road.
- A feeling of pride.
- The time to learn about different ways of thinking and doing things.

Follow these tips to learn what jobs are right for you. Take time to make a career plan. This will make your job search more focused and useful.

Tips for Job Search Success

Don't job search alone. Find a community or state-run program to help you. For example, learn about employment laws before you talk about your criminal background.

Be positive. Don't get defensive about your past. Focus on how you can handle difficulties. Also, point out what you can do for a potential employer. Talk about new skills you have. For example, some people get job training while incarcerated.

Set short-term and long-term career goals. Go to the **Create a Plan and Set Goals** section for more information (page 33).

Make a resume that is honest and shows your work skills. See page 68.

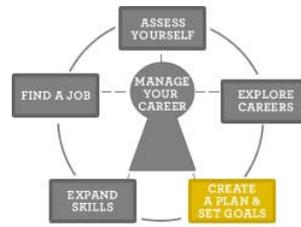
Practice answering hard interview questions
(www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffenderinterviews.html).

Network so that more people will know you and can recommend you to employers. See page 60.

Know which careers match your skills, interests and work values. Review your work from the **Assess Yourself** section (page 15).

Fill out a copy of an application form (page 67). Learn how to answer questions on it. Find help if you need it. Usually, there is a section on an application asking for criminal background information. Consider stating that you'd like to talk about this in person. If they insist on written answers, get help on how to respond. One solution might be to create a page about what happened and why it won't happen again.

Get a copy of your criminal record and review it with a legal professional or someone from the probation or parole office. You should understand what information is on your record and how it affects your employment options.



Create a Plan & Set Goals

This section will help you learn about the importance of setting goals.

Are you clear about your skills, interests and values? If not, you need to review the **Assess Yourself** section before you set goals (page 15). Do you know about occupations that fit you or do you need to go to the **Explore Careers** section (page 26).

If you are ready to set your own career goals, then you are ready to find out more about creating a plan and using these exercises.

Why make career plans or set goals?

Goals are things you want to accomplish or change in your life. It takes effort and organization to make changes in your life. That's why you can use a career plan.

A career plan helps you keep track of your goals. A career plan also helps you think about how to accomplish your goals. Your plan will also help you think about who can help you.

Don't think you need a career plan or goals?

In the New World of Work (page 4), you learned that employers like to hire people who take charge of their careers. Having a plan shows you are in charge of your career.

Also, you might reach the point in your life where something isn't quite right. Maybe your job doesn't pay well enough. Maybe you want to learn a new skill. Maybe you feel stuck. The good news is that you can set goals to change your career, and your life.

Make the changes that you want and find the help you need by using the planning and goals information in this section. Start on the next page and learn how to **Take Charge of Your Career**.

Take Charge of Your Career

People who set and finish career goals tend to get more done and often earn more money than people who don't set goals.

Some people used to rely on their boss or company to give them chances to advance. Now it is up to you. If you don't make it happen for you, no one else will.

In today's world of work, you need to take charge of your own career. You can learn more about the New World of Work (page 4).

Good Reasons to Take Charge of Your Career in the New World of Work

You Relate to Others as Equals: There is more of a "team" mindset in the workplace. Supervisors' roles have changed from "parent" to "coach." You decide how long you want to stay in one position. You also know that an employer can ask you to leave at any time if they don't like your work.

You Are Happier at Work: You can choose work that you find interesting. Since fewer jobs offer real security, why not do what you love?

You Keep Growing: To keep growing and moving up, you need to expand your skills. You need to build relationships with coworkers and others in your field. You must be flexible and able to adapt to changes in your work. You must be able to transfer your skills to different types of work.

You Know Who You Are: You get to choose the skills and experience you want to have. You can tell your story by talking about what you can do. For example, you don't have to say "I work for XYZ Company." You can say "I am good with my hands and I have excellent skills from four year of painting houses."

Think about what you want. Now make a plan that will get you to where you want to go.

Set Long-Term Goals

Think back to what your life was like two years ago, or five years ago. What would you have done differently?

Now think ahead two years. Where would you like to be working? What do you want your life to be like in a few years? Ten years?

What choices can you make today that will make your life better in the future? Write down these choices or goals. These are your long-term goals.

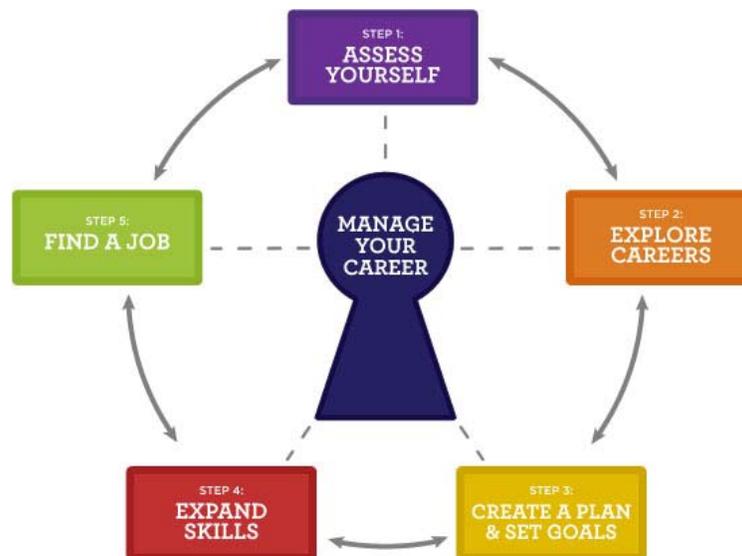
Make goals that you believe you can achieve. Give yourself a set amount of time to complete each goal. Think of the people and resources you will need to achieve each goal.

Your long-term goals should cover all parts of your life -- career, education, financial and personal. These goals can be related to each other. You might have one goal that affects all areas of your life.

Examples:

- **Career:** I want to work as a chef.
- **Education:** I want to get a degree.
- **Finances:** I want to have at least \$2,000 in savings.
- **Personal:** I want to work out three times a week to stay healthy.

Use the "Long-Term Goals" exercise on the next page to write down your goals. You may not have goals in all areas.



Long-Term Goals (Exercise 3.1)

Directions: Think about and write down your long-term goals. They could include career, education, financial or personal goals. You may not have goals in each area.

Areas	My Long-Term Goals
Career	1. 2. 3.
Education	1. 2. 3.
Finances	1. 2. 3.
Personal	1. 2. 3.

Make Your Goal-Setting Plan

Once you write down your long-term goals (Exercise 3.1, page 35), think about how you can achieve them.

Come up with specific actions for each goal. These actions are your career plan.

