



Moving Forward with Confidence: Pursuing a New Job



Finding a career that matches your military experience or meets your desire to grow in your current field can be a rewarding challenge. Move your career forward by following a few steps to prepare, explore career options, plan your next move and develop skills to succeed.

Prepare

Being prepared for a career transition will allow you to make choices that align with your personal goals and interests in continuing your service in a civilian environment. Take time to:

- ▲ Reflect on the reasons you want a new job. Are you unfulfilled in your current job? Are you looking for new challenges? Do you want a shorter commute?
- ▲ Think about the transition to a new career and the changes it will involve (salary, relocation costs, commute). Can you manage these changes?
- ▲ Establish career goals based on your work interests, so you can focus on opportunities that are a good match for you.
- ▲ Determine if you are prepared for potential obstacles by asking yourself:
 - Do I have any personal barriers to overcome (time, dependents, support)?
 - Am I willing to commit to a specific career choice?
 - Do the people who are important to me support my new career?
 - Am I willing to relocate?
 - Am I willing to take a step back in my career before moving forward?
 - What am I not willing to compromise for a new job (work/life balance, types of benefits, commute time)?

Your answers to these questions will help guide you as you make various decisions in your career search.

Explore

Next, explore available career options. Below is a list of resources for Veterans:

- ▲ The [My Career Mapping Tool](#) provides a list of vacancies at VA and a link to [USAJOBS](#), where you can apply for those jobs.
- ▲ The [My Career Fit Tool](#) helps you identify which jobs at VA could be a good fit based on your interests.
- ▲ [VA Career Guides](#) highlight specific jobs within occupational families at VA.
- ▲ [Feds Hire Vets](#) is a comprehensive website with information on federal employment for Veterans, transitioning service members and their families.
- ▲ [VA for Vets](#) Career Center provides Veterans with online tools to translate your military skills into civilian-friendly language, take self-assessments, create resumes, search jobs and more.



Plan

Making the right career decision is important. Follow the steps below when pursuing a career to ensure that your experience is as positive as possible:

1. Identify challenges. What goals and preferences did you identify in your assessment?
2. Consider alternatives. Complete the My Career Fit Tool to see options related to your preferences.
3. Generate alternatives. Are these careers interesting to you? Learn more in the Career Guides.
4. Prioritize alternatives. What is your first choice, or your fifth?
5. Take action. Apply for your top choices.

You can also use the [Guide to Good Decision Making](#) exercise to help you make a sound career choice.

Develop

Finally, make sure you have the tools in place to seek a new career:

- ▲ **Resume.** Is your resume current? Is it tailored to the specific job you are seeking? If you are applying for a federal position, do you have a federal resume ready? Find out more about [building a federal resume](#).
- ▲ **Interview skills.** Have you researched the latest interviewing tips and best practices? Get tips to [prepare for your next interview](#).
- ▲ **Network.** Do you have a social or professional connection to someone in the organization where you want to work? Are there groups or other organizations you can join to expand your circle of influence? Are you using social media tools like LinkedIn to make professional contacts? Learn how to [network effectively](#).

Managing the Challenge

Now that you have a plan, you are ready to take action. Follow these tips to improve your chances of landing the new career you deserve:

- ▲ Stay motivated
- ▲ Actively seek information
- ▲ Stay focused
- ▲ Think clearly about options
- ▲ Make good use of ideas from others
- ▲ Ask for help when needed
- ▲ Follow through

Sampson, Jr., J. P., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., Reardon, R. C., & Saunders, D. E. (1999). *The Use and Development of the Career Thoughts Inventory*. Lutz, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.

