National Career Development Guidelines
Overview
http://www.acrnetwork.org

INTRODUCTION

We live in a time when both youth and adults are confronted with constant change in many aspects of their lives. For example, changes in the workplace include a redistribution of available jobs, a more rapid rate of technological development and shifts in business structure. Individuals must invest in lifelong learning to remain competitive. All of this creates the need for frequent career decision-making and those decisions can impact on a person's family, finances, health, social responsibilities, leisure time and overall lifestyle. It is clear that each person must manage his/her career. The skills to do so can be learned through career development programs for youth and adults.

What is career development? Career development is a lifelong process comprised of many tasks that arise in conjunction with exploring, choosing and implementing decisions about educational, occupational and related life roles. In the broadest sense, career development can be understood as one of the many aspects of socialization that combine to create human development. In this case, it is that aspect of human development which includes how individuals incorporate their values about work, their beliefs about their own interests and abilities, their decisions about education, the ways they negotiate transitions into and out of work experiences and their unique interactions between work and other life roles. (Herr, 2004).

THE NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES REVISION PROJECT

The National Career Development Guidelines (Guidelines) resource identifies content, provides activities and materials and recommends program implementation strategies that support the career development process throughout life. The Guidelines can help practitioners:

- prepare youth and adults for the changing workplace by increasing their understanding of the need for lifelong learning and the relationship between education and employment;
- reduce individual risks by promoting better understanding of self, improving social adjustment and enhancing decision-making and planning skills;
- increase program accountability by evaluating program process and outcomes through regular assessment;
- promote program coordination and articulation by defining a sequence of delivery for program activities, reinforcing learning from previous levels and reducing duplication of services; and
- expand public awareness of the need for and benefits of career development.

The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) first released the Guidelines resource in 1989. It contained a framework of career development competencies and indicators, as well as a recommended strategy for implementing career development programs for youth or adults. The Guide

lines initiative is now funded by the US Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

In the fifteen years since the Guidelines initial development, much has changed. The demands of a high performance workplace require workers to engage in lifelong learning to continually improve their academic, occupational and career management skills. It is important for the Guidelines to remain dynamic and continue to reflect the full scope of career development and career management skills required in today's workplace. Therefore, the Guidelines Revision Project was commissioned in 2003 to:

- update and revise the Guidelines framework of competencies and indicators to effectively align with the goals of No Child Left Behind (NCLB);
- expand the Guidelines target audiences to include K-12 students and their parents, teachers, counselors and administrators, postsecondary students and other adults, as well as the business community;
- broaden the Guidelines scope and application by providing the target audiences easily accessible career development information, learning activities and strategies that lead to informed career decision-making and lifelong learning; and
- create a robust, career development Web site for the delivery of Guidelines information, learning activities and strategies.

To accomplish this mission, OVAE contracted with DTI Associates, Inc. - A Haverstick Company (DTI) to oversee the creation of an expanded Guidelines resource that contains these components:

- a framework of career development domains, goals and indicators;
- career development activities and resources for youth and adults to use on their own or with family; and
- career development lessons, activities, resources and implementation strategies for educators, administrators, counselors and career development practitioners to support program development, delivery and evaluation.

The materials in each component are designed to help youth and adults better manage their own careers or to help professionals design and deliver career development programs and services for youth and adults in many settings. The America's Career Resource Network (ACRN) Web site (www.acrnetwork.org) houses the components of the Guidelines.

UNDERSTANDING THE GUIDELINES FRAMEWORK

Domains and Goals
Domains, goals and indicators organize the Guidelines framework. The three domains: Personal Social Development (PS), Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning (ED) and Career Management (CM) organize content that is further described by eleven goals. The goals define broad areas of career development competency as shown below.

Personal Social Development Domain
- GOAL PS1 Develop understanding of self to build and maintain a positive self-concept.
- GOAL PS2 Develop positive interpersonal skills including respect for diversity.
- GOAL PS3 Integrate growth and change into your career development.
- GOAL PS4 Balance personal, leisure, community, learner, family and work roles.

Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning Domain
- GOAL ED1 Attain educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach your personal and career goals.
- GOAL ED2 Participate in ongoing, lifelong learning experiences to enhance your ability to function effectively in a diverse and changing economy.

Career Management Domain
- GOAL CM1 Create and manage a career plan that meets your career goals.
- GOAL CM2 Use a process of decision-making as one component of career development.
- GOAL CM3 Use accurate, current and unbiased career information during career planning and management.
- GOAL CM4 Master academic, occupational and general employability skills in order to obtain, create, maintain and/or advance your employment.
- GOAL CM5 Integrate changing employment trends, societal needs and economic conditions into your career plans.

Indicators and Learning Stages
The goals are detailed by more than 200 indicators that highlight the knowledge and skills needed to achieve them. (Visit www.acrnetwork.org for a complete list of the Guidelines indicators.) Each indicator is presented in three learning stages derived from Bloom's Taxonomy. They represent a developmental sequence of Knowledge Acquisition, Application and Reflection (see below). The stages describe learning competency. They are not tied to an individual's age or level of education. Together, the Guidelines goals and indicators can be the basis for K-Adult career development program content and evaluation.

Learning Stage 1. KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION (K). Youth and adults at the Knowledge Acquisition Stage expand awareness and build comprehension of knowledge. They can recall, recognize, describe, identify, clarify, discuss, explain, summarize, query, investigate and compile new information about the knowledge.

Learning Stage 2. APPLICATION (A). Youth and adults at the Application Stage experience acquired knowledge by applying it to situations and to self. They seek out ways to use the knowledge. For example, they can demonstrate, employ, perform, illustrate and solve problems related to the knowledge.

Learning Stage 3. REFLECTION (R). Youth and adults at the Reflection Stage analyze, synthesize, judge, assess and evaluate knowledge in accord with their own goals, values and beliefs. They decide whether or not to integrate the knowledge into their ongoing response to situations and adjust their behavior accordingly.

Coding System

The Guidelines framework uses a simple coding system to identify domains, goals and indicators as outlined below.

Domains:
- PS—Personal Social Development
- ED—Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning
- CM—Career Management

Goals: Coded by domain and then numerically.
Examples of goals:
- Goal PS1 The student develops understanding of self to build and maintain a positive self-concept.
- Goal ED1 The student attains educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach personal and career goals.
- Goal CM2 Use a process of decision-making as a component of career development.

Learning Stages:
- K—Knowledge Acquisition
- A—Application
- R—Reflection

Indicators: Coded by domain, goal, learning stage and then numerically.
Examples of indicators:
- CM2.K2 Identify the steps in one model of decision-making.
- CM2.A2 Demonstrate the use of a decision-making model.
- CM2.R2 Assess what decision-making model(s) work best for you.

TIPS FOR USING THE GUIDELINES

Guidelines Framework

The Guidelines framework is the foundation for all of the other Guidelines materials. Consider the following possibilities for using the framework.

1. Youth and adults can use the goals and indicators as an informal checklist to determine areas of competency and gaps that need attention.
2. Parents, guardians, spouses, or family members can use the framework to better understand how

to help someone with career development questions.

3. Teachers can use the framework to review their curriculum and existing lessons for career development connections.
4. Teachers can use the framework to write new lessons that enhance academic rigor by infusing career development concepts.
5. Counselors, career practitioners and administrators can use the Guidelines framework to review an existing career development program for students or adults to see what competencies are covered and where the gaps are.
6. Counselors, career practitioners and administrators can use the Guidelines framework to craft needs assessments for youth and adults.
7. Counselors, career practitioners and administrators can use the Guidelines framework to craft a new competency-based career development program for youth or adults.
8. Counselors, career practitioners and administrators can use the Guidelines framework to develop a program evaluation and accountability plan.
9. Counselors, career practitioners and media specialists can use the Guidelines framework to review materials and resources on hand or those being considered for purchase.
10. The Guidelines framework can serve as the basis for staff development workshops offered locally, statewide, or regionally (e.g., ACRN workshops).
11. The Guidelines framework can inform the development of professional standards, accreditation, certification and legislation and policy at both the national and state levels.
12. Product developers can use the Guidelines framework to target their materials to meet specific career development needs of potential customers.

