

Sources of Career Information

Below is a list of some major sources of career information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

People you know - One of the best resources can be your friends and family. They may answer some questions about a particular occupation or put you in touch with someone who has some experience in the field. This personal networking can be invaluable in evaluating an occupation or an employer. People you know will be able to tell you about their specific duties and training, as well as what they did or did not like about a job. People who have worked in an occupation locally also may be able to give you a recommendation and get you in touch with specific employers.

Employers - These are the primary sources of information on specific jobs. Employers may post lists of job openings and application requirements, including the exact training and experience required, starting wages and benefits, and advancement opportunities and career paths.

Informational interview - People already working in a particular field often are willing to speak with people interested in joining their field. An informational interview will allow you to get good information from experts in a specific career without the pressure of undergoing a job interview. These interviews allow you to determine how a certain career may appeal to you while helping you build a network of personal contacts.

Professional societies, trade groups, and labor unions - These sources have information on an occupation or various related occupations with which they are associated or that they actively represent. This information may cover training requirements and earnings, and may provide listings of local employers. These sources may train members or potential members themselves, or they may be able to put you in contact with organizations or individuals who perform such training.

Each occupational profile in the *Handbook* concludes with a "Contact for More Info" section, which lists organizations that may be contacted for additional information.

Guidance counselors and career counselors - Counselors can help you make choices about which careers might suit you best. They can help you establish which occupations fit your skills by testing your aptitude for various types of work and determining your strengths and interests. Counselors can help you evaluate your options and search for a job in your field or help you select a new field altogether. They also can help you determine which educational or training institutions best fit your goals and then assist you in finding ways to finance your education or training. Some counselors offer other services, such as interview coaching, résumé building, and help in filling out various forms. Counselors in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions may arrange guest speakers, field trips, or job fairs.

You can find guidance and career counselors at

- High school guidance offices
- College career planning and placement offices
- Placement offices in private vocational or technical schools and institutions
- Vocational rehabilitation agencies
- Counseling services offered by community organizations
- Private counseling agencies and private practices
- State employment service offices

When using a private counselor, check to see that the counselor is experienced. One way to do so is to ask people who have used the counselor's services in the past. The National Board of Certified Counselors is an institution that accredits career counselors. To verify the credentials of a career counselor and to find a career counselor in your area, visit www.nbcc.org/.

Postsecondary institutions - Colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions typically put a lot of effort into helping place their graduates in good jobs, because the success of their graduates reflects the quality of their institution and may affect the institution's ability to attract new students. Postsecondary institutions commonly have career centers with information on different careers, listings of related jobs, and alumni contacts in various professions. Career centers frequently employ career counselors who generally provide their services only to their students and alumni. Career centers can help you build your résumé, find internships and co-ops—which can lead to full-time positions—and tailor your course selection or program to make you a more marketable job applicant.

Local libraries - Libraries can be a valuable source of information. Because most areas have libraries, they can be a convenient place to look for information. Also, many libraries provide access to the Internet and email.

Libraries may have information on job openings, locally and nationally; potential contacts within occupations or industries, colleges and financial aid, vocational training, individual businesses or careers, and writing résumés. Libraries frequently have subscriptions to various trade magazines that can provide information on occupations and industries. Your local library also may have video materials. These sources often have references to organizations that can provide additional information about training and employment opportunities.

If you need help getting started or finding a resource, ask your librarian for assistance.

Internet resources - A wide variety of career information is easily accessible on the Internet. Online resources include job listings, résumé posting services, information on job fairs, training, and local wages. Many of the resources listed elsewhere in this section have Internet sites that include valuable information on potential careers. No single source contains all information on an occupation, field, or employer; therefore, you will likely need to use a variety of sources.

When using Internet resources, be sure that the organization is a credible, established source of information on the particular occupation in which you are interested. OC Individual companies

may include job listings on their websites, as well as information about required credentials, wages and benefits, and the job's location. Contact information, such as whom to call or where to send a résumé, is usually included.

Some sources exist primarily as a Web service. These sources often have information on specific jobs and can greatly aid in the job-hunting process. Some commercial sites offer Web services, as do federal, state, and some local governments. [CareerOneStop](#), a joint program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and the states as well as local agencies, provides these services free of charge.

Online Sources from the Department of Labor - A major resource in the U.S. Department of Labor's Labor Market Information System is the [CareerOneStop](#) site. This site includes links to the following sources:

- [State job banks](#) allow you to search job openings listed with state employment agencies.
- [America's Career InfoNet](#) provides data on employment growth and wages by occupation; the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by an occupation; and links to employers.
- [America's Service Locator](#) is a comprehensive database of career centers and information on unemployment benefits, job training, and educational opportunities.
- [O*net Online](#) provides occupational information, including descriptors on hundreds of occupations.