

CAREER EXPLORATION AND TRAINING *tipsheet*

Discover your Interests, Skills and Career Training Choices



Preparing to Go Home

There are many important things to do before you go home. Getting your IDs. Finding housing. Working to improve your school and job skills. Finding transportation to get around. (See other Tipsheets for more on these things.) Finding a first job after you return to the community (see Employment Tipsheet) is very important. But, that first job may not be a job you want forever. You may not make enough money in that job. So, you will need to start looking for the next job based on your interests and skills. We know that if people are in a job they like and do well, they can move up into a more rewarding career path. Getting that first job after release is very important! Then, your long-term goal is to stay employed with a job you like, lowering the chances you get new charges and go back to prison.

Questions to think about:

- Do I know what kinds of jobs and careers I would like or not like?
- What jobs have I had in the past?
- What did I like or not like about past jobs?
- Have I taken any career assessments to help me think about my interests and skills?
- Can I use skills I learned in prison or within the juvenile justice system in a real job?

Most Americans work until they are 65 or older. So taking small steps toward a job and career you like and can grow in will make you happier. You will probably earn more money and be more stable in your family and community.

Career Development for any person has **4** major steps:

1. Self Exploration Who am I? What are my interest, skills, and abilities?
2. Career Exploration Learn more about the types of jobs, careers, and training that interest me.
DO THE HOMEWORK!
3. Job Exploration. Work on my job search to find jobs based on my interests, skills, training, and experience.
Also think about my skill types.
 - *Hard technical skills* are things like computer programming or typing.
 - *Soft skills* are things like communication, getting along with people, showing up on time, and so on.
 - *Transferable skills* are learned in one place and can be used in other jobs.
For example, the skill of using a cash register I learned while waitressing might help me work in a store.
4. Planning next steps Set short-term goals that can be reached quickly and longer-term goals that will take more time to achieve. The short-term goals should be steps that lead to the longer-term goal. Short-term goals could include learning what I need to do to reach my longer-term goal, and finding out who can help.

This Tipsheet will only focus on discovering who **YOU** really are as you explore careers. American Job Centers near you can help you learn about the many careers and training programs that may be right for you. This is the start of planning for what your future really can be! (Read the Employment Tipsheet for job search strategies and resources.)

Before Your Release

You don't need to wait until you are out. You can do a lot to prepare before you leave. Here are some questions to ask:

What? What is my job goal? What do I want to do? What kind of job do I want for now? For the long run?

How? How can I get this job? What do I need to do? Do I need training or more school? How can I write my resume to get this job? What will my criminal record (RAP sheet) mean for my goal?

Where? Where do I need to go for help in reaching my goal? Do I need to go to a job center? Will I need a job-training program? Will I need to go to community college or trade school? Is there a re-entry program or job agency that can help me?

Who? Who do I need to involve in my goal? Are there family, friends, or community members who can help? What about religious groups or people who have helped me before? Can I get help from mentors or other people who are working with me?



- Most prisons offer some type of career exploration services. Sign up for the classes that will help you learn more about your interests, abilities, and skills.
- Orientation and Assessment: Hopefully before your release or soon thereafter, someone will tell you about the services they offer. You may be asked to sign up and tell them some basic things about yourself. For example, your work history, education and where you live. You might be asked to take several survey assessments. Don't worry, these just help figure out what you are best at. That way they can find a good job match for you. The kind of assessments they might give might be ready and math, things you like to do, or your skills in certain areas.
- Write down things you're interested in and that are important to you.
- Think about any prison job or good work experience from before. What skills did you use that can be used in other types of jobs?
- Make a folder of your interests, skills, assessments, and other career "homework" you did.
- What career path is the most interesting to you? Helping others? Hospitality? Construction? Transportation? Retail? Landscaping? Arts and media? Medical? Technical or STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)? Or even owning your own business eventually?
- While you were in jail you had time to think about your past life on the streets – and what you want to be and DO when you get out. Maybe you never saw yourself having a "real job" or a career you like. But, growing means getting yourself ready for a better life.

It takes the 3 P's: Plan, Prepare, and Practice

Just like playing sports, planting a garden, or making a special meal, success means planning, preparing, and practicing. Do one step at a time as you choose a career that you like that will pay the money you need.

After Your Release

Once you are out, there will be more for you to do. You can start your career exploration and planning for training programs. Start by doing these things:

- Create an Action Plan to take small steps to reach your career goals. Write on the attached worksheets as you build your Action Plan.
- Find good friends and family who will keep you working on your career plan even while you are employed in a first job you may not like very much.
- Enroll in training programs that use your interests and skills to help you get that next job.
- Take one day at a time when looking for that first job. The job you start out with may not be the career you dream about. But, it is a first step to give you more experience, education, or training to help you get there.
- Get that first job when you get out! But do something small every day to help you explore your next job or career based on your interests, skills, and training.
- You, like everyone else, will have a job for a long time. Plan now to use both personal and work time to develop your skills.
- Achieving your goals will be hard work! But you can do it if you try hard, take small steps, and keep your eye on the target.