Example of a Career Plan	
My long-term career goal:	To be a lead chef.
My short-term actions to support this goal	<p>I will learn more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will talk with three people working as chefs within one month. • I will get an entry-level job in a restaurant kitchen within six months. <p>I will practice skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will read cookbooks every week from the library. • I will practice making at least one new recipe every week at home. <p>I will get experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will ask my restaurant boss to teach me how to make at least one recipe within three months. <p>I will gain training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will earn my culinary arts degree within three years.

Use the “Career Plan Worksheet” (Exercise 3.2, page 39) to track your career goals and the actions to support them. You can add your personal goals to this worksheet, too.

Learn How to Use a Career Plan

Think about famous people who you admire. How did they get there?

Many successful people know what they want and set goals to get where they want. They usually break down their goals into smaller tasks. Then, they make new goals to achieve more.

Career Plan Steps

Here are ways to help you set goals and stick to them.

<p>Step 1: Make a Career Plan</p>	<p>Think about your long-term career goals and the things you can do in the short run to get them done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write these things down on the "Career Plan Worksheet" on the next page.
<p>Step 2: Follow Your Career Plan</p>	<p>You've set your career goals and written down the steps you need to get them done. Now follow your written plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell people about your goals. Find people who will support you and give you feedback. • Be sure your goals and the time you need to get them done are realistic. • Reward yourself for completing a task.
<p>Step 3: Review and Update Your Career Plan</p>	<p>You may run into roadblocks or want to change your mind. Don't be discouraged!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change your career plan or tasks if they aren't working for you. • Try a new way to complete your goals. • Understand that the world of work changes quickly, and so can you.

Once you achieve your career goals, reward yourself. Then think of new goals for the next phase of your career. Remember: planning your career will *last for your whole life*.

Use the "Career Plan Worksheet" on the next page to track your long-term and short-term goals.

Career Plan Worksheet (Exercise 3.2)

In order to move into a career, it is helpful to break down by the actions needed to complete it.

Directions: Using your career research, write down the short-term actions you need to do to complete your career goal. Also list when you will complete these actions. Write down the resources to help you complete it. Make sure you reward yourself for a job well done. Make copies of your career plan worksheet. Talk about it with people who can help you. Update this worksheet when you move forward in your career planning. You can also use this worksheet for other long-term goals such as education, finances, and personal.

My Career Plan: My long-term goal is _____

I will do this short-term action:	By this date:	I will use these resources:	I will reward my success by:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

I will re-evaluate my plan and goals on this date: _____

How to Create 'Plan B'

A career plan helps you decide what you want in your life or career. The steps in your plan help you meet your career goals.

If you are not able to meet your goals the way you planned, don't give up. Instead, come up with a different plan or new goals. This is your backup plan, or Plan B.

Many things can keep your goals from happening the way you first planned. Your family situation might change. Things at your work could change. Also, other events, like a change in the economy, can affect your plans.

Knowing when it's time to make a new plan.

Think about past events that have changed your plans. Talk to other people about how unexpected events changed their career plans. Then think about what could change your plans in the future.

Your Plan B should include steps that will help you meet your goals if something unexpected happens.

Possible events or situations that could change your career plans include:

- Changes in your family like a new baby, marriage, or divorce
- An illness or injury of you or a loved one
- A job loss or other change in family income
- Moving to a new city
- A promotion at work or new projects

Changing for the better.

Many people who now have career and financial success reached their goals by working their Plan B. You will meet your goals faster and easier if you have a career plan and a backup plan.

Remember: When you think about possible blocks to your plan and know how to get around them, you are more likely to keep working toward your goals.



Expand Skills

The section will help you learn about ways to expand your skills.

One of the best ways to expand your skills can be through education and training. In this section you'll see some education options that help you expand skills. You'll see benefits for going to school. Also, you'll learn some tips to find the right education for you.

[What skills should you gain or expand?](#)

Your skills are the foundation of your career. You've learned about your personal skills such as managing your personal life (page 7). You know the skills to be successful in the New World of Work (page 4). You've assessed your work skills (page 16). You've explored careers to find out the skills needed for careers (page 26). Hopefully, you put any skills you need on your career plan (page 38). This section helps you put all of these pieces together and to implement your career plan.

[Why should you expand your skills?](#)

- Are you looking for a new or better job? Employers hire people with skills that match their job needs.
- Employers keep and promote people who are serious about expanding their skills.
- Many good jobs require training such as a degree or a certification.
- If your job ends, you'll have a better chance to get a new one.

This section has information and resources to help you expand your skills and move toward your career goals. Start on the next page by look at ways to **Get Job Skills**.

Get Job Skills

Sometimes people looking for a job may not be able to go to school at the same time. If this is your situation, you can still get job skills without going to school. First review your job skills from your skills assessment (page 18). Next, think about which skills you can work on now. Then use the information on this page, **How to Gain Skills** (page 45), and **Keep Advancing Your Career** (page 52) for ideas on how to gain skills in a school program, on the job, or in other ways.

Why should you get job skills?

- You'll be seen more positively by employers. They tend to like applicants who continually learn new skills.
- You'll feel more confident during interviews.
- Your resumes, cover letters, and job applications will be stronger.

There are some things you can do to expand your skills now.

- Go to the **Find a Job** section (page 54). You'll learn about what makes job seekers successful.
- Go to your library and read books about your career field.
- Volunteer in your field.
- Ask to job shadow someone in an occupation that interests you.
- Ask your library about free or low-cost classes. They may know of computer or other job skill classes.
- If you don't have a high school diploma, finish your GED.

Resources to help you get job skills.

- Find a public library near you (www.servicelocator.org/Libraries.asp).
- Find a GED or adult literacy program near you (www.literacydirectory.org/).
- Network to find out about job leads or job shadowing (page 60).
- Update your career plan to include focusing on new skills (page 39).



Formal Training Pays Off

Want to earn a living wage? You'll likely need more than a high school education or GED. You may be looking at occupations that require a certification, degree, or specialized training.

As you weigh the pros and cons of going to school (see Exercise 4.1, page 45), think about how education pays. People with degrees tend to make more money and stay in their jobs.

Unemployment Rate*	Education Level	Typical Weekly Earnings**
14.6%	Less than High School	\$454
9.7%	High School Graduate	\$626
8.6%	Some College, No Degree	\$699
6.8%	Associate Degree	\$761
5.2%	Bachelor's Degree	\$1,025
3.9%	Master's Degree	\$1,257
2.5%	Professional Degree	\$1,532
2.3%	Doctorate	\$1,529

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009 unemployment and wage data.

* **Unemployment rate** is the percentage of people who lost their jobs and applied for unemployment benefits. This rate is for those ages 25 and over.

** **Typical weekly earnings** is the median wage. This means listing all of the wages from low to high and picking the middle one. The earnings are for year-round, full-time employed workers age 25 and older.

