

A Job Seeker's Guide to Discovery

“Discovery” is a way to find out what you are good at and what you like to do. In your Discovery program, you will learn about different jobs, try different job tasks, and meet people who work at different businesses. Discovery is a “hands on” and active way to find out what kind of job is right for you. This Guide is a “framework” or a set of ideas. It is not about forms and paperwork. It is about you. Your Path to Employment is special and different from any other person’s Path to Employment.

There are people who can help you with Discovery. Often, an employment professional can help because it is their job to help people find jobs. Your family members and other people who know you well can also help with Discovery.

Discovery is a type of “[Career Exploration](#)”. This means exploring different careers to learn about what you will like to do and what you will be good at for work.

Planning Meeting

The first meeting is to help you pick your team. It is also to help the team learn more about what you like, what you are good at, and what you want in a job. You may not be sure about these things yet. This team meeting can make a plan so that you can “Discover” more about yourself and jobs.

Here are tips for planning your planning meeting:

My Career Discovery Planning Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Talk about what the meeting is for
3. Talk about who is on your team
4. Talk about what the team is going to do
5. Talk about any rules for the meeting
6. Talk about the Career Discovery Process
7. Talk about and list things you and your team already knows about you- what you are interested in, what you are good at, who you know, and what kind of support you might need.
8. Talk about your Dreams for your life and career
9. Make a plan for learning more during “Career Discovery”
10. Summarize and set roles and time lines

Home Visit

Your home is an important part of Discovery. It can be helpful to invite someone from your Discovery team to come and see you at home. The things you do at home and the things you have at home help your team learn more about you and what you will like to do for work.

You can show them things that are important to you. You can also show them things you use at home and even how you use them. You can show them your hobbies, tasks, and chores, too.

The person from your team will look at things if you give them permission. They will ask questions about what you do, watch how you do activities at home, and write notes about these activities.

Here are some examples of things to show to your team:

My HOME
My favorite things:
✓ Facebook page
✓ Cat
✓ Awards
Things I use:
✓ Computer
✓ blender
✓ Suitcase
My hobbies:
✓ Knitting
✓ Fixing appliances
✓ Singing Karaoke
My tasks
✓ Doing laundry
✓ Making lunch
✓ Paying bills

You might feel nervous about having someone from your team come to your home. Your team can learn a lot about you from meeting with you at home, but you don't have to let someone come to your home if you don't want to. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable about a home visit, you can talk to your team and decide to do another Discovery activity instead. You may decide to have a home visit at another time.

Neighborhood Visit

Your neighborhood is made up of people, businesses, and services. It is important to learn about who you know in the neighborhood. It is also important for your team to learn about the businesses that are close to where you live. Some of these businesses might be places where you can work. It is also important to learn about the services in your neighborhood, like transportation and other community services.

You and someone from your team can talk about and list the people and places you know of in your neighborhood. You may want to visit some of these places later to learn more about them.

My Neighborhood
People I know
Businesses that I visit
Businesses I want to know more about
Transportation
Community Center
Library
Church/ Synagogue/ Mosque
Schools
Nearby Cities and towns
Parks
Other

School or Program Visit

If you are still in school or if you go to a day program or other activity, it is helpful for someone from your team to see what you do there. Someone from your team can watch you do your usual activities and learn about what you like to do, what you are good at, and who you know.

It can also be helpful to talk to the people who know you. Sometimes your teachers or program staff know you well, and can talk about your skills, preferences, interests, and support needs. People can talk about you only if you give permission.

If you feel nervous or unsure about a school or program visit you should talk about this with your team.

Here is some information to gather at your school or program visit:

Sample School/ Program Visit Questions

Who do you give permission to talk to?

Who knows you best?

What is your schedule?

Who are your friends?

How do you prefer to communicate?

What are your favorite classes/ activities?

Show how you do those activities.

What do you dislike?

How do you learn?

What environments do you prefer?

