

**Career  
Resource  
Center**



## **Getting Organized**

**Assess the present career program.**

**Create a local advisory board.**

**Determine the objectives of the Center.**

**Plan the initial setup and operational budget.**

**Plan space, location, equipment, and resources.**

**Gather existing career materials.**

**Establish operational procedures.**

**Determine methods of identifying and filing career materials.**

**Plan ongoing reassessment by the staff, students, and advisory committee.**

**Plan publicity and dissemination of Career Center information.**



## TIPS ON GETTING STARTED

- Get **COMMITTED** to the idea of a Career Resource Center
- Get **EVERYONE** involved--teachers, students, counselors, librarians, parents, community members, and volunteers
- **COLLECT AND ORGANIZE** all career resources that are already on hand (Classroom teachers may have excellent materials that can be shared)
- Conduct a Career Resource Center **NEEDS ASSESSMENT** to determine the most immediate career materials needed as seen by students and faculty
- Contact and/or **VISIT** other schools that have a Career Resource Center
- Obtain listings of **CAREER RESOURCES** available on loan from state and local agencies
- Designate a **COORDINATOR**
- Designate an easily accessible **LOCATION** for the Career Resource Center



## Purpose and Philosophy

### Purpose

A Career Resource Center identifies valuable resources and services that counselors and faculty can use to provide career awareness, career information, and career planning for their students. Beyond that, students can learn strategies they will need as they make career changes and choices throughout their lives. High school may be our last chance to teach these young adults that selecting jobs and careers is a lifelong process, that jobs evolve into careers, and that careers are fluid and changing. Knowing how to use resources to make informed decisions about job training, job choices, and job changes will help these students meet the challenges of the employment world.

The school-to-work effort recognizes that many high school graduates lack many skills and career/educational goals leading to employment. A comprehensive Career Center at school provides reference materials for students to personally research various careers and the training required for those careers. Teachers can find information to develop classroom activities that increase skills, competencies, and knowledge of careers so that students are better prepared for employment or higher education.

### Philosophy

The approaches to career development have changed a great deal in the last few years. Today there are likely to be several career changes and even more job changes in a lifetime. Counselors need to help students and clients plan both occupational choices and career paths. Career counseling today is more about total life-role integration. A person's career cannot be separate from other life roles. People, as individuals, have many different facets and roles. Thus, the total person should be assessed. For example, an individual's work-value system should be a major factor considered in career development.

According to Brown and Brooks, *Career Counseling Techniques*:

Career counseling is an interpersonal process designed to assist individuals with career development problems. Career development is that process of choosing, entering, adjusting to, and advancing in an occupation. It is a lifelong psychological process that interacts dynamically with other life roles. Career problems include, but are not limited to, career indecision and undecidedness, work performance, stress and adjustment, incongruence of the person and work environment, and inadequate or unsatisfactory integration of life roles with other life roles. (Brown and Brooks, 1991, p. 5).

The challenge is in helping students integrate their roles, work-values, strengths, interests, etc., into a career path that fits their personality and personal situation. The goal of this toolbox is not to teach the techniques of career counseling; it is to help the educators begin to organize the types of resources that will facilitate career development and exploration.

**Accessibility**

Any Career Center should be committed to making all services accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes providing alternative formats for testing and information delivery. Simpler modifications might include large print and braille formats, and computer work stations accessible to persons with disabilities as well as resources written specifically for those students. More sophisticated devices such as speech synthesis software, speech recognition software, and assisted listening devices for hearing impaired could be available in a more comprehensive career center. However, since most school career centers could not afford the personnel or equipment to be this sophisticated, career counselors should educate themselves about outside resources for referral. Employment opportunities for students with disabilities should not be forgotten.

**Standards**

Career standards reinforce the need for career information, interest inventories, aptitude testing, resumé writing, portfolio development, and other activities directly related to information available in a comprehensive Career Center.

**Guidelines**

One of the main benefits of career guidance and counseling programs is to support educational excellence by increasing motivation and improving academic achievement. Students who have career goals can better recognize the benefit of their education. A student begins the career exploration process in elementary and junior high school by learning about the world of work. By the early years of high school, students should be able, with guidance, to develop career and occupational goals that will increase motivation through high school and hopefully help increase retention rates.

The National Career Development Guidelines, as developed by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC), represent a major, nationwide effort to foster career development at all levels. They are a competency-based approach to career development that helps states, schools, colleges and universities, and human service agencies plan quality career guidance and counseling programs. The Guidelines represent professional consensus in three main areas:

1. *Student/Adult Competencies and Indicators.* Recommended student or adult outcomes are organized around self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning.
2. *Organizational Capabilities.* The structure and support needed for quality programs include administrative commitments, facilities, materials, and equipment.
3. *Personnel Requirements.* Counselors and other staff must have the knowledge and skills to deliver a quality program.

**Table 1. Career Development Competencies**

	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle/Junior High School</i>
<b>Self-Knowledge</b>	Knowledge of the importance of a positive self-concept.	Knowledge of the influence of a positive self-concept.
	Skills to interact positively with others.	Skills to interact positively with others.
	Awareness of the importance of growth and change.	Knowledge of the importance of growth and change.
<b>Educational and Occupational Exploration</b>	Awareness of the benefits of educational achievement.	Knowledge of the benefits of educational achievement to career opportunities.
	Awareness of the relationship between work and learning.	Understanding the relationship between work and learning.
	Skills to understand and use career information.	Skills to locate, understand, and use career information.
	Awareness of the importance of personal responsibility and good work habits.	Knowledge of skills necessary to seek and obtain jobs.
	Awareness of how work relates to the needs and functions of society.	Understanding how work relates to the needs and functions of the economy and society.
<b>Career Planning</b>	Understanding how to make decisions.	Skills to make decisions.
	Awareness of the interrelationship of life roles.	Knowledge of the interrelationship of life roles.
	Awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.	Knowledge of different occupations and changing male/female roles.
	Awareness of the career planning process.	Understanding the process of career planning.

For more information about the National Career Development Guidelines initiative, contact:

□ National Occupational Information  
Coordinating Committee (NOICC)  
2100 M Street, NW, Suite 156  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 653-5665

□ Oklahoma State Occupational Information  
Coordinating Committee (SOICC)  
1500 West Seventh Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364  
(405) 743-5198

		<b>by Area and Level</b>	
		<b>High School</b>	<b>Adult</b>
<b>Self-Knowledge</b>		Understanding the influence of a positive self-concept.	Skills to maintain a positive self-concept.
		Skills to interact positively with others.	Skills to maintain effective behaviors.
		Understanding the impact of growth and development.	Understanding developmental changes and transitions.
<b>Educational and Occupational Exploration</b>		Understanding the relationship between educational achievement and career planning.	Skills to enter and participate in education and training.
		Understanding the need for positive attitudes toward work and learning.	Skills to participate in work and lifelong learning.
		Skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career information.	Skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career information.
		Skills to prepare to seek, obtain, maintain, and change jobs.	Skills to prepare to seek, obtain, maintain, and change jobs.
		Understanding how societal needs and functions influence the nature and structure of work.	Understanding how the needs and functions of society influence the nature and structure of work.
<b>Career Planning</b>		Skills to make decisions.	Skills to make decisions.
		Understanding the interrelationship of life roles.	Understanding the impact of work on individual and family life.
		Understanding the continuous changes in male/female roles.	Understanding the continuing changes in male/female roles.
		Skills in career planning.	Skills to make career transitions.

*Note:* Outcome objectives were based on competencies determined by the National Guidelines for career planning and exploration. This table shows Career Development Competencies for elementary grades through adult in each of the three areas.

### Getting Organized

The recommended organizational procedures to follow when establishing a Career Center are:

- Assess the present career programs.
- Create a local advisory board.
- Determine the objectives of the Center.
- Plan the initial setup and operational budget.
- Plan space, location, equipment, and resources.
- Gather existing career materials.
- Establish operational procedures.
- Determine methods of identifying and filing career materials.
- Plan ongoing reassessment by the staff, students, and advisory committee.
- Plan publicity and dissemination of Career Center information.

## Assessment, Advisory Board, Goals and Objectives

The first phase of developing a Career Center requires assessing the current career guidance activities currently offered at the school. This will provide a baseline of available services and activities as well as identify resources that can be used in the future. (One very important use of the baseline data is in the evaluation or assessment process once the Career Center is functioning.) Evaluating current resources will prevent the offering of duplicate services.

### Assessment of School

The school assessment should be conducted at five levels:

1. Administration
2. Support Staff
3. Faculty
4. Students
5. Parents

### Administration

The support for the Career Center should flow from the top down. An initial meeting should be set up with the superintendent by the director of guidance and the principal. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the superintendent of the Career Center plans and to assess support of the project. Once the project is approved by the superintendent, the project director can then begin the assessment at all other levels. (Some high schools may have area administrative offices that would serve as the top level clearance.) It is important to obtain this top-level support before beginning other stages of project development.

### Support Staff

It is important to assess the career guidance services being provided by individual guidance and counseling staff. This should be done through verbal assessment as well as brief written responses to four basic questions:

- What career-related resources are available, and how current are these materials?
- What is the present level of usage of these resources?
- What career guidance services are currently provided and which personnel provide these services?
- What career education programs exist? What are the sequence and depth of these programs?

The answers to these questions provide information on both the level of career guidance that is being provided, and the written and audio/visual resources available at the school. These resources may be considered for consolidation within the Career Center.

Responses to these questions can be used to generate new ideas for Career Center services.

**Faculty**

Although the primary goal of the faculty assessment is to identify the current in-classroom career guidance activities, it is also a quick way to inform the faculty of the plans to develop a Career Center. A quick and easy assessment form (see Form A) is the key to participation, especially if endorsed by the director of guidance or the principal. A side benefit of generating the form early in the project is to identify those faculty members who are excited about the project. The responses will clearly identify such faculty members.

**Students**

This is the group that usually supports the Career Center without reservation; however, it is a good idea to have some written assessment on hand. A suggestion is to survey classes across the curriculum (see Form B). This is a good time to find out what the students want in a Career Center and any suggestions that they may have to improve career counseling services.

