



Get the Information You Need to Investigate Potential Careers

Once you have identified some possible careers, the amount of information available can make it a little overwhelming to investigate. Here are some good places to start:

ONLINE

Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/ooh/

A fantastic resource created by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to help people make better career choices. There are numerous ways to search, and very detailed descriptions of hundreds of careers. Much more than just statistics, these descriptions make it much easier to get a handle on what different professions are all about.

O*Net www.onetonline.org/

Another terrific resource from the U.S. Department of Labor offers lots of ways to both search for specific careers and to browse by different characteristics.

Professional Associations www.weddles.com/associations/

Professional associations, for example the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), offer information about the profession, required credentials and licensure, accredited schools, job boards with job titles and descriptions you can explore, and much more.

What's Next Illinois www.whatsnextillinois.org (select the "Career Planning" tab)

Lots of information for Illinois residents related to career exploration.

Search Engine www.google.com etc.

Simply enter the profession you are considering into the search box and see what comes up! Get more specific by adding "trends", "Illinois licensure," or other terms.

Stay Organized!

You will be gathering a lot of information over time, so find a method that works for you to keep track of it all. A notebook, a binder, or a spreadsheet can all work well.



Student Counseling and Career Services

www.neiu.edu/careerservices
Building B, room 119
(773) 442-4650

OFFLINE

Getting off the computer and talking to people about the professions you are investigating is essential to getting a complete picture.

Books

Yes, this old-fashioned paper-based medium still has lots of value. You can find books about careers at the library, at bookstores, or online that provide a lot of valuable information about career choices.

Professors

Your instructors have had many students who went into a variety of professions, and will be happy to speak about potential options with you.

Professionals

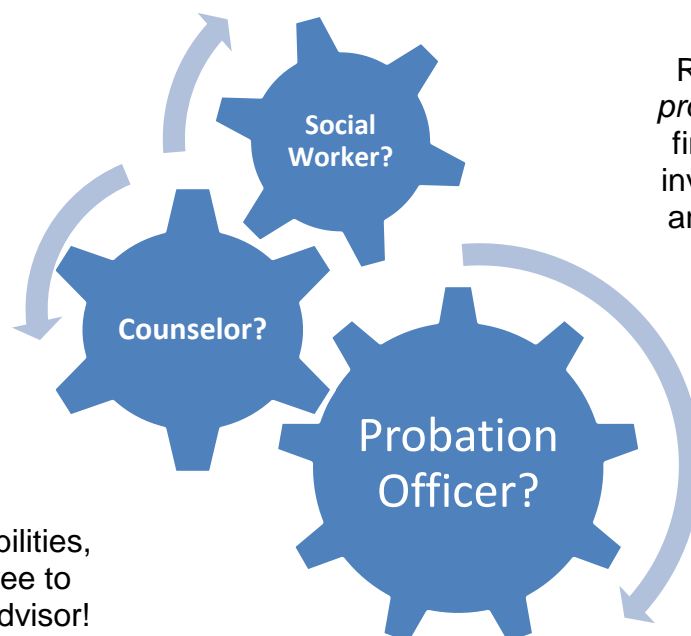
People who work in the professions you are considering are usually very happy to speak with you about what their experience has been like, the types of training they recommend, and the pros and cons of the profession from their point of view. These are called “informational interviews.” Learn more by reading the flyer on *Informational Interviews* found on our website.

Job Shadowing/Observations

This is taking your investigation a step further, by actually watching someone who is in the profession you are considering. This obviously gives you a much more detailed view of a “day in the life” of that profession, but be careful not to evaluate based on just one experience. The person you shadow may have a very different experience than someone else, so observing several people is best. These types of experiences are sometimes required by graduate schools before you apply, so that the program is assured that you understand what you are applying for.

Volunteering

If you are interested in a career with a non-profit organization, volunteer for it! Even if you are interested in a private sector career such as accounting, you can volunteer at a non-profit to “practice” that profession in the real world. This provides not only a learning experience but valuable skills to add to your resume.



Remember that this is a *process*, and you will likely find additional options to investigate along the way, and/or change your mind several times.

Stay open to possibilities,
and always feel free to
consult a Career Advisor!