How to Gain Skills

Do you have the skills and education that employers want? Not sure? The **Explore Careers** section (page 26) can help you learn about employers.

One of the best ways to expand your skills is through education and training. Make sure that your education connects to occupations that fit your interests and skills (see page 24).

There are five steps to help you get the right education:

- Step 1: Pinpoint occupations that interest you.
- Step 2: Look at your education options
- Step 3: Look at what schools have to offer
- Step 4: Track your research on schools.
- Step 5: Choose education options.

The exercises and resources on the next few pages will help you look at schools that fit your needs.

Step One: Pinpoint occupations that interest you.

One of the best ways to expand your skills is through education. Make sure that your education connects to occupations that fit your interests and skills.

Use the "Rank Your Occupations" worksheet below to list your desired occupations and the education needed. List the pros and cons of each. Rank them in order to help you decide.

Rank Your Occupations (Exercise 4.1)

Directions: List your desired occupations and the type education needed on this table. Look at each one and list the pros and cons of each occupation. Then, rank them in order (1 is the highest).

Occupation	Type of Education	Pros	Cons	Rank
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Step Two: Look at your education options.

Here are education options for you to think about. You can ask at a library about local options. You can also talk about your options with a career coach.

Education Options	Description
Apprenticeship Programs	An apprenticeship program is a training plan based on employers' needs. It helps potential employees learn the skills of an occupation or trade. Students learn the standard skills in a classroom. Also, they learn on the job and sometimes get paid. Sometimes they are supported by trade or labor groups.
Online Learning	Online learning is a great option for many students. You can take one course. Or you can earn a certificate or a degree. For the right students, online learning makes it easier to go to school.
Adult Basic Education	Adult Basic Education classes are free. They help people who are 16 and older and who are not in school. Students can improve their basic skills such as reading, math, listening, and speaking. Some classes help prepare people for better jobs or for getting ready for more education.
U.S. Military	The military offers hundreds of jobs to help you get skills and meet your goals.
Licenses	Licenses are the required knowledge and skills for some jobs. Licenses often vary by state. It is against the law to work in these jobs without a license. These workers need to keep going to school to keep up their license. Interested students should ask if a school will prepare them for a license.
Degrees	<p>A degree is given by a college or university. It means that you completed a course of study. An associate's degree usually lasts two years or less. A bachelor's degree usually takes 4 or more years. You may need to take classes to get ready for college.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here is short-term training that lasts less than two years: www.careerinfonet.org/ShortTermTraining/default.aspx • Here is training that is more than two years: www.careerinfonet.org/edutraining
Certifications	<p>Certifications are tests that measure your work knowledge. Some employers like hiring people with these skills. Interested students should ask if their school will prepare them for certifications. Many certifications require a degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here is a list of certifications: www.careerinfonet.org/certifications_new/default.aspx

Step Three: Look at what the schools offer.

Do you need to go to school? Make a list of what you want from a school or program. Then, research schools and programs that fit your list. You can use your library to find your education options.

Schools tend to tell you about strengths and may hide their weaknesses. Only you can decide if a school is the right one to help you meet your career goals.

Use the tips listed below to see if you agree with the school's claims.

- Read the materials from the school. Is it accredited? Do their courses match your goals?
- Find out about the training. How long will it take? How much it will cost? What about tuition, fees, supplies, and books? Are there evening courses? How well does it prepare you for occupations that interest you?
- Find out about the school's equipment. Is it current? Is it similar to what you will use in the workplace?
- Ask about services for students. Do you need help with finances, daycare, tutors, computer skills or other things?
- Ask about "must haves" to enroll. Are there tests you need to pass? Do you need a GED or high school diploma? What else do students need to get enrolled?
- Ask about credit options. Can you transfer your credits from other schools? Can you get credit for prior learning?

Step Four: Track your research of schools.

In order to make good decisions about school, research your options. You can look online or call the school directly. Think about what you will get out of any program before you enroll in it.

Use the "School Research Worksheet" (Exercise 4.2) on the next page to keep track of the type of training and any services each school offers students. If you are looking at more than one occupations, make a new worksheet for each one.

Step Five: Choose Education Options.

You've found several options that fit your goals. How do you choose? Use the results of your "School Research" (Exercise 4.2 on the next page) on the "Weigh Your Options" (Exercise 6.1, page 8) to help you make decisions. Talk over your decisions with people who are supportive of you.

School Research Worksheet (Exercise 4.2)

Directions: Use this worksheet to track your research on schools or programs.

Occupation Title: _____

School or Program Name	Type of Training (Degree, license, certification, etc.)	Services for Students	Length of Training	Costs & "Must Haves" to Enroll
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Occupation Title: _____

School or Program Name	Type of Training (Degree, license, certification, etc.)	Services for Students	Length of Training	Costs & "Must Haves" to Enroll
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Pay for Your Education

Can you afford the education you need to achieve your goals? You have many options to get training or a degree. Think about short-term actions towards your career. Start planning now how to pay for your education.

Before you apply to schools, update your budget. For help, go to **How to Create a Personal Budget**, page 11. Know how much you can afford to pay for training.

What are your financial aid choices?

Financial aid is money that helps you pay for school or training. Most students get money from one or more of the four kinds of aid. This aid is used to pay for your tuition, books, or other costs.

Types of Financial Aid

Grants and scholarships are awards you don't have to pay back. Grants mostly come from the government, such as the Federal Pell Grant. Scholarships can come from a school, community group, business, or the government. Some scholarships are for people who don't have much money. Others are for people who are good at sports, have good grades, or a special talent. Check with the school you want to go to for scholarships that fit you.

A loan is money you borrow. You have to pay back a loan with interest. There are many kinds of loans. Each has a different interest rate and rules. Some well-know loans are the Stafford, Perkins, PLUS, and SELF.

Work study is a job offered through the school. It helps you earn money to pay for your education.

Resources to help you pay for education

- Learn about the tips to lower education costs (https://studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/pay_for_college/cost_35.html).
- Use an an online Financial Aid Advisor to see what aid you might qualify for (www.careerinfonet.org/finaidadvisor/default.asp).
- Apply for federal student aid (FAFSA, www.fafsa.ed.gov/).
- Learn about tax credits to help offset college costs (www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96341,00.html).
- Search for scholarships that may fit you (www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/).
- Use an online loan calculator to estimate your costs (www.finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments.phtml).

Apply to School

Applying to college can help you meet your life and career goals. Colleges have conditions for enrollment.

Do a good job on your applications. Check into tests to get into the school. Get help from the school if you need it to apply.

Tips for Applying to College

Read your mail.

Check mail from schools immediately. A letter might tell you how to register for classes. Financial aid information might also be mailed. School letters often have important dates. Ask a career coach for help, if needed.