**Parents**

Parents often exert a strong influence on their children's career choice. Many parents expect their children to make career decisions before they are ready or with insufficient information. They often project their own desires on their children's career choices. The parent assessment provides an avenue for the counselor to reach and establish a network with parents so that they can be provided with factual career information. This can contribute to a positive influence on their children's career planning efforts. By involving parents in the process, they may be more likely to encourage their children to participate in the Career Center programs.

**Career Center Advisory Board**

Once the assessment process is completed and the recommendation is to develop a Career Center, it is time to establish a working Advisory Board. The Board should provide feedback for the establishment of goals and objectives of the new Career Center. Each Career Center should be established to meet local needs and the individual goals should support those needs. The Advisory Board should provide input and evaluation but should not set policies or guidelines.

Selecting the Board members is the important task. It is strongly recommended that each Board have representation from the guidance and counseling staff, the academic faculty, the vocational faculty, the student body, and members of the community. The community members are extremely important. They are aware of what is needed by the local employment market. They are aware of what type of jobs are available and what job skills are needed by students to qualify for those jobs. It is important that the Career Center support the needs of the students as well as the community needs.

The Advisory Board should become the source for information, support, and long-term evaluation. The Board should serve as a liaison to local business and industry. The Board should keep the Career Center aware of local needs not being met. The evaluation process needs to be ongoing and continuous. This allows for constant feedback from the community. The feedback needs to be used to improve the Career Center so that it is relevant and a valuable asset to the students, other users, and the community.

### **Identification of Goals and Objectives**

This important phase of development determines the path to the successful establishment of the Career Center. The assessment of faculty, staff, students, and parents will be the basis for forming the goals and objectives, since the purpose of the Center is to meet the needs of the clients who will be using the services. The availability of resources and money to fund the project will also need to be considered.

Although each Career Center will be based on the needs of its students, these basic objectives should be followed:

- Provide accurate and relevant career materials.
- Assist the students in researching occupational ideas suited to their interests, values, and abilities.
- Offer career assessment through testing and interest inventories.
- Provide the faculty with staff and resources to support career-related educational instruction.

These objectives clearly establish the purpose of the Career Center, including what programs will be offered, who will have access to the Center, and what materials and resources will be provided. The objectives will establish a plan of action that will determine the needed staff, space, resources, programs, and equipment. They will also lay the foundation for developing a comprehensive Career Center.

### Ask Yourself

Now that your goals and objectives are established, ask the following questions:

- Where is the best location?
- Who will be using the Center?
- How many people need to be accommodated at one time?
- What types of services and programs will be offered?
- How much space is needed for these services and the supportive equipment?
- What resources will be available for student use, for faculty and staff, or parents who need information to guide their children?

By answering these and other questions related to your objectives, a picture will begin to develop of your future Career Center.

## Location and Floor Plans

### Location

The ideal location for the Career Center is in the guidance and counseling area of the school. Counselors, students, and faculty then have easy access to the programs and resources of the Center. This is usually a high traffic area of the school and students are already accustomed to using counselor services. In addition, it will facilitate the integration of the Career Center programs into the overall guidance plan of the school. If space is not available within the guidance and counseling area, it is possible that an adjacent classroom be modified to accommodate the Career Center. Another alternative is to use a section in either the counselor's office or the counseling waiting room.

Other considerations related to the location include the following:

- Reasonable access for students with disabilities
- The assurance of security for the equipment and the resources
- Space allowance for individual and/or private workstations
- Privacy for counselor/student interaction
- Quiet areas for assessment
- Sufficient room, if possible, to accommodate small groups for workshops

### Floor Plan

Once the location has been determined, the floor plan can be developed. The Career Center coordinator should keep several factors in mind when developing the floor plan: space for computer workstations, privacy for assessment and career exploration, and noise levels of certain activities.

The effective and efficient use of space is a factor in developing the Career Center. Three floor plans are presented: Figure 1- a small Career Center; Figure 2- a moderate-size Career Center; and Figure 3 - a large Career Center with several small rooms. Examples of some other Career Center floor plans are presented in the book *Career Counseling: Applied Concepts of Life Planning* by V.G. Zunker.

