

Informational Interviewing and Job Shadowing Guide

Instructions and purpose: A great way to learn about a specific career is to interview or spend some time with someone who has that career. Work with YouthBuild staff and your mentor to set up an informational interview or job shadow to learn more about career options.

Informational Interview

An opportunity to ask questions of people in an occupation that interests you.

Job Shadow

A learning experience that involves observing someone during a typical day at work.

Pre-Interview/Job Shadow Preparation

Find Someone to Interview or Shadow

With your career interests in mind ask YouthBuild staff members and your mentor to help you meet people who work in fields that interest you. To expand your horizons, consider interviewing and/or job shadowing with a person in a field that you may not have considered before.

Review Professional Behavior and Conduct with Your Mentor

What have you learned from your YouthBuild program about professional behavior? What does it mean to be professional? What will you wear to your meeting?

Brainstorm

What would you like to learn about the occupation or career pathway? What will help you to decide if it is right for you? What aspects of the job would you like to know more about? What haven't you been able to find out elsewhere in your research?

Develop a list of questions to ask the person you are interviewing. Below are possible questions that you can ask:

- What do you like most about this job? What do you like least?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What made you decide to pursue this career path?
- What personal qualities and transferable skills help people to succeed in this position?
- What do employers in this industry look for when hiring?

- What credentials or postsecondary degree does someone need to move up the career ladder? Can you recommend any programs?
- What internships or other volunteer opportunities might prepare me for this position?
- Do you have any tips for finding a job in this industry?

Practice

Interview your mentor using the questions you have created for your informational interview so that you won't be nervous when it is the real thing. Map the location of the site you will visit and plan how you will get there. Leave a little early in case you get delayed on your way.

Post-Interview/Job Shadow Experience

Follow-Up

Write a thank you note and send it to the person you interviewed or shadowed. In addition to saying "thank you," give some specific examples of the things you learned as result of the job shadow.

Reflect

What was the most interesting thing you learned from your interview or job shadow?

What did you like most and least about your experience?

How did your experience shape your opinion of this career path?

What are your next steps to learn more about this career and/or prepare you for this specific career path?

Source: "[Informational Interviewing: Get the Inside Scoop on Careers](#)," Olivia Crosby, BLS, 2002.