

Workplace Readiness Series

# Exploring Job and Career Possibilities

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Researchers estimate that a person will spend approximately 70,000 hours of a lifetime performing a job and getting the training needed to do it well. You will want to consider very carefully how you plan to spend what amounts to one-third of your life. It is important to keep your goals, interests and skills in mind as you consider job and career possibilities.

about occupations in groups. For example:

- Carpenters build houses.
- Computer programmers write software.
- Nurses take care of sick people.

It is helpful to think of occupations in groups that are mostly similar but also a little different. For example, “pilot” includes people who fly passenger planes, military jets and helicopters; and “medical assistants” may work in ambulances, retirement homes or emergency rooms.

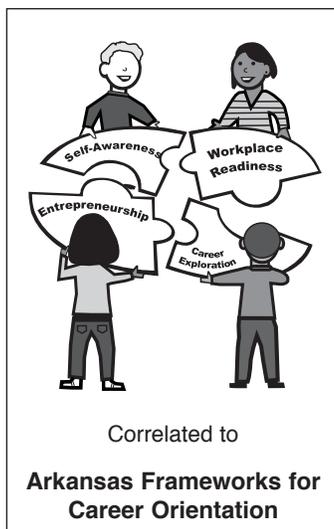
Instead of trying to think about thousands of occupations, it is helpful to consider groups of occupations referred to as career clusters.

## What Is the Difference Between a Job and a Career?

A job is an agreement between two persons or a person and a company to perform certain work duties in exchange for payment. A career is work done over a period of years in one area of interest. It is wise to think about career goals when considering any job. Why? When you take a job in an area that interests you, you have the chance to see just what is involved in the job and whether it really suits your personality and talents. If you decide to continue in that field, you will have gained valuable experience that you can build on and include on your résumé.

## What Is a Career Cluster?

The U.S. Department of Labor breaks all the occupations in the United States down into 16 career clusters. This gives you an opportunity to look at careers in an organized manner. By looking at the career cluster requirements and their relationship to your career objectives, you can narrow your job search to one or more career clusters. From this point, you can shorten the list until you



## Looking at Job and/or Career Possibilities

One way to figure out the kind of work you might like is to think

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determine your primary career choice. The 16 occupational career clusters are as follows:

- **Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources**

Occupations dealing with growing plants and harvesting crops for commercial and scientific purposes, raising and training animals, the health of plants and animals, the use of natural resources, and the management of agricultural businesses and the production of agricultural goods.

*Examples: Horticulturist, Animal Trainer, Crop Duster, Park Ranger, Farm Equipment Sales Manager*

- **Architecture and Construction**

Occupations dealing with the design, planning, managing, building and maintenance of physical structures such as roadways, bridges, as well as industrial, commercial, and residential facilities and buildings.

*Examples: Architect, Carpenter, Bricklayer, Plumber, Painter*

- **Arts, Audio, Video Technology and Communication**

Occupations dealing with designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing and publishing multi-media content (includes visual, performing arts and design, journalism and entertainment services).

*Examples: Cartoonist, Actor / Actress, Radio Announcer, News Writer, Graphic Art Designer*

- **Business, Management and Administration**

Occupations dealing with planning, managing and providing administrative support, information processing, business communications, accounting, and human resource management services and related business management support services.

*Examples: Company President, Receptionist, Medical Secretary, Office Manager, General Manager*

- **Education and Training**

Occupations dealing with planning, administering, managing and providing education and training services; related learning support services such as library, information services, child care and counseling services; also includes preparatory medical training in educational settings.

*Examples: Public School Administrator / Teacher, Librarian, College Professor, Child Care Provider, Counselor*

- **Finance**

Occupations dealing with banking, investment, financial planning, economics, and insurance services, including managing and planning for firms and businesses involved in such services.

*Examples: Financial Planner, Accountant, Stockbroker, Loan Officer, Bank President*

- **Government and Public Administration**

Occupations dealing with planning, managing and providing government legislative, administrative and regulatory services; includes government services at the federal, state and local levels such as public finance and planning.

*Examples: Public Defender, County Judge, FBI Special Agent, Labor Relations Specialist, Military Officer*

- **Health Sciences**

Occupations dealing with planning, managing and providing diagnostic, therapeutic, treatment, research and information services related to the physical and mental health of humans.

*Examples: Nurse, LPN and /or RN, Pharmacist, Physician, Radiologist, Pediatrician*

- **Hospitality and Tourism**

Occupations dealing with the provision of lodging, food, recreation, convention, tourism, travel and related planning and support services.

*Examples: Sports Trainer, Hotel Clerk, Chef, Travel Agent, Camp Counselor*

- **Human Services**

Occupations dealing with promoting and providing individual, family and community relations and wellness including family and work issues, religious services, care for the elderly and social work.

*Examples: Social Worker, Church Clergy / Pastor, Pet Groomer, Hair Dresser, Nursing Home Director*

- **Information Technology**

Occupations dealing with the design, programming, development, management, maintenance and operation of computer, information, communication and technology networks, including related hardware and software.

*Examples: Information Technology (IT) Director, Instructional Design Specialist, Computer Programmer, Word Processing Operator, Computer Game Designer*

- **Law, Public Safety and Security**

Occupations dealing with police work, the law and legal services, the judicial (court) system, the study and detention of criminals and fire protection.

*Examples: Police Officer, Private Investigator (PI), Firefighter, Detention Officer, Lawyer*

- **Manufacturing**

Occupations dealing with the process of creating intermediate and finished products beginning with raw materials; includes managing, planning and performing the production of various items by operating

machinery, as well as industrial support activities, such as production planning and control, and maintenance.

*Examples: Company Manager, Plant Manager, Engineer, Assembly Line Worker, Quality Control Manager*

- **Marketing, Sales and Service**

Occupations dealing with marketing, advertising or otherwise promotion and selling merchandise; includes managing retail establishments, making merchandise-specific repair and providing personal services (e.g., cosmetics, hairstyling, funeral services) to customers.

*Examples: Model, Retail Store Owner / Manager / Sales Clerk, Window Display Designer, Market Research Analyst, Purchasing Agent*

- **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics**

Occupations dealing with engineering, related technologies, scientific research and application of scientific principles in the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, etc.) and social sciences (economics, sociology, geography, archeology, anthropology, etc.). This does not include specific medical, agricultural or food sciences.

*Examples: Chemist, Archeologist, Biologist, Sociologist, Ecologist*

- **Transportation, Distribution and Logistics**

Occupations dealing with planning and managing the movement of people, materials and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail and water; includes related professional and technical support service such as transportation planning and management, logistics services, and mobile equipment and facility maintenance.

*Examples: Truck Driver, Shipping Clerk, Airline Pilot, Stewardess / Steward, Mechanic*

## How to Conduct a Career Search?

The career list in this publication is just a brief review of the 16 career clusters, but it may help you begin to narrow your choice to one or more clusters you will want to examine in detail.

There are many career resources that may prove helpful, including the U.S. Department of Labor web site. Books that provide career information are available for purchase or may be borrowed from public libraries, college libraries or high school counselors' offices.

## Sources

America's Career Kit  
[www.eworkforce.org/careerkit/](http://www.eworkforce.org/careerkit/)

Arkansas Department of Workforce Services  
[www.state.ar.us/esd/](http://www.state.ar.us/esd/)  
(formerly Arkansas Employment Security Department)

O\*NET Career Exploration Tools  
[www.onetcenter.org/tools.html](http://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html)

Occupational Outlook Handbook  
[www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)

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