Informational Interviewing
To Explore Occupations

The Purpose
Conducting informational interviews helps you identify people who are doing what you want to do. Different from a job interview, YOU ask the questions, with a goal to gather the information needed to make a good decision. Identify people who are doing a specific job to discover what the job is really like before you commit your time, effort, and finances to pursuing it. Informational interviewing helps broaden your knowledge of the jobs you are exploring. Remember, you are not looking for a job, but confirming information about the occupation and developing contacts that may prove useful in the future.

The Process
You may know a relative, friend or other acquaintance involved in the job in which you are interested. You may also know someone who can provide you with a potential contact. If you have no personal contact or referral, you may make a new contact by using the sources of information section on the next page.

Make an appointment to meet for 15-20 minutes. Even if you think you have the answers to some of the questions, the interview will help you see a “day-in-the-life” and possibly fill in gaps in your information – some you may not realize are there. Go into the interview equipped with knowledge of the company or career area so you leave a positive impression. Go with a goal and pre-composed questions. You never get a second chance to make a first impression, so make sure you convey a positive and professional image. Be sure to thank your interviewee and follow up with a thank-you letter.

Questions to Ask
- How would you describe your typical workday?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What do you like least about your job?
- What education and training is needed for someone who wants to enter this field now?
- What skills and experience are needed to get into this field?
- What personal qualities do you think are most important in your work?
- What do you wish someone had told you before you entered this field?
- What are the opportunities for promotion/advancement?
- Is this field expanding or taking any new directions?
- What steps did you take to enter this field?
- What is the salary range for this field?
- What types of people tend to do well in this field?
- What are the stressors that you experience on the job?
- What related occupations would you suggest I investigate?
- Who else does this type of job?
- What else do you think I need to know that I have not asked?
- Can you give me the names and contact information of three other people who also enjoy working in this field?