Choose several schools.

Apply to up to six different schools for degree programs. It's good to have a back-up plan in case your first choice falls through. If you can't afford to pay the application fees, ask if you can have them waived.

Apply.

Make a checklist of each school's admission steps. Ask for help from your family or career coach to organize your lists. Most schools have application deadlines. Know what day each application is due. Ask each school what their deadlines are. Keep all of your school information in one place.



Keep Advancing Your Career

Successful people keep learning. At every step, think about how to expand your skills. You'll impress employers. And, you'll feel more confident.

Expand your skills while in school.

Getting good grades is not enough to impress most employers. Get involved in activities to expand your skills now. When you graduate, you'll be better prepared to look for jobs.

- Look into student and professional groups (www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx).
- Connect your school assignments to your career.
- Get experience. Participate in career activities (www.iseek.org/careers/studentcareers.html). Your school's career center may have ideas for you to get experience. Ask about where you can be an intern or volunteer.
- Update your career plan with these tasks. See the "Career Plan Worksheet" (Exercise 3.2, page 39).

Expand your skills while you are working.

Learn about the gaps in your skills, knowledge, or credentials.

- Talk with your supervisor about how to expand your skills.
- Request work projects that improve your skills.
- Join a professional or trade group. Learn more about networking in the **Find a Job** section (page 54).
- Get a mentor. Or seek advice from experienced workers in your field.
- Stay current with the technology used in your field.
- Take training offered at your job.
- Update your career plan with these tasks. See the "Career Plan Worksheet" (Exercise 3.2, page 39).

Stay current in your field.

All workers should look at their skills and improve them.

- Explore the job market to learn about trends that affect your field. You can check out your local library for these trends.
- Learn from others working in your field through networking. Learn more about networking in the **Find a Job** section (page 60).
- Use online social networks. You can learn about trends and meet people in your field.
- Update your career plan with these tasks. See the "Career Plan Worksheet" (Exercise 3.2, page 39).



Find a Job

This **Find a Job** section will help you understand the strategies you need to find the right job. It will describe each strategy. It will help you organize your job search so that you can be successful. Here's where you'll apply what you learned in your assessments (page 15) and career exploration (page 26).

Why should you follow job search strategies?

The current job market can be tough. But people find jobs all of the time. The people who find jobs understand what employers look for when they hire. Employers expect that job seekers are good at these job search practices. If are serious about finding a job that fits for you, follow these strategies.

What are the job search strategies that you need to know?

They include:

- Preparing for a job search
- The hiring process
- Networking
- Researching employers
- Job applications
- Resumes and cover letters, and
- Interviewing and negotiating job offers

Get Started and Get Help

Sometimes people look at the job ads in newspapers. They look at the wages and think “I could do that!” However, employers hire people who have the right skills and experience. And they hire people who can show they are good workers. Use the **Succeed in the Workplace** tips to help you be a good employee (page 4).

Know your skills and interests.

There are many ways to use your skills and interests in your work. If you don't know your skills and interests, go to the **Assess Yourself** section (page 15)

Target your job search.

Most people can do several types of jobs. Employers want to know why you would be a good worker for their job. Spend some time learning about the skills needed for the types of jobs you can do. Keep track using the "Job Search Target" worksheet below.

Job Search Target (Exercise 5.1)

Directions: Be prepared. Think about occupations, industries, or employers. Use the **Assess Yourself** section for help, page 15. Write down your targets here.

Job Search Target(s)	
Occupation	
Industry	
Employer	

If you don't know what occupations you want to do, look at the **Explore Careers** section (page 26). Also, your library or career coach will have information about occupations.

Get job search help.

- If you are in college, go to your college career center.
- Every state has services to help job seekers. You can access these services at your local One-Stop Career Center (www.servicelocator.org/onestopcenters.asp). Services can include:
 - Free job search classes
 - Individual employment coaching
 - Free or low-cost work training programs
 - Job leads and employer connections
 - Veterans services
 - Free use of computers, Internet, and phones
 - Unemployment benefits assistance
 - GED exam preparation

More resources.

- Your library may also have ways to help you look for a job. Find a public library near you (www.servicelocator.org/Libraries.asp).
- Job search can be stressful. Find resources in the **Take Care of Yourself** section (page 7).



Learn About the Hiring Process

Each employer has his or her hiring process. But here are four common steps. It is important for every job seeker to do well at each step.

1. The employer looks for the right people for their job opening.

- Many start by looking at their own employees. They may ask for referrals from employees and others they know. This is called networking (see page 60).
- Employers might advertise the job. They may advertise on websites or online job boards.
- Employers may work with a recruiter or agency. They may go to job fairs to find candidates.
- Employers ask applicants to send resumes and cover letters to the company. They may ask them to fill out an application. For resume tips, see page 68; cover letter information in on page 69. See page 67 for more about job applications.

2. The employer screens the applications.

Often times, there are many people who apply for one job. The employer removes the ones who aren't a good match. People may not have the right skills or experience. Or they don't describe their skills well.

Then, the employer picks the applicants that match the job. They may call candidates on the phone to ask them questions. Or they have people come in for an interview.

3. The employer sets up interviews with people who seem to fit their needs.

At the interview, the employer asks each applicant about his or her skills and background. Employers are also looking for people who will fit with their company. They look for things like a "can do" attitude. They look for people who can get along with others. They also want people who like to learn and work hard.

The job seeker is also interviewing the employer. The job seeker wants to make sure that this job and the company is a good fit.

4. The employer makes an offer to a selected candidate.

The employer chooses one person to hire. Then it is time to discuss the job and its benefits. The employer and job candidate discuss the salary, benefits, schedule and other things. This is called negotiation (see page 72). This agreement has to benefit both parties. A job seeker can walk away from an offer if it isn't good for him or her.

Market Yourself

"Market yourself" means to show yourself in the best light to employers. It is very important that you can show that you are a good fit for a job. The person who gets a job may not be the most skilled. They may have been good at promoting themselves. Here are some tips to help you market yourself.

Create your "elevator speech." (Exercise 5.2)

People who hire are very busy. So are people who can help you find a job. You'll be more effective if you can explain your job search targets. An elevator speech is a good tool to use.

Directions: Think about being in an elevator with a potential employer. You have one minute to talk about yourself. You want this person to know your job target and why you're a good fit. Practice your speech with people who can give you feedback. When they hear your elevator speech, do they understand what kind of job you're looking for? Do they understand why you'd be good at it?

Examples of elevator speeches:

- *"My name is Jane Doe. I have two years experience as an office assistant. I also took classes in project management at Whatever College. I have worked in customer service most of my life. I'm looking for an administrative support position. I'd really like to work for a medical company. Do you know of any jobs in that area?"*
- *"I'm John Doe and I'd love to be your caterer for your next event. I have worked as a chef for six years. I'm starting my own catering company. I can make good food for memorable events."*

Your Elevator Speech (Exercise 5.2)

My name is: _____

I'm interested in: _____

My skills and background for this job are: _____

Be prepared and organized.

