

Who can I talk to?

Family and friends are a good place to start. People who know you can tell you about their jobs in a casual setting. School counselors and other community members will also talk with you. Think about the questions and make a list before you begin.

Where can I get information about careers?

You can get information from many different sources. Public, school, and church libraries have materials available to you. Newspapers have job listings and articles about people at work. Human resources departments of government employers have job descriptions. Job centers and personnel agencies also have information. If you have access to a computer, there are multiple sites that can help you explore.

How can I experience different careers?

It might be a good idea for you to “try out” some different careers. Hospitals, libraries, churches, and professional and civic associations all have multiple opportunities for volunteers. Many high schools offer programs like apprenticeship, internships, and job shadowing. Colleges and universities may provide co-op and internship programs. Part-time or temporary jobs will also give you career experiences.

What information should I collect?

You should ask questions about things that are important to you. Here are some examples to help you begin exploring:

- What are the tasks performed by this occupation?
- Do the tasks require interests, abilities, skills, and values that match mine?
- What education does this career require? Where can I get this kind of training? How can I pay for this education? Will I need periodic retraining to stay in this career?

- What is the future of this career?
- What is the typical work attire?
- What are the normal work hours? Are flexible schedules available? Can I work from home?
- Does this job require travel?
- What is the path of advancement?
- What are the health and retirement benefits generally found in this line of work?
- How much money will this career pay?
- Do I need to relocate to take this job?

How do I know what my career options are?

The options are endless and constantly changing. Today’s list of careers may look different next year. In addition, your career needs will be constantly changing. First, know yourself. Next, learn about the world of work. Then, find your place. You will repeat this process many times during your life.

Contact a counselor at your school to receive more information and to discuss your options. The material contained in this pamphlet is current as of March 2009. For the most current information visit our web site: www.gcic.peachnet.edu

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Making career decisions is a lifelong process. It is all about exploring and experiencing the world of work. It is also about understanding your abilities, interests, skills, and values and combining these to create a meaningful framework for life. You will have many opportunities to discover and rediscover careers that match your changing lifestyle. It is important that you are an active participant in this decision-making process.

Career decision-making begins with you, your awareness of the world around you, and your ability to understand what is important to you. The following checklist may help you begin:

- Learn about yourself: interests, abilities, skills, and values
- Observe individuals in the workplace
- Talk with family and friends about their work experiences
- Collect information about specific careers and companies
- Experience different careers through volunteer or part-time work, or school internship, co-op, and apprenticeship programs
- Consider your personal short-term and long-term goals

Frequently Asked Questions

What is career decision-making?

This is the process of making informed career choices based on your personal experiences.

Where do I start?

A good way to start is by learning about yourself. You will be happiest if your career is a good fit and brings you satisfaction. Make a list of your interests, abilities, skills, and values. Consider careers that require some of the same traits.

How do I determine my interests? Why is this important?

Your interests are the things that you like to do. Some people have hobbies like cooking or gardening. These hobbies might transfer to a career as a chef or landscape designer. Careers that have a close match to your interests may be more personally rewarding.

How do I determine my abilities?

Abilities are those physical and mental activities that you seem to do easily. Perhaps you can draw animals or comfort people in need. These abilities might help you obtain a career as an artist or a counselor. Sometimes, additional education will help you enhance your abilities.

How do I determine my skills?

Skills are activities that can be learned or developed by education or training. You can increase your math skills by going to school or you can attend a conference and learn about a new computer software package. Every job will require you to do certain activities or tasks, and each task will require a variety of skills. Your skills will continue to increase over your lifetime.

What are values?

Your values are the principles that you use to determine how much something means to you. For example, you like to work on cars and you are concerned about the environment. Then perhaps a career working on electric cars or designing alternate fuel vehicles would be right for you.