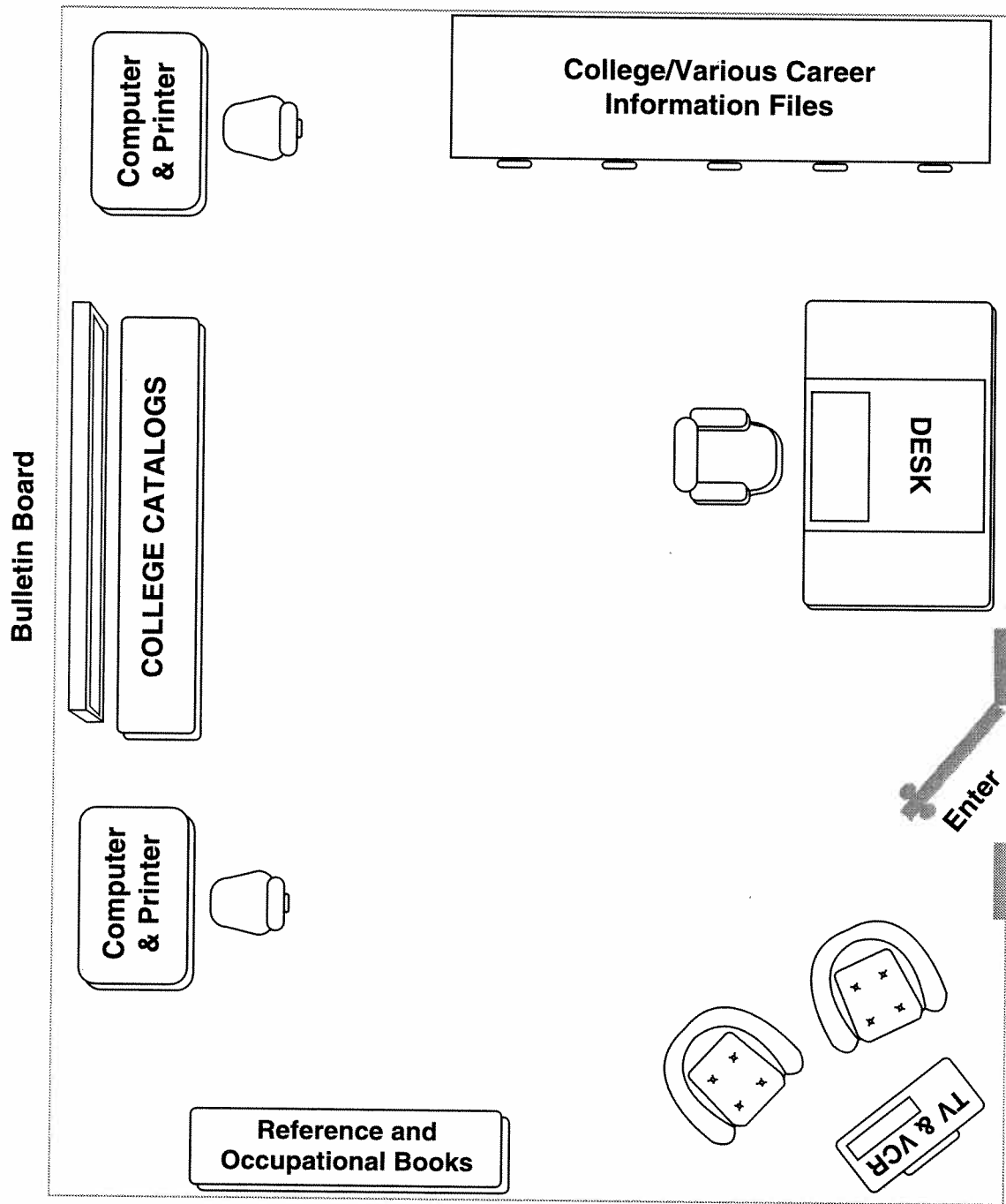


Figure 1. Small Career Center (Office) / Limited Space

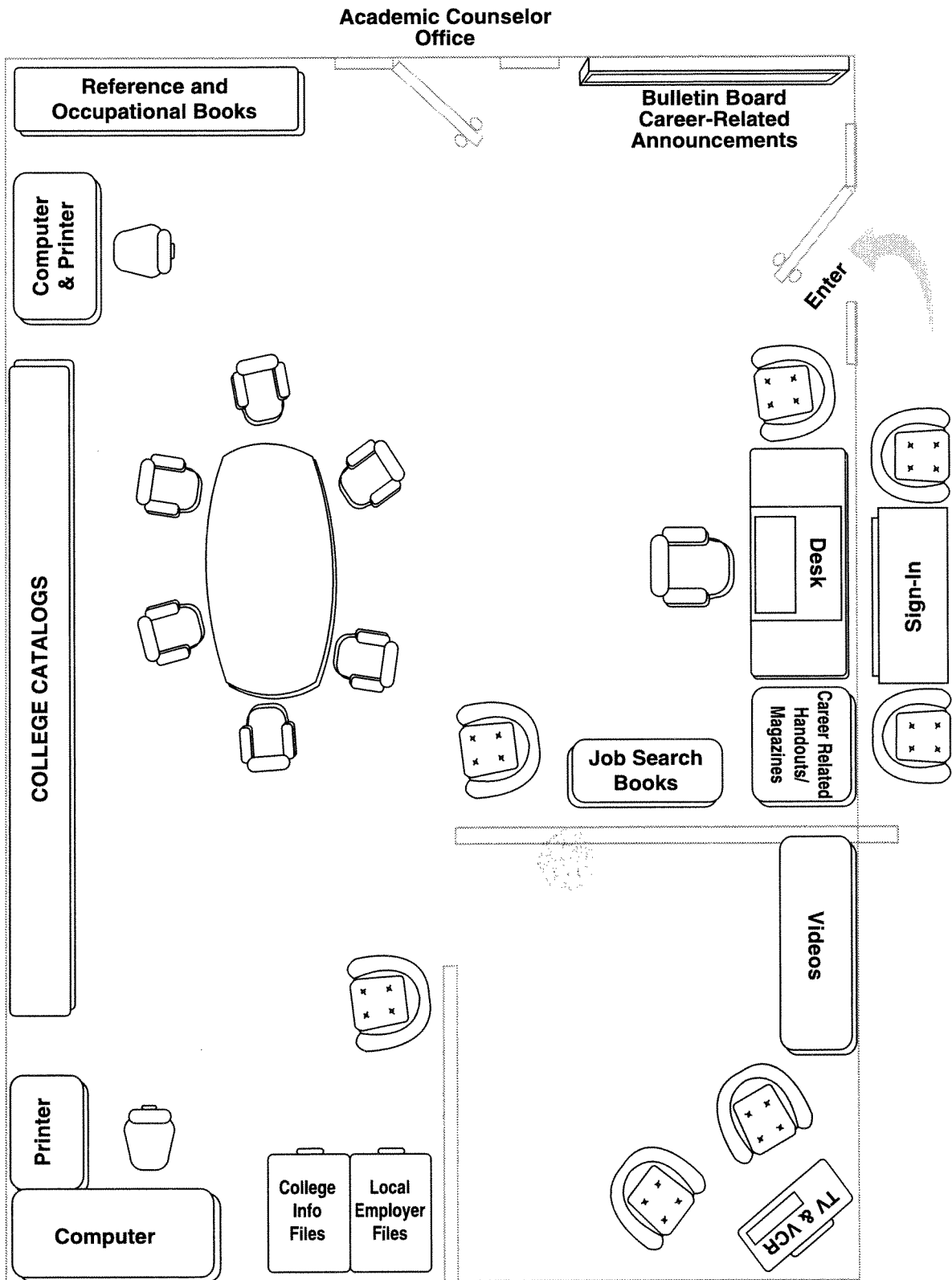


Figure 2. Moderate- to Large-Size Room Career Center

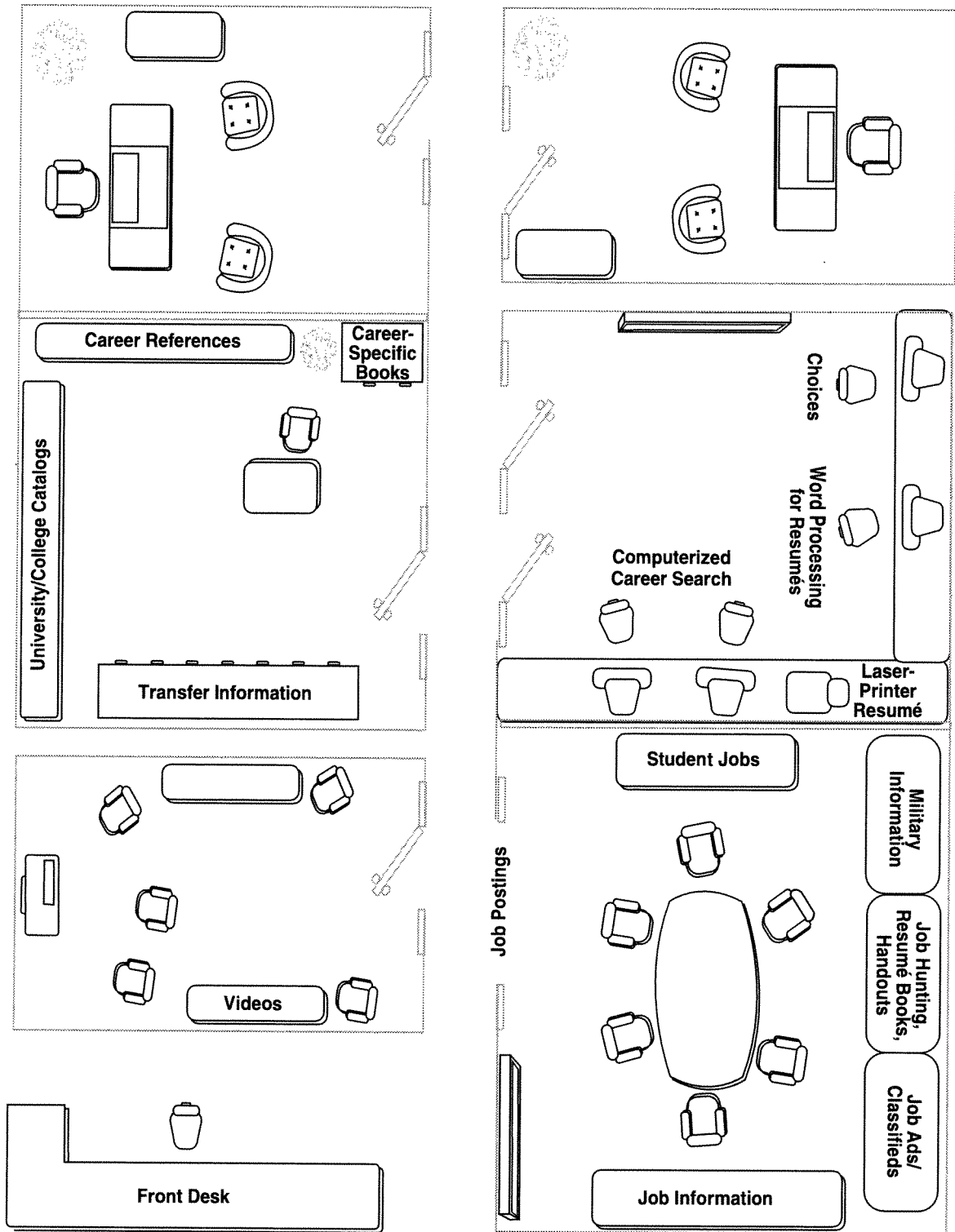


Figure 3. Large Multiroom Career Center

## Levels of Development

Staffing the Career Center and selecting the equipment and resources can seem like a complicated procedure. To simplify the process, it is suggested that development of the Career Center utilize the two levels described in this section. At the minimum, the components of Level 1 should be implemented; however, as resources and funding become available, the Career Center can expand as depicted in Table 2.

### LEVEL ONE

#### Staff

A guidance and counseling staff member should be appointed as the Career Services Coordinator for the purpose of managing and implementing programs, developing budgets, maintaining resources, and training other staff.

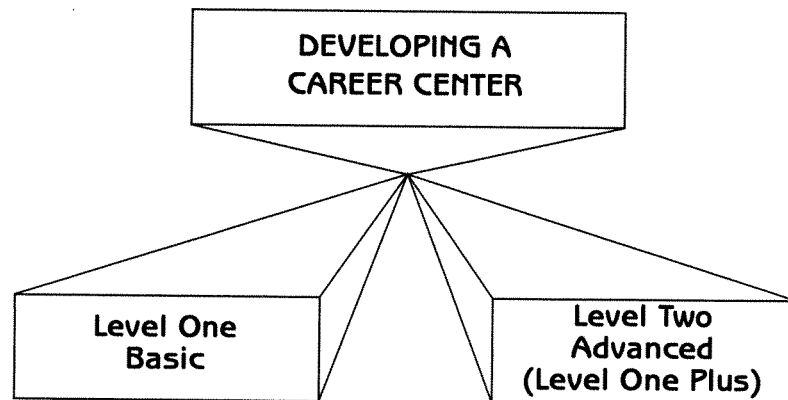
#### Equipment

It is very important to have at least one computer in your career center exclusively for student use. The computer should also have multimedia capability. There is an ever-increasing need for speed and memory to run software packages. It is important that your computer system be as up-to-date as possible.

There are some excellent career information delivery system software packages and programs on the market today. *Oklahoma Career Search*, one of these programs, is widely used in Oklahoma.

The minimum requirements to run *Oklahoma Career Search* on Windows 3.1 are 4 megabytes of RAM or for Windows '95, 8 megabytes of RAM, and at least 30 megabytes free space on hard drive. This software loads to stand-alone system or network (CD-ROM optional).

A printer is needed to produce career and educational information for students. A laser printer is strongly recommended. Having access to a copy machine is also very important. In a school setting, many copies are needed for student use and group presentations. A copier is also useful for duplicating day-to-day communications and reports.



**Staff**

Career Services Coordinator

Student Aides

**Equipment**

Access to:  
 Computer (CD ROM)\*  
 Printer  
 Copy Machine

Access to:  
 Modem (Internet)  
 Video Cassette Recorder (VCR)  
 Monitor - TV  
 Overhead Projector (Workshops)  
 LCD Panel (projects the computer screen for workshops)

**Resources**

Occupational Information  
 Training Information  
 College catalogs  
 Career Decision-Making Materials  
*Oklahoma Career Search*†  
 Assessments  
 Test Preparation Materials (ACT/SAT, ASVAB Guides)  
 Job-Seeking Materials (resumé, interview guides, etc.)

Additional reference books, journals, magazines, materials.  
 Video Library (Occupational, Job Search, College Videos)  
 Occupational Files w/career information on jobs and opportunities with regional businesses and government organizations  
 Application files for area businesses  
 Apprenticeship/OJT files for various vocations.

\* Materials from college information to occupations to interviewing information are available on compact disc (CD ROM).

† *Oklahoma Career Search* is highly recommended.

**Table 2**

## Resources

It is recommended that all Career Centers provide five basic types of information:

- **Occupational information** for both military and civilian jobs to include training requirements, duties, salary, work environment, projection of employment, advancement opportunities, and skills needed
- **Training information** to include universities, community colleges, vocational-technical schools, military, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training
- **Career decision-making material** such as tests and, surveys of student's interests, values, aptitudes, and self-directed materials for career-planning exploration
- **Test preparation material** related to the PSAT, SAT, ACT, ASVAB, Civil Service, etc.
- **Job-seeking material** related to strategies, resumes, applications, interviews, and advancement

A sixth category of **scholarship and financial aid information** may be added if the institution does not have a separate department handling this area.

## Occupational Information

The federal government produces several publications that present occupational and labor market information. It is highly recommended that the following selections be included when establishing a Center:

- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
- *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*
- *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*
- *Guide for Occupational Exploration*

These publications are updated and revised periodically. These federal publications are further detailed in the "Support Services Available" section of this manual.