When are you at your best?

Informational Interviews

An Informational Interview is a visit to a business that includes talking to people who work in those businesses to find out what they do. It is a way to learn about types of jobs in your community. It is also a way to meet new people.

You and someone from your team can pick businesses that are interesting to you. It is a good idea to ask your team members if they know someone who works at the business. People who are friends or family members are usually willing to talk about their business.

Sometimes it helps to call ahead to make an appointment. Other times you can stop in. This depends on the kind of business you want to visit.

Sometimes you can ask for a tour of the business. You can watch people do their jobs. You can see the work being done and learn about the supplies and equipment that is used.

You should go with a list of questions about the business and the jobs there. Here is a sample list of questions to ask:

Sample Informational Interview Questions

Business Name:

Name of person you interview:

What does the business do (products and services)?

How many people work at the business?

How long has it been around?

What are the different jobs in the business?

Does everyone do every job or do some people do one job?

How did the person get started in this job?

Does it require special training?

What do you like best about this job?

What is the hardest part of the job?

What do you look for in employees?

Is the business changing?

How to people apply for this job?

Hands-On Activities

It is helpful to try out some jobs in your community before deciding what kind of job you want. When you try a job task, you can find out if you do or don't like it. You can find out if you are already good at it or if you might need more training. Trying tasks gives you a chance to find out what a job is really like.

Some of the businesses you visited for informational interviews may allow you to try some tasks. You can ask the owner or manager if you can try.

Here are some tips for Hands-On Activities:

Hands-On Activities

- ✓ Find businesses in the community that do the work you are interested in
- ✓ Watch an employee of the business do the task
- ✓ Ask questions about the task
- ✓ Ask permission before trying a job task in a business
- ✓ Try some tasks that are new to you
- ✓ Have someone from your team take pictures or video of you doing the task
- ✓ Do not operate dangerous equipment or use hazardous machinery or supplies without training and supervision
- ✓ Talk with your team about what it was like to do the task
- ✓ Talk with your team about what you did and didn't like, what you are good at, and what you want to learn more about
- ✓ Find and connect with other businesses in the community that do the same or similar tasks.

Your Career Discovery Profile

Your Career Discovery Profile is the place where all of the information from your Discovery activities is written down. This profile will guide you and your employment team to find the right job for you.

You can add information to your profile over time. When you get a job, you can add information about your new job skills to the profile. When you want to look for a different job, you can make changes to the profile if you have different interests and preferences or changes in your support needs.

The Profile includes information about you, such as:

- ✓ Your name, address, and phone number,
- ✓ Dates of important meetings
- ✓ Names and contact information for your team
- ✓ A list of your skills and interests
- ✓ Information about your personality and preferences
- ✓ The conditions that are best for you and things you want to avoid
- ✓ Information about how you learn
- ✓ Your travel resources
- ✓ Medical concerns and support needs
- ✓ Your work and educational history
- ✓ Information about your goals and plan for action

To find an example of the Career Discovery Profile click [here](#)

Next Steps Planning Meeting

When you have tried some different activities and job tasks, you and your team should meet again to talk about what you have learned during Discovery.

This meeting is a time to talk about the people whom you met during Discovery, the types of businesses you visited, what tasks you tried, and what you learned about yourself. You can talk about what you did and did not like. You can talk about what you know you are already good at and what tasks you might need more time to learn.

You and your team can review the Career Discovery Profile and make sure that it has all of the important information that you want in it.

You and your team will make a plan for the next steps. Each person's plan for the next steps will be different. You may be ready to start looking for jobs, applying for jobs, and going on interviews. You may be interested in starting your own business. You may decide to get more training or go to college.

During this meeting you may choose some new members of your team to help you look for a job. You may be referred to an agency or employment specialist to help you. You may need to fill out applications for some services.

The most important thing to remember is that Discovery and the next steps are about helping to find a job that is right for YOU.