- **Track the activities you do for your job search.** Use “Job Search Checklist” (Exercise 5.6, page 73) to help.
- **Make a portfolio.** A portfolio of your work can show employers your accomplishments. You may include samples of work and school projects. You can put these samples in a binder. Some people like to put their samples online. You can bring your portfolio to job interviews.

What to Put in Your Portfolio	
If you are a:	You could include:
Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of your work
Chef or baker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of food or meals you've made • Recipes you created • Letters of recommendation from past bosses
Computer programmer or multimedia specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screenshots of your programs • Printout of the computer code you wrote • Letters of recommendation from past bosses
Dancer, actor, or musician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of your performances • Audio recordings of your work
Fashion designer, or tailor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures of the clothing that you have produced • Wear your own creations on the job interview
Office support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures for projects you helped plan • Reports • Newsletters you organized • Spreadsheets • Other examples of work that you completed • Letters of recommendation from past bosses
Writer or journalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of published articles • Printouts of your writing from websites • Video of your news stories

Build Your Network

Did you know that most job openings are not advertised? It's true — most employers have enough applicants without advertising. They often prefer to find employees from people who they trust. This network of referrals is the "hidden job market."

You can tap into the hidden job market by keeping in contact with your network and getting to know other people who can help you. Don't ask them for a job. Ask them for information.

Tips for Building Your Network

Ask for information.

- You can call people who know about or do a job that interest you. Ask for an informational interview (www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Interviews/InformationalInterviews.aspx). This is not the same as a job interview.
- You can ask about the occupation. You can also ask about industries or employers.
- You ask about what you need to know that will help you connect with employers.
- Be polite. Don't be too pushy or you may turn people off.

Be prepared to talk about yourself.

- Make sure you're clear about your job skills and background for your job target. Use the "Job Search Target" Exercise 5.1, page 55.
- Have a resume ready.

Follow good networking habits.

- Networking is like making friends. It's about building relationships.
- Think about ways to give something back to those who have helped you.

Find people in your job target.

- Start with friends, family members, past coworkers, and neighbors. They may know someone in your target job.
- Tell them about your career goals. Use the information from your "Career Plans" worksheet (Exercise 3.2, page 39).

Send thank-you notes when people are helpful to you.

- Always say thank you for any information or job leads you get.

Find a mentor.

- This is a person who knows about the occupation you are interested in.
- Get feedback on your job search ideas and questions.
- Ask to shadow someone on the job.

Look into professional groups.

- See if your job target has a professional group (www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx). Many members are eager to help job seekers. They may know employers with job openings.

Keep your key contacts informed about your efforts in the job search.

- Your contacts want to help you.

Your Network (Exercise 5.3)

Directions: Think of people who might have industry information or can help you in your job search. Make copies of this worksheet to track more names.

How You Know Them	Their Names	
Family	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Friends & Neighbors	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Hobbies & Sports Activities	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Networking & Social Club Members	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Community & Political Groups	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Place of Worship	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
High School & College Alumni	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Supervisors & Coworkers	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Colleagues from other Departments & Companies	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Former Employers & Coworkers	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Customers & Clients	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:
Trade & Professional Organization Members	Name 1: Name 2:	Name 3: Name 4:

Connect with People Online

One way to meet contacts using the Internet is through “social networking” websites. You can use these websites for your job search.

If you use them, think about your goals. Make sure what you write on these sites is well written. Get feedback about what you have posted. Use your Elevator Speech from Exercise 5.2, page 58. People sometimes post their resume on these sites.

Be careful.

- Never list your address, phone number, or bank accounts. Don't give anyone your social security number.
- Be positive. Don't argue with people online. Employers may see this post.
- Scammers may try to sell you training or job search assistance that should be free.

Common Social Networking Websites

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

- Many professionals use LinkedIn. They connect with others in their career fields. They learn about events and trends.
- LinkedIn can be used to research employers.
- To start, you create a profile. This lists your skills, career goals, and past jobs.
- Connect with people you know. You can ask them to post references for you. You can find others in your field by seeing the contacts from people you know. You can ask to add them to your “connections.”
- You can also join groups with your career interests. These groups update information often. You can ask questions and get job leads from these groups.

Twitter: www.twitter.com

- Twitter sends very short messages to many people at one time.
- You can use it to update "followers" on your career or find job leads.
- Employers use it to tell people about job openings. They also use it to find out more about applicants.
- Job seekers post their basic information. They may link to their resumes or blogs.

Facebook: www.facebook.com

- Facebook is a place to connect with your friends and people they know. You make connections with people who share your interests.
- You can search for people who work at employers you'd like to learn about. You can ask to connect with them about your job search.

Research Employers

Remember that most jobs are not listed anywhere. Find these leads by researching your "Job Search Target" (see Exercise 5.1, page 55). You can research occupations, industries, and companies in several ways:

- Start at your public library. They will have business directories and publications. Check out news articles and trade journals. There may be other local books focused on your target.
- You can also learn about employers from your network contacts (page 60).
- You can find a list of possible employers online. Use an Employer Locator to find businesses (www.acinet.org/acinet/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp). Look for a supervisor's or hiring manager's contact and company information.

Research occupations, industries, and companies (Exercise 5.4)

Directions: Think about your job search target from Exercise 5.1 (page 60). Research your targets. Your library or career coach may also be able to help you to do this task.

What businesses are near my home?	
Which industries hire for my target job?	
What can I expect to get paid in my target job?	
What are the future trends for this occupation or industry?	

Research each employer you are interested in.

You can look at the company's website for this information. Or your librarian may be able to help you.

What products or services does the company provide?	
What jobs does the company hire for?	
Has the company been in the news lately?	
What is the company's mission and values?	
Who are managers in this company?	

Contacting Employers

Once you know a bit about your target employers, you can call them. Use your occupation, industry, and company research for this call (Exercise 5.4, page 63) . If you feel like you have a good connection with the employer, offer to send a cover letter and resume. See page 68 for resume help.

Tips for Calling Employers

Write down what you want to say. Use an "Employer Contact Script" (Exercise 5.5 on next page). This is important if you are not used to calling employers. Don't read your script; your conversation should be natural.

Smile while you are talking on the phone. It makes your voice sound cheerful and relaxed.

Your outgoing voicemail message should not have music or jokes on it. Just say your name and ask the caller to leave a message.

Tell your roommates and family that employers will be calling. Ask them to take clear messages and give them to you right away.

Call back all employers who call you, even if you no longer want the job.