## Training Information

Books related to specific training opportunities can be ordered through companies such as Peterson's, Barron's, ARCO, Lovejoy, or from career resource catalogs. Having several books in each category from different publishers can assure that complete information will be available to students. These books contain the admission policies, tuition rates, addresses, programs of study, and other pertinent information on individual schools.

Catalogs from specific colleges can be obtained directly from the institution by sending a postcard request. The books above provide the basic educational information, but they do not contain the wealth of information found in individual catalogs. A college catalog section of two- and four-year programs will be invaluable to high school students.

Other sources of free information on training opportunities should be considered. Military recruiters and private employers can enhance a Center's resource collection. Prospective employee packets can provide on-the-job training ideas and hiring requirements. Some counselors regularly attend job or career fairs to obtain these materials for student use.

### **Career Decision-Making Materials**

Career decision-making materials include both test materials and individualized, self-guided, career-planning books (assessments will be covered in the "Career Assessment Tools" section). The books available are numerous, and it is suggested that three or four be selected to allow for individual differences. Several excellent books are in the "References and Resources" section. There are also many excellent guides for working with people in career development and career transition.

Counselors and teachers can use these career-planning books for individual or group workshops and classroom presentations.

It is a good idea to allow students to check out some of these books but to restrict checkouts so that reference materials, such as government publications, will stay in the Career Center at all times.

### **Oklahoma Career Search**

*Oklahoma Career Search* is a complete career information system offering the most current and comprehensive occupational/educational information available. The entire database is revised and updated each year to incorporate changes in the workplace and educational institutions. *Career Search* provides career and educational information for all users—no matter how much their aptitudes, interests, or educational backgrounds differ. The key to such versatility is *Career Search's* extensive database comprised of nine in-depth, completely cross-referenced files: Career File, College File, College Major File, Military File, School Subject File, Apprenticeship File, Oklahoma Local Data, College Letter Writer, and Scholarship and Financial Aid File.

### **Assessments**

Assessment tools are vital tools in a Career Center. They are discussed in greater detail in "Career Assessment Tools."

### **Test Preparation Materials**

High school students may be interested in study guides for tests they will be taking in conjunction with their future plans. Test preparation materials are highly recommended for a career resource area. The books will give an overview of test content, time allotment, testing procedures, and test-taking tips. Sample test questions and review exercises are included in the study guides. Offering several versions of study guides for the same test will provide students with a choice of materials and will provide the industrious student several guides to use. Some recommended study guides are given here.

- *ASVAB, How to Prepare for the Armed Forces Test*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- *How to Prepare for the SAT*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- *ARCO Preparation for the SAT*, Arco Publishing.
- *ACT, American College Testing Program*, Simon & Schuster, Inc.
- *How to Prepare for the ACT*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

Some companies offer computerized versions of these test guides. These would require excessive computer time, which may be prohibitive. However, parents may be interested in obtaining these programs. Ordering information can be found in most of the free catalogs listed in the "Ordering Sources" section of this manual.

### **Job-Seeking Materials**

Job-seeking materials will fill a need for students seeking part-time positions while attending school and, also, help prepare those going directly from high school into jobs. Books, videos, workshops, and classroom presentations are all ways to assist students in preparing for employment.

Resources in the job skills area should include information on the job market, application procedures, resume writing, and the interview process. There are books that cover all phases of the job hunt and others specifically addressing one area, such as resume writing or interviewing. A sample of job-seeking materials is noted in "References and Resources."

## **LEVEL II**

### **Staff**

Level I staffing provides a good foundation for a Career Center and allows most student needs to be met. In Level II, staffing can be expanded to include student aides. They can be trained by the coordinator to use the equipment, identify resources, and perform clerical duties.

### **Equipment**

The Internet is a wonderful and popular source of information on a variety of subjects. It is important for students to have guided access to this resource either through the school network or by calling into an Internet provider using a modem (minimum is 28.8 bytes per second [bps], recommended 56K). Modem software is usually provided by the company that manufactures the modem you purchase. Most modems come with the computer system, and modem software is already on the system.

Career and college information can be found on the Internet. A list of addresses and a further explanation of the Internet as a resource is discussed in the Appendix section of this toolbox. It is also important to note that individual college catalogs, as well as collections, are available now on CD. This is important especially if space is not available for displaying college catalogs.

The addition of a VCR and monitor will allow the Center to develop a video library that features occupational, career-planning, and job-seeking skills video tapes. A set of headphones will allow a student to view a video without disturbing others. Headphones are also useful with the computer as many programs of today contain audio and video components. OKSOICC has a comprehensive Video Library of career-related videos that can be borrowed at no cost.

Overhead and LCD (liquid crystal display) projectors are useful for classroom presentations and workshops. Many schools already have these and, as long as the counselor has access to the equipment, additional purchases will not be necessary. The LCD projector is used to project a computer screen onto a flat, vertical surface and is useful when demonstrating to a class how to use a computer program like *Oklahoma Career Search*.

### Resources

Although counselors are encouraged to keep writing to occupational organizations and industries for free materials, the cost for file cabinets, folders, and the manpower required to process this information needs to be considered.

This is the time to add books related to specific career fields as well as encyclopedias of collections of occupations. Adding these types of books will require the development of a checkout system. Undoubtedly, the counselor will want to select which books can be checked out, keeping reference books on hand at all times.

Career counselors must use their existing resources to increase and refine their own career-planning knowledge. There are many journals and books that can help the counselor stay abreast of the recent developments in the labor market and in career development and planning. A sample of these are noted in "References and Resources."

If a VCR and monitor are added to the equipment inventory, a video library can be developed. Career-specific videos can be ordered that cover major occupational areas and job readiness skills. These videos cover the major themes of job preparation such as resume writing and interviewing. A small sampling showing the wide range of videos is presented in the Video Section of "References and Resources."

Counselors should frequently examine the content of their resource information.

- Is the career information current?
- Is the information relevant?
- Is the information being used by students?

The comprehensive Career Center is one that has multidimensional resources that meet the needs of a diverse student population, including:

1. Occupational files with regional business and government organizations.
2. Application files for area businesses.
3. Apprenticeship/on-the-job-training (OJT) files.

Occupational files have information on various careers and the job opportunities within those careers. Application files contain application materials from businesses in the region. Students can pick up applications at the Career Center, and local employers may post jobs with the Coordinator. These jobs can be posted on a bulletin board in the Career Center. Apprenticeship/OJT files include information on opportunities for on-the-job training programs in the local area. Non-college-bound students will be interested in this option.

## Career Assessment Tools

Assessment is one of the keys to helping students make intelligent and well-informed career decisions. Assessment helps the counselor obtain more comprehensive information on the student's abilities, interests, values, views, and perceptions. There are two major ways to assess a student: the interview process and the objective assessment instruments and questionnaires. The ideal assessment portfolio includes:

- **The career interview** in which the student discusses goals, values, motivation, commitment to education, talents, and interests with the counselor.
- **Achievement test scores** are used in measuring current level of knowledge, skills, and competence. An algebra test is a good example.
- **Aptitude test scores** predict future level of performance. The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is an example of an aptitude test.
- **Interest inventories** measure the student's interests, work values, and occupational expectations.

The results of all these assessments can be used together to create a career portfolio for the student. A student portfolio organizes information on aptitudes, interests, skills, and values to help prepare a student for work or higher education. The student can build on this information and use it to create a resume or explore career or educational paths.

### Career Interview

The career interview can be used to gather more data about the student. The interview is an informal way of gathering information; however, it adds a personal touch and should be used in building rapport and establishing a relationship with the student. The interview will also help the student evaluate goals, motivations, and values. The interview can be used to discuss any topic that could influence career choice, including strengths, talents, hobbies, and past experiences. Discuss feelings or beliefs about various careers that may interest or intrigue the student. The interview will allow the counselor to assess the student's career-related perceptions. More importantly, the interview will help the student engage in some self-analysis, which will often generate discussion and bring up additional ideas.

### Achievement Tests

Achievement test results are standard items contained in student files. These results give the counselor information on the knowledge attained in a given area and are useful in career counseling for noting strengths and areas that need improvement. Examples of common achievement tests are the ACT, SAT, and PSAT.

### **Aptitude Tests**

Aptitude tests measure specific skills and proficiencies. Through the process of measuring aptitudes, a guide can be developed to determine potential career choices by predicting a student's or client's strengths.

The ASVAB is an example of a multiple aptitude battery. Results help students assess their aptitudes and predict performance in academic and occupational areas, select career exploration activities, and make tentative career choices.

Ideally, the ASVAB will be administered to all eleventh-grade students at the beginning of the school year. The results are returned to the schools in approximately two weeks, along with one copy of *Exploring Careers — The ASVAB Workbook* for each student who takes the battery. This ASVAB workbook helps students identify occupations for which they may be suited — based on their career interests, ASVAB scores, amount of education they are willing to pursue, and values that are important to them. Once students have identified one or more occupational areas based on the above criteria, they are better prepared to use the Career Center to more fully investigate the specifics of jobs or occupations that appeal to them. In researching a specific job, students are able to find out information concerning the number of openings in their state; expected salary range; training, education, or other qualifications required; and related occupations. Once high school juniors have identified occupations, they have a year or more in which to focus their energies toward reaching their occupation of choice.

The ASVAB is equally important to juniors who plan to go to college. The identification of an occupation or career group will better prepare them to discuss with their school counselor possible colleges or universities that offer programs in their chosen field. Additionally, if taken before the ACT or SAT, it will help them identify stronger areas including math or English. This knowledge will provide them with opportunity for more practice in their weaker subjects prior to the test to improve their test score.

There is no charge for the ASVAB. All services (pretest briefing, test administration, scoring, and posttest interpretations) and materials (paper, pencils, etc.) are provided by the Department of Defense. School officials need only provide an adequate testing area and a school official with whom testing personnel may coordinate testing procedures.

### **Career Interest Inventories**

Interest inventories compare individual interests to those of the general population, identifying higher than average interest areas. Individual interests are compared with interests of people who have a high degree of job satisfaction in particular occupations. The surveys can stimulate student involvement in career exploration and are helpful in the career decision-making process where students learn more about themselves and the world of work. Interest inventories help students focus their interests on jobs within a career area(s).

