Making Informed Career Decisions

**Instructions:** Review the results from your previous career exploration activities, including what you have learned about labor market data and high-value careers. Use this information to answer the questions below.

1. Complete the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Work Interests Assessment | Work Values Assessment | Lifestyle Aspirations |
| List your top two work interests and provide a brief definition of each. | List your top two work values and provide a brief definition of each. | Briefly describe your future lifestyle goals and list the annual income you will need to support your lifestyle.  |

1. Review each of these factors and sort them from most important to least important – 1 being most important and 5 being least important. For the Lifestyle Aspirations section, you can simply list, “My Lifestyle Goals” and rate this anywhere form 1-5 in the list below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |

1. What are high-value careers? What types of labor market information can you look at to help you identify high-value careers?
2. For you, how important is it that your future career is a high-value career? Would you consider a career with low job availability or low wage? Why or why not?

After answering question 1-4, you should now have an idea of your top personal factors and a sense of how important high-value careers are to you. There are many ways to use this information and no one way is better than another. Below is one approach that you might find helpful.

Based on your answer to question 4, determine whether a high-value career is essential and choose one of the decision-making pathways below. Answer the questions for your chosen pathway.

**High-Value Career is Essential**

**High-Value Career is Not Essential**



**Questions for “High-Value Career is Essential”**

Choosing this pathway means that your career choices will in initially be screened to determine whether they are high-value. Those that do not meet the criteria for a high-value career will be eliminated from your search. Careers can then be evaluated based on their fit with your personal factors to make a career decision.

1. Examine occupations from your previous career exploration activities. Choose three careers that are high-value careers with several annual openings and median wage above $35,000.
2. Complete the table below.
* Write the occupation titles in the top row of the table below.
* List your personal factors, in order of importance, in the first column.
* Review each occupation and mark an X in the table for each factor match that you find.
* Add the number of X’s for each occupation and write the total in the last row.
* The occupation(s) with the most X’s can be considered a better personal fit.
* If a tie is found, the occupation with more X’s at the top of the list is a better personal fit.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Personal Factor | Occupation 1 | Occupation 2 | Occupation 3 |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| Personal Factor Match Total |  |  |  |

1. Which of the three occupations did you find to be the better fit? Would you consider pursuing this occupation? Why or why not?

**Questions for “High-Value Career is Not Essential”**

Choosing this pathway means that your career choices will initially be screened to determine whether they are a good fit with your personal factors. Those that do not align with your personal factors will be eliminated from your search. Careers can then be evaluated with regard to the labor market to make a career decision.

1. Examine occupations from your previous career exploration activities. Choose three careers that you believe have the greatest potential to match your personal interests, values, and goals.
2. Complete the table below.
* Write the occupation titles in the top row of the table below.
* List your personal factors, in order of importance, in the first column.
* Review each occupation and mark an X in the table for each factor match that you find.
* Add the number of X’s for each occupation and write the total in the last row.
* The occupation(s) with the most X’s can be considered a better personal fit.
* If a tie is found, the occupation with more X’s at the top of the list is a better personal fit.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Personal Factor | Occupation 1 | Occupation 2 | Occupation 3 |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| Personal Factor Match Total |  |  |  |

1. Examine annual openings and median wage for these occupations. Which of these occupations, if any, meet the criteria for a high-value career?
2. Based on your review of personal fit and labor market data, which of these occupations would you consider pursuing? Why?

**For All Decision-Making Pathways**

1. Repeat the steps in your chosen decision-making pathway a few more times and work on generating a list of three potential careers. Arrange this list with your top career choice listed first.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Occupation Title | Why is this a good career choice for you? |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

1. Did you think this activity resulted in the best possible career choices for you? Why or why not?
2. What additional factors might you want to consider before making a career decision?