Now, let's explore some jobs and careers that might interest you.

PLANNING TOOL #1: Career Information and Support

Use the chart below to put the name, phone, e-mail address, and location of people what can help you get that first job and prepare for the next job. You might not know someone at each of these places, but fill in the ones who you think might be able to help. Ask your case manager,/parole or probation officer to help you find this information.

WHAT I NEED....

List Specific Names of Places and Contact Information

	Inside the Prison	American Job Center (One Stop)	Community College Career Center	Reentry Programs	Public Libraries	Internet Sites I've tried? (See Resources)
Tools to help me figure out what career might interest me (career interest assessments).						
Help finding my job and career pathways based on my skills and interests.						
Help finding my first or second jobs to get experience and see what I like.						
Help making a budget to meet my financial needs.						

PLANNING TOOL#2: Career Exploration and Training Action Plan

After you take career interest assessments and look at your skills, list what you know about yourself so you can match your interests to job options. Work with your case manager/probation or parole officer to fill out the names of programs and services that can help you match what you know about yourself with a job. Set the date when you will finish each step.

WHAT ...	WHERE can I find out?	WHEN
What are my interests? 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What are my work values (what is important)? 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What skills do I already have? 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What do I do to get started? (Fill in Information and Support Planning Tool #1 first) 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What do I do to get to the next job or to the next step in my career exploration? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What jobs can I get that interest me? 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	
What are my education and training needs? 1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	

PLANNING TOOL# 3: Career Exploration and Training Summary Planning Chart

What job fields -like construction, helping others, or transportation-interest you? When you know your strongest interest and skill area, find out what you need to do to get a job in one of the fields below. Save this worksheet with other “homework” about your career planning.

What I need to know:	Construction	Health care (if possible*)	Helping others	Customer service	Hospitality	Transportation	Manufacturing	Other
What experiences and skills do I have or need to get?								
What job titles can I explore based on the career interest assessments?								
Are there job openings in that field?								
Do I need special training for the job I want?								
What is the average hourly wage?								
Does it meet my budget needs? <i>(See Financial Tipsheet)</i>								
Do I have transportation to the job I am interested in? How can I find it? <i>(See Transportation Tipsheet)</i>								

*Healthcare career options may depend on your charges.

PLANNING TOOL #4: Individual Goals

You have done your homework – looking at your interests and skills, learning who can help you, and where they are. Now, write your short and long-term goals based on things you like and skills you have. Save this sheet with your other career exploration papers and information in your career exploration folder.

MY INTERESTS AND SKILLS	Based on my interests and skills, what is my SHORT TERM GOAL?	Based on my interests and skills, what is my LONG TERM GOAL?	What will I do until my short-term or long-term goals are reached? PLAN B
List 3 major interests: 1. 2. 3.			
List 3 major skills: 1. 2. 3.			

After using these planning sheets and finding local services to take you to your next step, you will be closer to your career goals and finding needed skills and training. **You are another step closer to TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR FUTURE.**

RESOURCES

- **America’s Job Center** – offers tools to help find a job, like career information, job preparation skills, Job Center locators, and state job websites. On this website, you can also explore careers, find local training, and look for a job when you are ready. <http://www.careeronestop.org/exoffender/index.aspx>
- **O*Net Online** – offers information on career exploration and job descriptions and the education needed for those jobs. <http://www.onetonline.org>
- **My Next Move** – an online tool for new job seekers, students, and others to learn more about career options. My Next Move also offers information on different careers and requirements. <http://www.mynextmove.org/>
- **America’s Service Locator** – connects you to jobs and training you can get at local American Job Centers. The website provides contacts for many local services. This includes unemployment benefits, career development, and school opportunities. <http://www.ServiceLocator.org>
- **America’s Career InfoNet** – helps you explore career opportunities to make informed job and school choices. The website has career and industry information, pay data, career videos, self-tests, career exploration help, and other things to help. www.CareerInfoNet.org
- **mySkills myFuture** – helps you find new jobs or careers to explore. You can identify jobs that need skills similar to a job you have now or had before. Learn more about these suggested matches, locate local training programs, and apply for jobs. www.mySkillsmyFuture.org
- **US Department of Education** – *Take Charge of Your Future*: a Guide developed by the US Department of Education, Office of Correctional Education. It will help you get started or keep going in your education. It is available FREE at 1-877-433-7827 or edpubs@edpubs.ed.gov

“ **5 things I wished they had told me before I got released...** ”

Try not to be so hard on yourself for what you have done. Because even though you might have bad charges, it doesn't make you a bad person. So you have to beat these feelings and get a good education and job.

If you are still holding onto your past, there is NO room for you in my future.

I know now through my school classes that you can go back into the workforce and pursue a career.

You have the power to take control of your future and be successful. Take one day at a time, one step at a time.

I learned that no matter what showed up in my life, that I could succeed at anything that I wanted to.
If you get over your past, you can make it in the Real World.