Today, many career interest inventories are available both in written and computerized form. The companies that sell the booklets or answer sheets and software provide in-depth manuals and brochures detailing administration, reliability and validity data, the normative sample, and how their results can be used to work with a student. One of the most easily administered career interest inventories is the Self-Assessment Survey, which is a component of *Oklahoma Career Search*. A student's answers are scored by the computer and occupations are suggested that are compatible with the student's interests. A student can then access a report on any of the listed occupations.

Checklists of work values are also available. What aspects of the workplace does the student value most? Does the student like working in a team or working alone? The checklist may also list power and authority, time freedom, fast-paced work, and profit gain. Students can focus their job possibilities by using work values. These checklists may be found in *What Can I Do and Who Will Hire Me to Do It?* by Peggy Simonsen and Shirley Benos and *Career Counseling Techniques* by Duane Brown and Linda Brooks.

### **Student Portfolios**

Each student should be encouraged to maintain a portfolio. This portfolio should include job-related skills, educational skills, employability skills, career development plan, activities, awards, and community service. Any information, which helps students set goals or shows their ability to achieve required job skills, should be kept in the portfolio. As previously mentioned, the portfolio can be used to help create a resumé when applying for jobs.

## Career Exploration Tools

There are many excellent career exploration tools a counselor can use to help students discover more about educational opportunities and the world of work. Three of the most useful tools are the *OOH*, *Oklahoma Career Search*, and the Internet.

### The Occupational Outlook Handbook

The *OOH* is developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and is an essential tool to have in any Career Center. It is also available from private publishers in print form as well as on CD. An Internet version is available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics home page (see Appendix of this toolbox). The *OOH* describes in detail nearly 250 occupations, which cover about 90 percent of all workers. It is a wonderful tool for occupational exploration and clarification.

There is a job index in the *OOH*. Detailed reports on occupations or groups of occupations are available. The major report categories are *nature of the work*, *working conditions*, *employment*, *training/other qualifications/advancement*, *job outlook*, *earnings*, *related occupations*, and *sources of additional information*.

*Nature of the work* gives a comprehensive description of the job and its duties. *Working conditions* discusses the working environment, the hours, and the types of situations encountered on the job. *Employment* deals with the number of people in that occupation nationwide as well as the places of employment. *Training/other qualifications/advancement* is concerned with education or training, certification, and the procedures required for promotion. *Job outlook* presents the national forecast for the job's growth. Forecasts are usually given for eight to nine years from the date of publication. The *Earnings* section discusses average weekly or annual salaries. *Related occupations* mentions various occupations that are similar to the one being discussed. *Sources of additional information* names a few professional organizations within that field that can be contacted for information on career opportunities, certification, licensing, etc.

The *OOH* can be ordered in print or on CD through companies such as

JIST Works, Inc.  
720 North Park Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3431  
Ph: 1-800-JIST-USA  
FAX: 1-800-547-8329

## Oklahoma Career Search

*Oklahoma Career Search (OCS)* is a complete, easy-to-use career information system offering the most current and comprehensive occupational and educational information available. The entire system is revised annually to incorporate changes in the workplace and educational institutions. OCS provides career and educational information for all users — no matter how much their aptitudes, interests, or educational backgrounds differ. The key to such versatility is the extensive database comprised of nine in-depth and completely cross-referenced files: Career File, College File, College Major File, Military File, School Subject File, Apprenticeship File, Oklahoma Local Data (includes state specific information on area vocational and technical schools, scholarships, private schools, labor market information, and licensing information), College Letter Writer, and Scholarship and Financial Aid File.

### Assessment Tools

OCS is easy to use and is a useful tool in providing information related to an individual's interest, skills, and aptitudes. The Self-Assessment Survey and Occupation Search are two interest inventories that assist individuals in identifying occupations that most closely match their interests and skills. In addition, results from the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), COPS/CAPS, and Holland Self-Directed assessment instruments can also be used, and OCS will help identify occupations for the student to explore.

### Occupational Descriptions

The system has more than 400 major occupational titles and 1,400 occupational specialty titles. Each occupational profile includes an occupational description; occupational specialties and definitions; nature of the occupation; duties included; working conditions; tools, equipment, and materials used; likes related to the occupation; physical and special requirements; opportunities for experience; entry methods; national and state earnings; career ladders; fringe benefits; national and state employment and outlook; levels of education and training usually needed; school subjects helpful; related occupations; related military occupations (out of 152 occupations); related college majors; related Oklahoma AVTS programs; and more sources of information.

### College Information

There are more than 3,400 colleges in OCS. Students can conduct an educational search to identify the colleges that meet their preferences. Each college profile includes the school name and address; type of school, affiliation, enrollment statistics; student body profile; community profile; housing information; student programs; student service information; tuition costs; financial aid information; admissions information; testing information; majors offered; and athletic scholarships offered. Also, if available, an Internet e-mail address and website address are listed on each profile. If using the windows version of OCS on a computer system that is Internet-ready, the website is directly linked to the system and can be directly accessed.

### Scholarships

OCS contains college scholarship information for more than 2,450 scholarships. Individuals can do a scholarship search based on the following criteria: major, state, ethnicity or race,

academic record, gender, or affiliation. Financial aid and scholarship information for each area vocational and technical school can be found under Oklahoma Local Data.

### **Letter Writer**

The Letter Writer feature of OCS is very popular. Individuals can use the system to develop letters to selected colleges, area vo-tech schools, and to obtain more information for selected scholarships.

### **Quick Searches**

Quick searches can also be done for occupations, apprenticeships, military occupations, colleges, occupation list by related high school subjects, scholarships, and occupational specialty titles, by selecting the appropriate alphabetical listing. Using the Windows version on an Internet-ready computer system, Internet resources such as America's Job Bank and other Job Banks, Electronic Resumé Banks, and many other good career sites can be directly accessed through the main menu. The Internet Resources list is a hyper-text markup language (HTML) document that can be modified by the user to add additional sites.

### **Occupational Abstracts**

The OCS occupational abstracts have been developed to complement the software. Each major OCS title has a one-page, front and back, summary abstract that is reproducible. The abstracts are excellent to use as a backup to the software.

### **Multimedia and Resumé Writer**

Optional accessories that can be used with OCS include Multimedia Video Clips and Resumé Writer. The Multimedia CD-ROM includes one-minute, full-motion video clips for 50 of the OCS occupations. The Resumé Writer can be used to build job-winning resumé and cover letters using professional templates, including those appropriate for careers in education, sales, marketing, computers, medical and many more. Individuals can browse through hundreds of professional letter samples, including cover letters, follow-up letters, and thank-you letters. Resúmes can be customized using a wide choice of fonts, bullets, borders, layout styles, and clip art. Also included are full-motion videos related to job search, including "The Right Attitude," "Key Interviewing Skills," "Projecting Enthusiasm," and many more.

### **Site License**

OCS is purchased on a site license and can be installed on an unlimited number of computers or a network. For pricing and ordering information, please contact the Oklahoma Career Information Division of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education at (405) 743-5419 or Customer Service at 1-800-654-4502.

### **Contact Information**

For training, demonstration, or general information, contact the Career Information Coordinator at (405) 743-5419 or the Career Systems Specialist at (405) 743-5404.

## Career Center Day-to-Day Operations

The Career Center day-to-day operation includes individual career counseling appointments, interest and aptitude inventory for group or individual administration, classroom presentations, research projects, career forums, and workshops. The workshops should cover areas such as career center resources, career exploration, educational and financial aid search, resumé and application writing, and interviewing and presentation skills.

### Counseling

When a student visits the Career Center, the counselor needs to establish the student's objectives in visiting the Center. Career counselors are there to guide the student in better career exploration. However, the direction for career exploration is ultimately chosen by the student.

The process of career counseling has a logical sequence that can be followed in most cases.

1. Conduct a career interview with the student discussing topics like the student's goals (personal/professional), interests, strengths, talents, etc. A career interview is a chance to establish some rapport with the student and allows an informal assessment. The interview is an opportunity to see how students view themselves and their situations.
2. An interest inventory helps students clarify their interests more clearly and suggests career clusters based on those interests. A values inventory or checklist pinpoints values that should be incorporated in the occupational search. An aptitude test assesses a student's strengths and abilities as well as delineates areas that need improvement. The inventories should be age appropriate and take no longer than 30 to 40 minutes each to complete. Some inventories can be administered in groups and may require two to three sessions to complete. The counselor should be cautious of giving more than one instrument to a student at a time.

In the counseling sessions, it is important that the counselor and student discuss any conflicts or inconsistencies that are seen in the inventory results or that come out in the interview. For example, students' job values may not match their job choices. It is important for counselors to suggest that career decision-making is a lengthy process and may not be decided in one or two sessions. It is equally important that students realize they must make a personal investment in exploring and learning about various careers. This means spending time in the Career Center with the resources. The counselor needs to check out some of the career-specific books to students. The students then can conduct their own research.

### Career Exploration

When students know their occupational interests, in-depth occupational exploration can be done using computerized resources such as *Oklahoma Career Search*. Other exploration resources are available in both computerized and print such as the *Occupational Outlook*

*Handbook* and the *Encyclopedia of Careers*. The Internet is another good resource. Three key occupational exploration resources were described in detail in the previous section "Career Exploration Tools."

Students should narrow their final choices to include three to five occupations, if one doesn't stand out by itself. The final component of exploration should be to talk with a career representative from the occupation of interest. Counselors should establish contacts within the community — with people in various occupations who are willing to talk with students about their respective occupations. The student should then set up an interview to talk with these representatives and even job shadow, if possible. Job shadowing is observing someone on the job to see what actually takes place. The interviewee needs to gather as much information as possible on the duties, realities, myths, and the pleasant and not-so-pleasant aspects of the occupation in question.

Following is a list of possible questions that might help a student obtain helpful information:

- What are the academic majors/degrees or training experiences required to be qualified for this occupation?
- What advice would you give to someone thinking about pursuing a career in this area?
- What are the most rewarding and least rewarding aspects of your job?
- What specific skills are required for this position?
- What additional training, if any, do you need in this occupation once you are hired? (e.g., continuing education units, maintaining licensure or certification, etc.)
- What is a typical day like for you?
- Do you see any interesting trends for this career field in the future?