Return all phone calls within 24 hours.

Tips for E-Mail Employers

Use a simple e-mail address with your name or initials for your job search. Don't use inappropriate nicknames or jokes like "cutiepie@email.com."

Start the e-mail with something of interest to the reader. Let them know right away why you are writing and how you can help their business. Write the e-mail the same way you would a letter. Don't use online acronyms (IMHO, LOL, etc.).

Have a subject line that is clear and interesting.

At the end of your message, tell the employer you plan to follow-up. Give them another way to contact you such as your phone number. If you sent the e-mail without them knowing, ask if they want you to keep in touch with them in another way.

Check for the correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

If the employer does not contact you, and you really want an interview, call them.

Employer Contact Script (Exercise 5.5)

Directions: Use the script help plan your conversation. Don't read your script; your conversation should be natural.

<u>Employer Contact Script (Exercise 5.5)</u>
Hello. My name is: _____
I learned about your company and found your name from: _____ _____
I'm interested in the job of: _____
My skills and background for this position are: _____ _____
Are you hiring people with my skills? Will you be hiring in the near future?
Do you know of any other companies that might be interested in my skills?
Would it be OK if I called you again in a few weeks to check on your hiring?
Thank you for your time.

Find Job Openings

Employers look favorably on job seekers who know about their companies. They also like job seekers who know why they are a good fit. Don't apply for "any job" in any career cluster.

Start by thinking about the type of job you really want and go after it.

Target Your Job Search (See Exercise 5.1, page 55)

I am interested in this occupation or industry:

Next, spend time researching employers.

How do you know which employers to research? There are two ways. One is by finding advertised job leads. The other is searching the hidden job market. See **Networking** (page 60) for more about the hidden job market. Also, learn how to **Research Employers** (page 63).

Find advertised job leads.

Once you find job leads, make sure you research each employer. See "Research Occupations" (Exercise 5.4, page 63) before you apply. Then, contact employers directly. See "Employer Contact Script" (Exercise 5.5, page 65).

1. Employer Websites:

- Most employers post their job openings online. You can look at company websites and learn about the company before you apply.

2. Job Boards or Job Banks: These are websites that post job openings.

- Your state has a job bank with jobs from all types of employers. Find your state job bank (www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/cos_jobsites.aspx).
- Many industries or professional associations have job banks (www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx). Ask your library or career coach to help you find these industry-specific job banks.
- Commercial job banks, like Monster (www.monster.com) or Indeed (www.indeed.com), post all types of jobs.

3. Temporary or Placement Agencies:

- Employment agencies find short-term and contract positions (www.dexknows.com/local/business/business_services/employment_services/). If interested, learn more about them. Ask your library or career coach. Be careful using employment services. Make sure you know are clear on the terms of your agreement.

Apply for Jobs

Employers ask to get job seekers' information in several ways. Pay close attention to what the employer wants from job applicants. Make sure you send them the documents they want. There are common documents to apply for jobs. Take a closer look at **Job Applications**, **Resumes** (page 68), and **Cover Letters** (page 69).

Job Applications

Employers use a form to learn about each job seeker. This form is called an application. Employers use applications to compare the job seekers to see who are the best matches for the jobs. Use words from the job description on your application, if they fit.

Job Application Tips

Make a rough draft. Get your references now. Get a copy of a blank application (www.jobseekersguide.org/US/sites/default/files/ApplicationExercise.pdf). Fill in all of the fields. Make sure you know all of your past employers and dates you worked. You'll also need addresses and phone numbers of past employers. Get feedback on how you answer each question. Use your rough draft to fill in all of your "real" applications.

Follow the directions. Be honest. Read the entire application before you start it. Pay close attention to what they ask you. Do not write in sections where they say "do not write below this line." Also do not write where they say "for office use only."

Fill out applications neatly and completely. Answer all of the questions. If one doesn't apply to you, you can use "n/a". This means "not applicable." This shows the employer that you did not overlook anything. Do not abbreviate.

Always list your "position desired." This is your job search target or the title from a job lead.

Give a range for your salary. Employer may use this question to screen out applicants. Use range or say "negotiable." This leaves you room to negotiate a higher wage.

Give positive reasons for leaving jobs. Choose your words carefully with this question. Don't say "Fired," "Quit," or "Illness." Instead think about these reasons. "Quit for a better job." "Left to work closer to home." "Left for a career change." "Quit to move to a new area." "Quit to attend school."

Write Good Resumes

A resume is a communication tool job seekers use to get interviews. Resumes are not a list of what you did. They list what you can do on the job. Again, use your Occupational Research (Exercise 5.4, page 63).

List your skills and experience that employers want. When describing work experience on your resume, start with an action verb. Do not say “responsible for ...”

Resume Formats

A **chronological resume** lists your work history starting with the most recent. This is the most common type of resume. It is used by people who are staying in the same career pathway.

A **functional resume** groups your skills and experience by skill areas. These skill areas are called “functions.” It is often used by people who do not have any work history.

A **combination resume** joins the other two formats. It groups your skills by function and it lists a short work history. It is often used by people who are changing careers.

What Features to Include on Your Resume

Some people start their resumes with a **career objective**. It is your target occupation or industry. Your resume can use a career objective or a summary statement.

A **summary statement** shows why you are a good fit for your target. You can highlight your skills and traits that make you successful. Show why you would be a good fit for the company.

Contact information tells the employer how to reach you. It is very important for setting up interviews. Most people list their address, phone number, and e-mail.

Education lists your degrees and classes. Include work licenses and certifications.

Your **work experience** describes where you worked. It also describes your skills and accomplishments.

Resume Writing Resources:

www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumeAdvice/SamplesTemplates.aspx

www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffenderresume.html

www.careerinfonet.org/resume/resume_features.asp

Create Cover Letters

A cover letter is a letter that you send with a resume. A resume is focused on an occupation. The cover letter is for a specific position and can be more personal. Cover letters are targeted to a job lead or employer.

You can use a cover letter sample to get started

(www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Letters/CoverLetterTemplate.aspx). Make sure each cover letter you send is different.

Parts of a Cover Letter	
Heading and greeting	Every cover letter needs the date. List your name and how to contact you. Address the letter to a specific person.
Opening and introduction	Explain who you are and why you are writing. Tell them how you found out about the position.
Body	Sell yourself. Reveal why you are a perfect and unique match for the position. Explain why you have chosen the employer.
Assertive closing	Be positive. Tell them that you will contact them.

References.

When you apply for jobs, you will be asked for references. They are people who can talk about your skills and work history. Choose your references carefully. You want people who will say good things about you. You'll need to list their names and contact information.

