Career Exploration Guide

This guide is designed to help you analyze the career areas you explore to see how particular jobs match or mismatch your interests, skills, aptitudes and values. In these explorations, you will draw upon the information you have gleaned from the assessment activities you have already completed. Your informational interviews or employers and employees, managers and staff members at worksites in the community will generate additional data for use in your career decision making.

The guide has three sections. The first section asks you to prepare for the career exploration by focusing on what you want to get from the experience. The second section provides you with sample questions for use during the interview with the community resource person at the worksite. You will want to review these in advance and perhaps add some questions of your own. Some participants like to prepare for the exploration by role playing the interview with another participant. Remember, the purpose of the interview is to seek information rather than to ask for a job. Section Three asks you to reflect on the exploration and to interpret its meaning for you. You may find that a career area option that you thought was promising really isn’t a good one for you after all. Or you may confirm your first positive impressions about a career area and decide to pursue it in earnest. In any case, the information you record on the guide is for your use only.
CAREER EXPLORATION

General Information

Company or Agency___________________________  Service or
Product Produced___________________________

Resource Person Interviewed___________________  ________________________________

Address___________________________________  Position___________________________

Type of Job Explored___________________________  ________________________________

Appointment Date__________ Time:______________  Telephone________________________

Email Address_______________________________  Web Site__________________________

Preparing for the Interview

Before you begin this exploration, describe what information you want to acquire from this experience. Use these questions to guide your thoughts and record your answers for later use.

1. How would this job fit with your
   - Interests?
   - Personal values?
   - Long- and short-range goals?

2. Which of your skills do you think you could apply in this job?

3. What do you want to know about the characteristics of the job itself?

4. Briefly outline the questions you are going to ask this employer. (See Section Two for ideas—then add any other questions you want to ask.)

5. Are there any other issues you think should be considered before you visit the worksite?
Interviewing Your Resource Person

These questions provide guidelines to thoroughly gather information about this job and the work environment.

1. How did you get started in this job?

2. What experience and training have you had as preparation?

3. What other jobs have you held?

4. How long have you worked here?

5. What is your work schedule (days and hours)?

6. What kinds of tasks do you do in a normal working day?

7. What, if any, are the standards of dress expected of those who work here?

8. How many people do you work with?

9. What you like about your job?
10. What do you dislike about your job?

11. Do you work in an open area or in an enclosed space?

12. Is most of your work done indoors, outdoors, standing or sitting?

13. What are some work tasks and activities typical of this job?

14. What kind of equipment and tools are used on this job?

15. What wages are paid for a beginning worker in the job?

16. Is there a union or bargaining group to represent workers? If so, which one?

17. Is there a group insurance plan here? Health? Life? Dental?

18. Is there a company-supported retirement benefit program?
19. Are there jobs that can be shared or is flex-time an option?

20. What are the opportunities for promotion?

21. What is the long-range outlook for jobs in this field?

22. Does this company provide in-service training for employees?

23. Is there a procedure for workers to influence decision making?

24. Are there opportunities to assume responsibility and use initiative in this job?

25. What are the educational and/or special training requirements of this job?
   - no high school diploma
   - high school diploma
   - GED
   - vocational training program
   - community college
   - 4-year college
   - other
   - other

26. What kinds of experiences are required by this job?
   - previous work experience
   - apprenticeship program
   - vocational training program
   - community college
   - community college
   - none
27. What do you consider to be the skills and aptitudes most necessary to the performance of this job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Aptitudes</th>
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28. (If there are other questions you want to add, include them here.)
Reflecting on What You Found Out

After you have completed the interview, take some time to reflect on it and assess the merit of this job as an option for yourself.

1. Describe your overall impression of this job.

2. How do your personal values fit this job?

3. Did you leave the interview knowing whether or not this job fits your long- and short-range goals?

4. What interests and aptitudes do you have that might be exercised in performing this job?

5. What interests and aptitudes do you have that would be used outside the job?

6. What skills that you want to use again could you apply in this job?

7. Identify what you would need to do to acquire a similar job (more training, identify potential employers, etc.).
8. List the skills and aptitudes you think you would have to learn in order to do this job, and suggest ways you think they could be learned. (For example, on-the-job training, college courses, company training programs, etc.)

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<th>Aptitudes</th>
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### Assessing This Career Option

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>UNCERTAIN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does the work interest me?</td>
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<td>Would the work tasks use my skills and aptitudes?</td>
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<td>Do I like the working conditions and environment?</td>
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<td>Can I manage the required training?</td>
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<td>Is the pay adequate?</td>
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<td>Are there job openings in this area?</td>
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<td>Can I physically handle the work?</td>
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<td>Do I want to pursue this career area further?</td>
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What other sources of information (people, books, teachers, etc.) do I plan to use to get more information about this job?

When will I complete this activity?

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CAREER EXPLORATION JOURNAL ACTIVITY

The actual experience of interviewing a person who is doing something you think you might like to do is crucial to your career decision making. This it is important that you not only accumulate and process the information you gain from the interview, but also that you react from your gut to the experience.

- How did your feelings change from the time that you waited for the interview to the time you actually spoke with the person... to the time you left the setting? Were you excited? Bored? Depressed? Titillated? Intrigued? Inspired? Discouraged?

- What was your emotional reaction to the interview process itself? Was it a process you can approach easily again?

- What was your personal response to the atmosphere or the setting of the job site interview?

- Picture yourself in the setting. What about the picture would you like to be able to change?

- How were your expectations met or not met during the interview? Had you anticipated your response to the person you were interviewing? His/her response to you?

- As you reflect upon the interview, what will you do differently next time?