Once students have gone through counseling, completed the exploration phase, and have a good idea of the occupation they would like to pursue, counselors help students explore educational plans. Together they investigate colleges and vocational-technical schools by using various books such as the *College Handbook* listed in "Resources and References." The college catalog section, from a broad spectrum of colleges, allows hands-on comparison in greater detail. It is impossible to keep a catalog from every university and college in the U.S. *Oklahoma Career Search (OCS)* is useful as it accesses contact information plus other details on almost any college or university in the country. A student can print a formatted letter, addressed to any college found in the system, requesting application information and a catalog. The Internet is also a great resource for educational searches and, via *OCS*, college sites on the Internet can be directly accessed.

After the student establishes an educational plan, additional issues such as financial aid, military service, or prospective employers should be addressed. *OCS* is also a resource for financial aid and scholarships.

## Classroom Presentations

Classroom presentations will help students become aware of the Career Center services and resources. The first presentation is usually general, often followed by requests for more specific presentations. Suggested presentations include general, subject-matter-related, value-oriented, senior packet, and research. Individual teachers can request that the career counselor make classroom presentations on specific topics. Counselors need to be open to developing new topics as the need arises.

### General

First presentations should be general in nature. After a conference with the teacher, the career counselor visits the high school classes. It is important that this presentation include Career Center purpose, location, appointment hours, and explanation of resource samples. The recommended general presentation consists of the following: a sample occupational video, a career information book, a job-seeking skills book, a variety of Department of Labor (DOL) publications, and occupational printouts on specific careers. Specific references include *OCS* software, *OOH*, and *Military Careers*. In succeeding years, the incoming class needs to be given the general presentation to become aware of the available resources.

### Subject-Matter

Subject-matter presentations are in response to individual teacher needs. Instructors request presentations on occupations and training related to their course of instruction (see Form C). For example, a Business Law class presentation may include information on the nature of legal work and related legal occupations. The career counselor then prepares information on the training, working conditions, earnings, and expected job outlook for the requested area or career. Presentations include all levels in any career area, for instance paralegal to lawyer, and court reporter to judge.

### Work Value

Self-assessment of work values assist students to learn more about themselves and how these relate to the world of work. Work value presentations cover those qualities employers generally look for, but students rarely see as important attributes, such as dependability, promptness, honesty, ethics, personal appearance, and many more.

### Senior Packet

By the senior year, students have been exposed to career exploration and work-based learning for several years. Seniors need information on higher education, job-seeking skills, and specific job information. All this information is included in a senior packet with a letter of congratulations and information on resumé writing, interviewing, job-seeking skills, DOL publications on available jobs, higher education opportunities, and any other valuable information not presented to the seniors earlier in their high school experience.

### Senior Project

*Senior Project* is a practical learning situation whereby each senior can add to his/her formal education a greater awareness of the outside world through career exploration, in-depth academic study, or service projects.

Its four major purposes are:

1. To expose seniors to people and ideas outside of classroom experiences.
2. To develop further the students' skills in
  - a. Identifying a problem
  - b. Determining possible solutions
  - c. Reaching conclusions
  - d. Evaluating conclusions
  - e. Seeing the world outside the classroom and learning something in the process
3. To give opportunities to students wishing to engage in
  - a. Career exploration
  - b. In-depth academic study
  - c. Service projects
4. To help satisfy a student's personal interests and his/her general intellectual curiosity.

Opportunities and ideas for Senior Project are endless, especially for the imaginative students. Students who wish to continue their academic pursuits may choose to research a topic of interest. As a service project, students can help those less fortunate, such as the disabled and the mentally retarded, by working with them in hospitals or homes for the aged. Students wanting to get a head start in a computer career may arrange to work at the IBM Center in Oklahoma City. A sponsor from the Center would help guide individual students through their projects. Unlimited opportunities allow students to explore areas now unknown or perhaps only vaguely familiar to them.

It is expected that through Senior Project, students will grow and mature, especially in the areas of realizing their responsibilities to themselves and those around them. The project is a serious undertaking for students and should not be regarded as an escape route but rather a path to their career success (see Form F).

### Research

Research projects for students typically begin with a classroom presentation, and many are instigated or assigned by the teacher. Various interest inventories should be given to individuals or entire classes. The inventories will help students narrow the focus of their career search. Students visit the Career Center for follow-up research on their chosen careers. This research may take several visits. Students can access information to prepare an oral or written report as required by the classroom teacher.

**Workshops**

Secondary career counselors should design job-seeking skills workshops. Videos and other interesting audio/visual aids should be included in the presentations. Some of the suggested topics for workshops are resumé writing, the perfect cover letter, job application procedures, and job interview skills. This information can be presented to individuals, small groups, or entire classrooms, depending on the school situation.

**Career Fair — General Information Source**

During a Career Fair, students usually go from booth to booth and talk with professionals about their careers. Career Fairs are normally held in a gymnasium or cafeteria, so they do not disrupt the normal classroom schedule as much as a Career Day does. During the Career Fair, students are free to go to any booth. This can be either an advantage or disadvantage. The advantage is that truly motivated students can discuss the career individually with a professional. A disadvantage is that students often do not stay to ask questions or listen to the entire presentation. Another disadvantage is that the organizers of the Career Fair have no guarantee that students will learn about new career options because students are free to roam from booth to booth.

**Career Forum — Specific Career Information Source**

A Career Forum focuses on a single career field while a Career Fair focuses on many career fields. Four or five representatives from several aspects of the field are brought together in a panel. Each member of the panel gives a short presentation on his/her job — the required training, general duties and responsibilities, work environment, salary, and so forth. Students attending the forum have the opportunity to ask questions. This helps students see the range of jobs available in the field. An example would be medicine with members of the panel including a Nurse's Aide or Orderly, Registered Nurse, Physical Therapy Assistant, Surgeon, Dentist, and General Practitioner.

**Career Day — Specific Career Information Source**

During a Career Day, speakers talk to a student audience for a designated amount of time. One advantage is that these presentations are usually in a classroom where the students are not distracted by other presentations, and the speakers have a definite time frame for their presentations. The Career Day format allows a speaker to plan for a specific number of participants and handouts. Organizers of the Career Day also know exactly how many careers each student will learn about during the event. One disadvantage is that a Career Day requires the cooperation of many teachers, who must allow both their classroom time and space to be used.

## Presentation of Resource Materials

An important aspect of a Career Center is the presentation of the resource materials. The resources are organized in a manner that invites and encourages people to use them without feeling as though they are imposing on the staff.

All resources need to be labeled for easy location. This identification, combined with organization, provides easy accessibility to students, faculty, and staff. Many students and instructors will stop by the Career Center to browse through the books, college catalogs, and publications. The placement of the resources vary according to the amount of space available — whether the Career Center is located in an office, a large room, or several rooms.

### Computer

Locate the computer in an area of the Career Center where students will have privacy when using it. Although this area does not have to be enclosed, place the computer in an area where there is minimal activity or talking. If an office is the only space available, partitions around the computer may be the best option so that students can concentrate without interruptions. Headphones are a good idea for programs that have audio.

The system needs to have a printer. It is used for printing assessment results, as well as general occupation and college information for the student's immediate use. OCS gives the career counselor many options for providing printed materials to the student.

### Video Cassette Recorder (VCR) and Monitor

Proper arrangement of equipment and videos in a reasonably secluded area encourages students and faculty to use the video equipment. Today's students are accustomed to videos and seem to gravitate to them. If they are allowed the freedom to browse through the titles, students will operate the videos on their own and at their own pace. This area consists of a television, VCR, and a good display rack and/or cabinet for the tapes. It is useful to have a video system that will allow the students to use headphones for audio privacy.

## Resource Materials

The optimum arrangement for resource materials provides sufficient space to display the resources in seven major divisions:

### 1. Career Search Section

The resources in this section should provide job descriptions, future outlook for careers, average national salaries, training or college requirements, academic preparation requirements, related jobs, working conditions, and other pertinent job description information. Books on vocational guidance, occupational exploration, and specific careers are very popular.

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and the *O\*Net* — the *Occupational Information Network* (electronic replacement for the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*) are two publications published by the U.S. Department of Labor. The *OOH*, on the other hand, gives a more thorough report on occupations. The *OOH* was discussed in greater detail in a prior section, "Career Exploration Tools."

### 2. Job Hunting Section

This section consists of books, magazines, and publications on resumes, application procedures, interviewing techniques, cover letters, job search, the job market, job skills, and other related materials. Please refer to the *Career Stuff* catalog.

Many high school students are in the school-to-work transition phase, and this section provides the career guidance tools to serve these students. It also serves students who are working while going to high school.

### 3. Military Sections

The Career Center is not a place for the standard military information rack. Rather, the Center provides information about selecting the military as a career field. Information is supplemented with copies of recruiting-type brochures.

### 4. Technical School and College Section

The technical vocational school and college section is very important. It is used extensively by juniors and seniors and also by parents! Include books that discuss selecting and applying to a postsecondary institution, financial aid information, campus visits, and guides for parents and students.

Another important component of postsecondary information is the college catalog section. This section is often built with whatever catalogs have been sent to the counselor. This provides an incomplete college catalog library, making it difficult for students to

research their particular college choices. Postcards requesting catalogs need to be sent out every one to two years to selected technical institutions, colleges, and universities. Include all postsecondary schools in your state as well as surrounding states. Beyond this, select only major state schools around the nation.

*Oklahoma Career Search* is helpful in establishing this section. A list of most colleges and universities by state can be accessed on *OCS*. A student can easily print a letter requesting a catalog and application materials from individual schools. A student searches for schools by major, tuition costs, community size, and other criteria.

### **5. Publication Section**

The "Support Services Available" section contains information on a variety of free materials and should be located at the beginning of the publication section.

The publication section of the Career Center requires display units, and some funds should be invested in magazine holders, similar to those used by libraries, or wall display units. It is important to prominently display categorized magazines, newspapers, and brochures.