Cover Letter & References Resources:

www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Letters/CoverLetterTemplate.aspx
www.iseek.org/jobs/references.html
<http://iseekinteractive.org/blog/?p=1956>

Know How to Interview

As you job search, your networking contacts will help you to find job leads (see page 60). These job leads will turn into interviews. Are you prepared to turn those interviews into job offers?

Be prepared to respond to common questions. Find someone to practice with. That person can give you feedback on your responses.

Interview Tips

Setting up job interviews

Think about what you are going to say before you pick up the phone to call an employer. You want the employer to think of you as a good future employee.

You will have about 20 seconds to make the employer want to meet you. Therefore, what you say has to be brief, to the point, and persuasive.

Preparing for an interview

- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. You might need to fill out paperwork before the interview.
- Go by yourself. If a friend or relative drives you, have them wait in the car.
- Wear an interview outfit that matches what you will wear on the job.
- Bring your sense of humor and smile.

What to bring to an Interview

- Extra copies of your resume (page 68), your references (page 69), and portfolio with work samples (page 59).
- Papers needed to complete your application (page 67) including copies of work licenses, your driving record (if required), and your social security or immigration cards.
- Questions for you to ask during the interview
(www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Interviews/SampleInterviewQuestions.aspx).

During the interview

- Display confidence. Shake hands firmly, but only if a hand is offered to you first.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Let the interviewer start the conversation.
- Listen carefully. Give honest, direct answers.
- Accept all questions with a smile, even the hard ones.
- Think about your answers in your head before you talk. If you don't understand a question, ask to hear it again or be explained. You don't have to rush, but you don't want to appear indecisive.

Follow-up after the interview.

The job interview is not over when you leave the meeting. You have one more chance to impress the employer. Follow up the interview with a thank-you letter.

Send a thank-you letter or note to each person who interviewed you. Your letter should have these main ideas:

- Thank them for their time.
- Say you are interested in working for them.
- Briefly say why you are qualified for the job.
- Give any information that you forgot to say in the interview.
- Add a final "thank you" for the chance to interview.
- Say how your plan to follow up.

If you told the interviewers that you would give them added information, make sure that you do. Keep track of when you said you would contact this employer to find out if you were hired. Don't forget to make that contact.

Reasons Why People Don't Get Hired After an Interview
• Application form or resume is incomplete or sloppy
• Arriving late for the interview
• Didn't ask questions about the job
• Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time
• Lack of interest and enthusiasm
• Lack of maturity
• Lack of planning for career; no purpose and no goals
• Negative attitude about past employers
• Nervousness or lack of confidence and poise
• No genuine interest in the company or job
• Overemphasis on money
• Overly aggressive behavior
• Poor personal appearance
• Responding vaguely to questions
• Unwillingness to start at the bottom

Negotiate a Job Offer

Negotiating your salary is a key part of the job search. Wait until after you get a job offer to talk about pay and benefits. Negotiating is a two-way street. People make these deals differently. Use the tips below that work for you. There are some negotiating tips that will help you make good decisions.

Negotiating Tips

Think about the offer

- Know what salary you can expect for the occupation (see page 29).
- Think about your pay needs based on your personal budget (page 12).
- Try to find out what the company pays before the interview. Call the human resources office or your networking contacts.
- Pay is only one part of job compensation. A job with low pay might have good benefits like a flexible schedule or health insurance. Think about the job offer in terms of your needs, and long-term career and life goals.
- Talk over the offer with someone you respect. Make a list of the pros and cons. Use the "Weigh Your Options" exercise on page 8.

Use good communication skills

- If you can, do not accept a job on the spot. It's common to get a few days to think about it. Even if you know you are going to say "yes," ask for 24 hours.
- When offered the job, make it clear if you want it. If you are not sure, say there are some items you would like to discuss before you can accept the job.
- Listen carefully to the offer. If it is different or less than you expected, let them know that. Say you are still interested in the job if they want to reconsider their offer.
- Ask for basic, practical benefits first. Those requests might include more money, tuition, or training. You might also ask for more vacation time, a flexible schedule, stock options, or parking privileges.
- Negotiations should never be mean or emotional. This is a business meeting. Use your values and skills to negotiate. Do not use your need for the job to negotiate.

Understand the rules of the game

- Don't assume the first offer is fixed. Even if the interviewer tells you it is, it rarely is.
- Did they offer the same pay and benefits a few days later? That's probably the final offer. When this happens, you can ask for a six-month review to look at your performance and pay. You can also turn down the job, and ask that they keep you in mind for future openings. But don't burn bridges — you never know what might happen.
- Don't say "no" as a trick to negotiate for more pay. When you say "no," be ready to lose the job forever.
- When you accept their offer, ask them to put the pay and benefits in writing.

Job Search Checklist (Exercise 5.6)

Employers expect that you know common ways to look for jobs. This checklist shows you all of these ways.

Directions: Use this list to help you organize your job search. Check off the items on this list as you complete them. Write down your job search resources. Also, list any follow up items. Check this list often. Make sure you don't forget to do any of them.

	Activity	Date Completed	Resources Used	Follow Up / Updates
1	Get Started and Get Help			
2	Learn about Hiring Processes			
3	Build Your Network			
4	Market Yourself			
5	Understand Job Applications			
6	Write Your Resume			
7	Cover Letters and References			
8	Find Employers and Job Openings			
9	Prepare For Interviews			
10	Follow Up After Interviews			
11	Negotiate A Job Offer			



Managing Your Career: Move Forward

This section shows you how to advance your career and keep growing.

Think of your career as a lifelong journey. It's important to know that the choices you make now will impact your future. All of your career management tasks such as your volunteer work, extra training, and jobs, are steps on your career ladder.

Career management tips.

A rewarding career doesn't just happen. You have to keep working at it. To be successful, use these tips. If things get hard, stay positive.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay current in your chosen career field. Join and be active in professional and trade associations. Use these groups to see industry trends and to add to your network. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifelong learning is important. Think about short-term training options. Go to the workshops and trainings that your employer offers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of how changes in your personal life affect your career and vice versa. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know your personal and work values. Develop a sense of purpose. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look over and update your career and personal goals every few years. Also review your goals when big, life-changing events happen. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to, you can revisit the steps of this career plan in any order. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can work on more than one step at the same time. |

Do you have a good attitude toward your work?

- Ask questions, and ask for help when you need it. Accept constructive criticism.
- If you make a mistake, admit it and find out how to fix it.
- Before you look for a promotion or a new job, learn all that you can in your present job.
- When you get a performance review, use it to learn how you can do your job better.

Succeed in the Workplace

A rewarding career doesn't just happen. You have to keep working at it. To be successful, use the tips listed below. If things get hard, stay positive.