Guidelines Applications
In addition to the Guidelines framework, the ACRN Web site houses many career development applications (activities, materials and resources) for youth, adults, parents, educators, counselors and career development practitioners.

Youth and adults will find the ACRN Web site a rich source for career development activities and resources to use on their own or with family. The student pages provide interactive, high school level activities to explore self, careers and future plans (About Me, About My Career and About Reaching My Future Goals). School Days offers tips to help students get the most out of high school. After Graduation is full of information to give students a head start with postsecondary education plans. Students learn about employment trends with Where the Jobs Are. Watch for enhancements as pages are added to the Web site for elementary students, middle school students and adults.

Parents/guardians will find brochures and other resources loaded with information about postsecondary education, financial aid, exploring occupations and key career development issues.

Educators, administrators, counselors and career development practitioners will find a wealth of career

development lessons, activities, resources and implementation strategies on the ACRN Web site to use in program development, delivery and evaluation.

- Teacher pages contain lessons that enrich rigorous academics with career development concepts. New ways to evaluate academic lessons, using the Guidelines, are suggested.
- Interesting articles increase understanding of the "what, why and how" of career development.
- The step-by-step approach to program evaluation will help counselors, career practitioners and administrators meet accountability requirements and further enhance program effectiveness.
- The comprehensive Guidelines strategy for establishing or improving career development programs is full of helpful implementation ideas and resources.
- A rich array of links leads to other career development Web sites and resources.

TECHNICAL REFERENCE: DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUIDELINES FRAMEWORK

The National Career Development Guidelines (Guidelines) was first released in 1989 in a series of handbooks that contained the Guidelines framework and strategies for implementing the Guidelines with various populations (e.g., elementary students, high school students and adults). The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC), the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICC's), national experts in career development and leading career counseling and development professional organizations collaborated in the Guidelines project. Two resources played a key role in the development of the original Guidelines: Career Development Education: A Program Approach for Teachers and Counselors and BORN FREE Training Packets to Reduce Sex-role Stereotyping in Career Development: Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Levels.

In 2003, OVAE contracted with DTI to manage the National Training Support Center (NTSC) projects, including the update and revision of the National Career Development Guidelines framework. DTI charged a team of three career development experts with the responsibility of writing the new Guidelines framework. Early in their writing process they gathered input from a broad range of career development practitioners. They used the original 1989 Guidelines as the foundation for the revision work. The writing team reviewed numerous other career development frameworks (e.g., the Canadian Blueprint for Life Work Designs, those from several states and the American School Counselor Association's National Standards for School Counseling Programs) for content and organization. DTI also convened a work group that included representatives from America's Career Resource Network (ACRN), counselor educators, state departments of education, national associations, practitioners, career development experts and OVAE. The work group provided ideas and input throughout the development process.

From July 2003 - June 2004 the writing team sought feedback from the career development community through e-mail broadcasts, ACRN Web site postings, discussion groups, and presentations at national conferences (e.g., National Career Development Association [NCDA], American School Counselor Association [ASCA], National Employment Counseling Association [NECA], National Consortium of State Guidance Supervisors and Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information [ACSCI] and ACRN grantee meetings). The team incorporated many of the

recommendations to create a first draft of the revised Guidelines. It was circulated for review and comment. This revision/comment process was repeated three times, as the document was further refined. The Guidelines framework was then validated through a rigorous set of "matching" procedures. DTI engaged five career development professionals and an evaluation consultant to perform eight exercises that included matching:

- goals to domains;
- all indicators to domains;
- indicators to goals for each domain; and
- indicators to learning stages for each domain.

When three or more of the matchers placed an item differently than that found in the Guidelines framework, that item was reviewed for clarity and utility. Adjustments were made as appropriate. The matching exercise provided information to further refine the Guidelines framework leading to the final version of the Guidelines.

Please use the Contact Us feature on the ACRN Web site (www.acrnetwork.org) to send your questions, suggestions and comments about the Guidelines.

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