If pamphlets or newsletters are received on a monthly basis, file them in a clearly labeled, three-ring binder, and display the binder so that it is easily accessible to students.

### **6. Video Section**

Video display units are expensive. One option is to purchase an inexpensive bookcase for video display or display under the VCR in the TV stand. For videos distributed by the ODVTE, refer to videos in the *Career Stuff* catalog.

### **7. Bulletin Board**

A Career Center bulletin board is useful for posting articles and publications on job training, college life, degree programs, job-seeking skills, Oklahoma economic outlook, future wages and jobs, high school information, and career planning. Job announcements from area employers should be posted here, as students may be looking for part-time work while in school. The bulletin board is also an advertising center for upcoming events such as Career Fairs, Career Forums, or Career Days.

## Documentation - Accountability - Reporting

### Monthly Report

A monthly report is a good tracking or assessment instrument. It is wise to keep the basic statistical data. This basic data should be kept on a simple sign-in sheet rather than a comprehensive intake form (Form D).

When establishing a Career Center, it is helpful to prepare a monthly progress report. Submit copies to those involved with the supervision and funding of the Center. The report is necessary for two reasons: First, it provides monthly accomplishments to program sponsors; and second, it enables the counselors to analyze the process and to make any changes necessary. Information in the report is used to evaluate the Career Center and to continually improve its resources as well as its processes.

The report needs to contain information on all phases of setting up and operating the Career Center. The report should include documentation on ordering equipment, resources, and supplies; the actual moving into the Center, training procedures; seminars and meetings attended; open houses; any forms, brochures, or literature developed; and the general day-to-day operations. The tally of student data is also reported, including the number of students, number of disabled, ethnicity, grade, and gender. This documentation will prove the use and value of the Career Center.

In addition to the objective analysis of the month, a subjective evaluation should also be conducted. The Center Director can review the activities of the month and discuss with those concerned any problems that may have developed as well as solutions formulated for the future.

### Intake Form

The intake form can be a very simple form, or more complicated, depending on reporting requirements of the individual school. If state or federal grant money is used to support the Career Center, the grant will specify specific stipulations for reporting Career Center information for accountability. This form may include questions on Oklahoma residency, citizenship, selective service, student involvement in a vocational/technical program, and disabled status. Each Career Center needs to ensure compliance with regulations within their organization.

Form E shows an example of an intake form requiring a wide variety of data. At a minimum, the form should include general information such as name, social security number, grade, and current goal. Include ethnicity to ensure compliance with Equal Opportunity Legislation.

The section on current goal or future plans (work, military, vocational/technical or professional) helps the counselor in guiding the student toward reference material that will be most helpful. Allow space on the form for the counselor to include information and data on what services were utilized by the student. The example in Form E has several categories printed on the back so that the counselor can simply circle the appropriate items. This saves time during the counseling session. This intake form is easy to use when preparing a monthly report and statistical evaluation. This section of Form E is very beneficial to the counselor when used as an evaluation tool to determine how effectively the resources are being used. With a limited budget, it is important to know what information is used most frequently; therefore, the report needs to be updated as often as financially feasible.

A remarks section should be available for the counselor to record actions taken and recommendations made for the future. Information that may impact career decisions — such as interest inventories, aptitude surveys, and achievement test scores — are kept in the same file.

### Ready? . . . Set . . . Go!

Have you observed an operational Career Center?

- Have you found a location for the Career Center?
- Have you created an Advisory Board?
- Have you decided on an appointment system for students or drop-in procedures?
- Have you planned on open houses for the Career Center? (Are these designed for specific groups or to provide general information?)
- Have you publicized the new Career Center? (Radio, TV, Newspaper, School Bulletin, Posters)
- Have you surveyed faculty and staff to assess their needs?
- Have you established a close working relationship between yourself and the Guidance Department?
- Have you prepared an information form or brochure of Career Center services for the faculty?
- Have you volunteered to give tours and presentations on the Career Center and its services and resources?
- Have you identified, ordered, received, and catalogued resources?

If you have addressed these questions, you should have an operational Career Center.

## Support Services Available

### Career Services

The Career Services, a part of the Guidance Division of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, provides technical assistance for school districts, area vocational-technical schools, and local school-to-work partnerships in the form of on-site visits, correspondence, telephone contact, networking, and e-mail. The following services are available:

- Assistance in selecting current resources for school career resource centers.
- Infusion of career awareness, exploration, and preparation concepts into academic curriculum.
- Assistance in improving the communication network between area vocational-technical schools and public schools.
- In-service supporting career development components of High Schools That Work, Tech Prep, and School-to-Work efforts.

For more information, contact:

Guidance Division  
Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education  
1500 West Seventh Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364  
(405) 743-5157

### Oklahoma Career Information

#### Mission

Oklahoma Career Information, an integral part of the Guidance Division of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education, plays a key role in the mission of the division. That mission is to develop and disseminate quality products and provide in-service training and leadership for career guidance/student service programs, for staff in area vocational-technical schools, and for counselors in public schools within the state of Oklahoma.

#### Staff Functions

The Career Information Coordinator creates, develops, promotes, and distributes career development products. These products are designed to focus on the following stages in career development: Career Awareness → Career Exploration → Career Preparation. Career Information products include computer software, curriculum, and videos.

Call (405) 743-5419 for information regarding:

- Career Awareness products
- Career Exploration products
- Career Preparation products
- Career development products for the school-to-work transition
- Vocational In-service Program (VIP) — Available for middle school to high school counselors who have a vocational education program in their schools or work with an area vo-tech school
- Planning for Life (recognition program)

The Career Systems Specialist assists in developing a quality *Oklahoma Career Search (OCS)* system integrating career information, labor market information, and employment opportunities. This staff member promotes career information materials, organizes and presents *Oklahoma Career Search* workshops, and provides technical assistance to users across the state.

Call (405) 743-5404 for information regarding:

- *Oklahoma Career Search* software program
- Product orders
- Product exchanges
- Other career information materials
- Booth exhibits
- Guidance in homepage development

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)**

The ASVAB is a nationally normed, multiaptitude test battery offered to students in high schools, vocational schools, and postsecondary schools. The ASVAB provides both aptitude and interest assessment, with comprehensive career exploration materials, and is easily integrated into a school's current career guidance program.

The ASVAB is designed to predict future occupational and academic success — hence, school-to-work. The ASVAB is a unique tool for college-bound and non-college-bound students and their counselor to explore career options.

The ASVAB Career Exploration Program meets the competencies and indicators identified in the NOICC National Career Development Guidelines and provides career information at no cost to the school or the student. The ASVAB takes approximately three hours to administer. Test administrators and proctors are provided for the test.

Juniors and seniors are encouraged to take part in the ASVAB to give them the necessary tools to make career decisions. Participating students complete an aptitude test, an interest inventory, and a work values exercise.

Through the ASVAB, students learn about themselves. For example, the college-bound student can identify majors that match interests and abilities. For work-bound students, the ASVAB provides career and vocational options.

The OCCU-FIND booklet, included in this career program, is a matrix which links students' aptitudes, interests, education, and work values to occupations. In addition, the ASVAB academic, verbal, and math ability scores, and interest codes can be used with *Oklahoma Career Search*, a computerized system designed to assist users in career exploration and planning.

School officials may schedule a test by calling: (405) 681-8683.

For more information, please write:

ASVAB Career Exploration Program  
Attn: Educational Services Specialist  
4400 Southwest 21st Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73108  
or call (405) 681-8682.

### **Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)**

EPAS is a systematic approach to career and educational planning, instructional support, and evaluation services. EPAS was developed to help schools

- set and attain standards for learning that culminate in student readiness for postsecondary education and work; and
- monitor student performance over time to determine progress toward school and district standards.

Educational reform as a means of preparing students to meet demanding educational and career goals is a major challenge facing all Americans. The search for answers to this dilemma has led ACT to develop its Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). EPAS is a longitudinal system of programs that can help teachers, parents, and administrators guide students through critical transition points in their educational lives.

Beginning in eighth grade, EXPLORE directs students through the transition to high school with a formative process of career exploration and course planning. EXPLORE also provides baseline data as a starting point for monitoring student progress through high school.

The second stage occurs in tenth grade with PLAN, designed to provide a midpoint review of career priorities and educational achievement while there is still time to adjust educational strategies. For all students, PLAN can provide direction for the last two years of high school to better prepare students for the next transition — from high school to college, or from high school into the workforce.

Students planning to attend college participate in another EPAS component, the ACT Assessment Program. The AAP is a guidance, placement, and admissions program that helps students prepare for the transition to postsecondary education while providing a final measure of high school outcomes for college-bound students.

For students planning to enter the workforce, EPAS measures and reports students' workplace skills. Work Keys is a system designed to help students prepare for jobs by assessing workplace skills and then helping students develop those skills. Rather than a single test, Work Keys is a comprehensive system for assessing, teaching, and aiding in the development of general workplace skills. Helpful to all students, Work Keys can support immediate entry into the workforce following high school graduation.

In addition to each of the four transition points, EPAS recognizes the need for information about district and school academic programs and student performance. To help meet this need, EPAS offers the AIM reporting service — a service that assists schools and districts in organizing information, identifying strengths and weaknesses, drawing conclusions, and making decisions about educational performance.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education will provide funding for testing materials and basic scoring fees for any district that chooses to administer the EXPLORE and PLAN.

Contact:

Falba Turner, M.Ed.  
Assessment Associate  
8303 MoPac Expressway North  
Suite B-228  
Austin, TX 78759-8369  
(512) 345-1949  
Fax: 512-345-2997

**Oklahoma State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC)****Vision**

A world-class workforce supported by the highest-quality occupational and career information products and services.

**Mission**

To provide high-quality occupational and career information to assist Oklahomans in making informed career and labor market decisions.

We advance workforce preparation by

- promoting collaboration between producers and users of occupational and career information,
- developing and continuously improving products and services,
- increasing information access and availability,
- optimizing the use of leading-edge technology, and
- providing the highest-quality training.

**Counselor Training**

The Oklahoma SOICC sponsors a number of workshops for school and agency counselors across the state. These training sessions show how to use national and state labor market information materials and reports to help students and clients choose career plans. Included in the course are detailed explanations of labor market definitions and local job definitions, along with dissemination and discussion of relevant state and national reports.

