

STEPS TOWARDS DEVELOPING YOUR CAREER

Knowing What You Want: The first step to finding the right job involves knowing what you want. Getting to this point may mean doing some self-assessment and self-inventory of your interests, values, skills, and experience. Knowing yourself well will help to clarify your career path choices. Your values are lead indicators. Keep in mind, that a job provides one with basic financial needs, but a job is still just one aspect in our lives that needs balancing with our personal values. Don't be afraid to seek assistance. Career counseling and self-help resources are available. The following questions may be considered while evaluating your career choices:

- What is your ideal work environment?
- What is your ideal location?
- What is meaningful work to you?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What kind of reward is most important to you?
- What are your strengths?
- How will you be supported during your time of transition?
- Are you ready to address obstacles that may be hindering you?

Researching Career Options: Develop a list of career possibilities to research. Visit career center libraries and utilize the internet to learn about various careers. Visit various organizations that offer your career field of choice. Interview persons in your desired career. Determine the career requirements in terms of training and experience. Find out how people get their foot-in-the-door whether it's by starting entry level, promotion from within the company, or outsourcing. Keep up with professional journals that relate to your desired career. Meet with faculty who have worked in your desired career field to discuss the career outlook for your field.

Getting the Experience and Education: Once you have narrowed down your career options, you'll need to gain qualifications for your career. Some experience may be gained through internship programs or temporary work experience. Such assignments sometimes lead to permanent placement. Try volunteering with an agency that allows you to exercise the career skills that you are hoping to build. You may not land the ideal job right away, but hopefully it will contain some elements of your ideal job. View each job as a stepping stone towards your desired career. Career development is a long-term goal that occurs over a length of time.

Networking: Use any job contact leads such as family, friends, neighbors, and community members. Become an active member in professional associations. Attend conferences, workshops, seminars or meetings where persons in your desired career field gather. Watch for recruiting fairs where employers of your career field attend. If you target specific employers, log onto their job board website and monitor it periodically.