

# Informational Interviewing and Job Shadowing

***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. 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 the student's career interests in mind, a mentor can help a mentee meet people who work in fields that interest them. To expand the student's horizons/options, consider helping set up an interview and/or job shadow with a person in a field that they may not have considered before.

- **Review Professional Behavior and Conduct**

What have you learned 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?

- **Plan Questions**

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?