**The Real Game Series**

SOICC also coordinates training on *The Real Game Series* in conjunction with the NOICC/SOICC Network and the American School Counselor Association. Developed through a partnership between more than 5,000 Canadian and American teachers, counselors, students, and parents, *The Real Game* is a career education program. It enables students, through activities based on an "experiential" approach, to discover the realities of the adult world and to realize the effects that choices and decisions made now have on the quality of their life as an adult. SOICC plans to offer approximately 10 training workshops on *The Real Game*, which targets seventh- and eighth-graders, in fiscal year 1999. SOICC also plans to offer training on the high school version, *The Be Real Game*; the adult version, *Real Times, Real Life*; and the elementary version, *The Real Small Game*.

**Publications**

In cooperation with the Guidance and School-to-Work Divisions of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education (ODVTE), the Oklahoma SOICC produces the career information products listed below.

**Career Connections Series**

**Elementary**

Get a head start on career development with your students by introducing them to career awareness in a fun, hands-on way. The *Career Connection* for elementary students introduces five major themes within career awareness: (1) understanding career clusters, (2) understanding the relationship between work and learning, (3) understanding the importance of personal respect and good work habits, (4) understanding how to problem solve, and (5) understanding how to relate student interests to career clusters.

C59013 In state \$9/pkg. of 25 Out of state \$18/pkg. of 25

**Mid-High**

The *Career Connection* for mid-high students is a 20-page, full-color publication jam-packed with hands-on career awareness and exploration activities and important information to help students develop plans of study, do career exploration, and get and keep that first part-time job. Articles include "How to Get Ahead in College," "Hottest Jobs in Oklahoma," "The Net's Best Sites to Surf," "Will You Be Ready to Leave Home?" and "Just How Ready Are You for the Real World?"

C59014 In state \$9/pkg. of 25 Out of state \$18/pkg. of 25  
 C59015 In state \$82/pkg. of 250 Out of state \$162.50/pkg. of 250

**High School, College, and Adult**

*Succeeding in the Workplace* is a "must read" for individuals who are making that all-important career decision. Whether it is your first job or next job, this magazine will help you make a smooth transition into the job you really want. Read valuable articles on job search techniques, mentoring in the workplace, home-based careers, internships, surfing the Net for jobs, financing your career training, resumé and cover letter development, how to prepare for interviews, and much more. Make this magazine your personal road map to success!

C59016 In state \$9/pkg. of 25 Out of state \$18/pkg. of 25  
 C59017 In state \$82/pkg. of 250 Out of state \$162.50/pkg. of 250

**Licensed and Certified Occupations of Oklahoma Handbook**

Containing approximately 140 occupations, this publication provides information on the occupations in Oklahoma that require licensing and certification. A general job description, educational and examination requirements, wage information, and additional sources of information are listed for each occupation.

TA9190 In state \$7 Out of state \$10

**Employability Skills, Series I**

Accompanied by a workbook, this employability skills video set provides counseling on how to find and land a top-notch job. Videos include (1) *Job Hunt: Staying on Track*, (2) *Job Connection: Applying for Work*, (3) *Job Interview: Tipping the Odds*, and (4) *Let's Go: Success on the Job*.

TA7200 In state only \$54/set

**Employability Skills, Series II**

Sold as a set, these four videos make job hunting a breeze. Included with this series are (1) *Creating a Resumé*, (2) *Career Options: A Winning Strategy*, (3) *Changing Jobs: Your Next Move*, and (4) *Making Career Decisions*. These videos will guide you through the employment process. Start your job search today!

TA7201 In state only \$54/set

**It's a New World**

This video reinforces the need for math and science skills through interviews with professionals in high-demand occupations. Students learn about six sample occupations that use science and math. It's an informative, motivational, relevant, and entertaining video for students in Grades 6-8.

TA1022 In state only \$15

**State Training Inventory**

The State Training Inventory (STI) is a multistate, educational database system that allows you to identify schools and the programs they offer by selected geographic area. The software system allows you to obtain educational and training data by program and type of institution.

TA9216 In state only \$7 (not listed in *Career Stuff* catalog)

**Explore!**

Explore is a 19-minute video that introduces upper-elementary students to the idea of exploring the world of work — just as Columbus explored the new world — to “discover” what is out there. Students find and describe several career opportunities in five different employment settings.

NC7003 In state only \$25

For more information, please contact:

Oklahoma SOICC  
1500 West Seventh Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364  
Phone: (405) 743-5197  
Fax: 405-743-6808  
<http://www.okvotech.org/soicc/index.htm>

**Free Loan Materials**

The Resource Center at the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education offers a library of materials (print and non-print) for checkout to Oklahoma educators.

**Circulation**

Materials may be checked out for one month and renewed if no one else is waiting for them. Items are loaned on a first-come, first-served basis. If the requested item is already checked out, your name will be placed on a waiting list, and the item will be sent as soon as it is available. There is an advance reservation system.

There is no fee for borrowing the items, but the borrower is responsible for return postage. Overdue notices are issued for items not returned on or before their due date. Replacement of lost or damaged materials is the responsibility of the borrower.

**Access**

The Resource Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on state-designated holidays. Please note the Resource Center is open during school vacations (summer hours are 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.). Materials may be requested by e-mail, fax, phone, written request, or walk in.

We offer subject bibliographies as tools for selecting items to borrow. Several are listed by level in the *Career Stuff* catalog.

For more information, please contact:

Resource Center  
1500 West Seventh Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364  
Phone: (405) 743-5163  
Fax: 405-743-6809  
dchri@okvotech.org

**Workforce Oklahoma Centers—  
One-Stop Career Center**

For further information on any of these programs, contact the nearest service center listed below.

CITY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ada	1628 East Beverly Street, 74820	(405) 332-1533
Altus	1115 North Spurgeon Street, 73521	(405) 482-3262
Antlers	211 Southwest Third, 74578	(580) 298-3854
Bartlesville	6101 Southeast Nowata Road, 74006	(918) 331-3400
Chickasha	628 Kansas Avenue, 73018	(405) 224-3310
Claremore	1810 North Sioux Avenue, 74018	(918) 341-6633
Enid	215 Kenwood Boulevard, 73701	(405) 234-6043
Hugo	301 East Duke, 74743	(580) 326-6472
Lawton	1711 Southwest 11th Street, 73501	(405) 357-3500
McAlester	1201 East Wyandotte Avenue, 74502	(918) 423-6830
Muskogee	2316 West Shawnee, 74401	(918) 682-2364
Norman	640 Veterans Drive, 73072	(405) 364-2505
OKC Central	One North Walker, 73102	(405) 235-5627
OKC Eastside	7401 Northeast 23rd, 73140	(405) 278-1890
Pryor	219 Northeast First Street, 74362	(918) 825-2582
Shawnee	101 North Union, 74801	(405) 275-7800
Tulsa-Hartford	110 South Hartford, 74120	(918) 596-7200
Woodward	1117 11th Street, 73801	(580) 256-3308

One-Stop Career Center Resource Room provides career publications, software programs, access to the Internet, and staff guidance, all at no charge.

**Federal Government Publications**

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)* is extremely useful as a career exploration resource because it provides in-depth reports on hundreds of occupations. The *OOH* is probably the best source for comprehensive and accurate national career information. It is ideal for student or counselor use because it contains answers to many occupational questions. The format is easy to read and understand. Many career centers keep several copies on hand because of its frequent use. This publication was discussed previously in detail in the section "Career Exploration Tools."

It can be ordered through:

Jist Works  
720 N. Park Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
1-800-648-3431  
(print or CD)

*The Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides updated occupational information and can be used to supplement the *OOH*. Articles are presented on various career fields, the job market, and other relevant topics. Highlighted occupations can include those in new technology or growth fields where demands will be high for specifically trained personnel.

To order the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, contact:

BLS Publication Sales Center  
Box 2145  
Chicago, IL 60690  
(312) 353-1880

The main objective of the *Complete Guide for Occupational Exploration (CGOE)*, produced by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, is to help students identify occupations that match interests, skills, values, and abilities. There are several checklists within the *CGOE* to help students in their exploration: occupational interests, work-related values, leisure activities, home activities, school and training subjects, and work experience. One of the most useful aspects of the *CGOE* is that it classifies the world of work into interest areas, work groups, subgroups, and finally, respective occupations. This career exploration tool looks at the total individual and then tries to match personal attributes to occupations within the interest areas, work groups, and subgroups. The student can see

examples of occupations within the subgroups and can then refer to the *O\*Net (DOT)* or the *OOH* for more information on that particular occupation. The *CGOE* may be ordered through:

<i>Career Stuff Catalog</i> (Refer to the back of this toolbox.)	OR	JIST Works, Inc. 720 North Park Avenue Indianapolis, IN 46202-3431 (317) 264-3720 Fax: 1-800-JIST-FAX or (317) 264-3709
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*O\*NET* — The National *O\*NET* Consortium is a new organization funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, to further the development, dissemination, and improvement of *O\*NET* — The Occupational Information Network.

*O\*NET* is a comprehensive database system for collecting, organizing, describing and disseminating data on job characteristics and worker attributes. *O\*NET* replaces the outmoded *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)*, currently the nation's primary source of occupational information.

Containing occupational information including skills, knowledges, abilities, work content, and the context in which work is done, *O\*NET* will provide the foundation upon which others can build as they assist with career counseling, employment, and job training activities. The ultimate goal of the *O\*NET* project is to produce a comprehensive occupational information network.

The *O\*Net* may be ordered from :

U.S. Department of Labor  
ETA/Office of Policy and Research  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N5636  
Washington, DC 20210  
(202) 219-7161  
<http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet>

*Military Careers* is a comprehensive source of information on 152 enlisted and officer military occupations as well as 36 selected military career paths. The reports on the military occupations contain a detailed description including various duties, physical demands, helpful attributes, work environment, training provided, civilian counterparts, and opportunities. Request copies through the Department of Defense at:

HQ USMEPCOM/MEPCT-E  
2500 Green Bay Road  
North Chicago, IL 60064  
Hotline: 1-800-323-0513