You've found a good job. Now, how do you live up to your employer's expectations? What can you do to show you deserve a raise or a promotion? Here are some tips to help you keep and succeed in your new job:

Tips to Succeed in the Workplace

Stick to your work schedule

- Always be on time to work. Have a backup plan for transportation and child care. If you are running late, call your boss as soon as possible.
- Don't take time off in the first few weeks. Let your new boss know you're dependable.
- Leave and return from breaks on time. Let your supervisor know when you will be away from your workstation.

Follow the rules at work

- Know the company rules and policies. Pay attention to all manuals, orientations and safety lessons. If you are not sure of a policy, ask your supervisor or human resources.
- Follow the proper chain of command if you have a problem at work. Talk to your immediate supervisor first, unless told to do something else.

Dress appropriately

- When you start a new job, find out what clothing looks OK and is safe to wear.
- Come to work clean and well groomed. Do not wear heavy perfumes or colognes. Go easy on the makeup.
- Look like you take pride in yourself and your job.

Act professionally

- Don't make personal phone calls or use company equipment for your own tasks.
- Speak in a way that's appropriate for work. Don't use curse words, slang or speak too casually to customers or your boss.
- Never use alcohol or illegal drugs at work. You could get fired if caught. It could also keep you from being hired for other jobs.

Get along with others

- Be a team player and help coworkers with projects.
- Hang around coworkers who have good attitudes and work hard.
- Everyone has different views of politics, religion and cultures. Most companies have rules supporting diversity.

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Online and Local Resources

These are websites and services to help with your career, training, and job search decisions.

Manage Your Career: Build a Foundation

Financial: Tips and resources	www.smartaboutmoney.org
Financial: Help for different stages of life	www.mymoney.gov/life-events.html
Financial: Reality check	www.iseek.org/careers/realitytool.html
Changes: Worker reemployment help	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/
Changes: Dealing with job loss	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/GetImmediateHelp/DealingwithJobLoss.aspx
Support: Find social services near you	www.iseek.org/jobs/publicservices.html
Support: Local employment services	www.iseek.org/jobs/employmentservices.html

Assess Yourself

Work Skills: ISEEK skills assessment	www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment
Interests: Match to occupations	http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/
Work Skills: Match past jobs to new options	www.myskillsmyfuture.org
Interests: Short RIASEC assessment	www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/interestAssessment.cfm
Work Values: Match to occupations	http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/Work_Values/

Explore Careers

Career Changers: Change occupations or industries	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/ChangeCareers/SwitchingOccupationorIndustry.aspx
Career Changers: Transferable skills	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/ChangeCareers/WhatareYourSkills.aspx
Career Clusters: List of 16 clusters	http://careerclusters.org/16clusters.cfm
Career Clusters: Occupations by cluster	www.iseek.org/careers/clusters.html
Find Info: Occupations	www.careerinfonet.org/Occupations/select_occupation.aspx
Find Info: Industries	www.careerinfonet.org/industry/Ind_State.aspx
Find Info: Fast-growing occupations	www.careerinfonet.org/select_educ_rd.asp
Find Info: Job vacancy reports	www.iseek.org/jobs/vacancies.html
Find Info: Local bright-outlook careers	www.iseek.org/jobs/regional.html
Ex-Offenders: Career choices	www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffendercareer.html
Ex-Offenders: Skills	www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffenderskills.html
Ex-Offenders: Job search tips	www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffenderjobsearch.html

Create a Plan & Set Goals

Create a Plan	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Plan/CreatePlan.aspx
Set Goals	www.iseek.org/careers/careergoals.html
Checklist	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Plan/Checklist.aspx

Expand Your Skills

Get Job Skills: Work-based learning	www.iseek.org/education/workbased.html
Get Job Skills: Adult basic education	www.iseek.org/education/abe.html
Education Pays	www.careerinfonet.org/finaidadvisor/earnings.aspx
How to Gain Skills: Education options	www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/Plan/WhatsAvailable.aspx
How to Gain Skills: What schools offer	www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/Plan/BePrepared.aspx
How to Gain Skills: Short-term training	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/UpgradeYourSkills/ShorttermTraining.aspx
How to Gain Skills: Get credentials	www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/GetCredentials.aspx
How to Gain Skills: Find schools and programs	www.careerinfonet.org/edutraining/
Pay for Education: Financial aid	www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/Pay/FinancialAid.aspx
Pay for Education: Scholarship search	www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp
Pay for Education: WIA-eligible programs	www.careeronestop.org/WiaProviderSearch.asp
Keep Advancing: While in school	www.iseek.org/careers/studentcareers.html
Keep Advancing: While working	www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx

Find a Job

Get Help: Find your One-Stop Center	www.servicelocator.org/National_Locators.asp
Get Help: Find local employment programs	www.iseek.org/careers/careertrainingprograms.html
Get Help: Find a career counselor	http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/consumer_find
Hiring Process: How employers hire	www.iseek.org/jobs/employershire.html
Hiring Process: Overqualified	www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/FindaJob/AreYouOverqualified.aspx
Market Yourself: Make a portfolio	www.iseek.org/jobs/worksamples.html
Market Yourself: Personal branding	http://iseekinteractive.org/blog/?p=1334
Networking	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Plan/Networking.aspx
Connect Online: Social networking tips	www.iseek.org/industry/manufacturing/jobs/social-networking.html
Research Employers: Find potential employers	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Plan/PotentialEmployers.aspx
Research Employers: Employer locator	www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp
Find Job Openings: Your state job bank	www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/cos_jobsites.aspx
Find Job Openings: General job banks	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/COS_jobsites.aspx
Job Applications: Ways to apply	www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Apply/WaystoApply.aspx
Job Applications: Filling out applications	www.iseek.org/jobs/jobapplications.html
Job Applications: Tips for ex-offenders	www.iseek.org/guide/exoffenders/exoffenderjobapp.html

Find a Job, continued

Write Your Resume: Create resumes	www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumeAdvice/CreateResume.aspx
Write Your Resume: Resume samples	www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumeAdvice/SamplesTemplates.aspx
Write Your Resume: Improve your resume	www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumeAdvice/ImproveResume.aspx
Cover Letters: How to write one	www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Letters/CoverLetters.aspx
Cover Letters: Inquiry letters	www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Letters/InquiryLetters.aspx
Cover Letters: List your references	www.iseek.org/jobs/references.html

Manage Your Career: Move Forward

Career Management: Lifelong journey	www.iseek.org/careers/journey.html
Career Management: Handling stress	www.iseek.org/jobs/stressmanagement.html
Succeed in the Workplace	www.iseek.org/jobs/succeed.html



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To provide feedback on this guide: <http://iseek.custhelp.com/app/ask>.

To get job search and career help from a counselor, contact: International Association of Jewish Vocational Services, (215)854-0233; www.iajvs.org.



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www.JobSeekersGuide.org