



# My Career Workbook

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[www.MyCareerAtVA.VA.gov](http://www.MyCareerAtVA.VA.gov)

**MyCareer@VA** delivers engaging career development tools to help you explore and establish your long-term [career path](#) at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The tools are anchored by an innovative website that offers current and potential employees a one-stop source for career exploration and planning at VA.

The **My Career Workbook** is aligned to VA's [career planning process](#) and provides additional supporting activities as well as a place to record your key information and track your progress along the way.

MyCareer@VA's **career planning process** includes four phases – **PREPARE, EXPLORE, PLAN** and **DEVELOP** – and leverages the following tools: **My Career Fit Tool, My Career Mapping Tool** and **VA Career Guides**.

## PREPARE

An important first step in career planning is to [PREPARE](#) for your long-term career by establishing career goals based on your preferences at work, such as:

- **Work Interests** – The type of work you like to perform. As an example, one individual might find a job in medicine interesting, while another might prefer a job associated with technology or administrative issues. Exposure to different types of work can help you better define the specific roles and opportunities in which you are most interested.
- **Work Environment** – The physical and social factors of a workplace. For example, some people enjoy working outside instead of working inside at a desk. Others may prefer occupations that are less routine or involve competition and time pressure. Identifying the work environment that best meets your individual preferences includes both the psychological and physical environment associated with a job.



The [My Career Fit Tool](#) helps you to identify your work interests and work environment preferences and suggests jobs at VA that may be a great fit for you.

### Work Interests:

### Work Environment:

Now you can start developing or revising your career goals.

## Identifying Career Goals

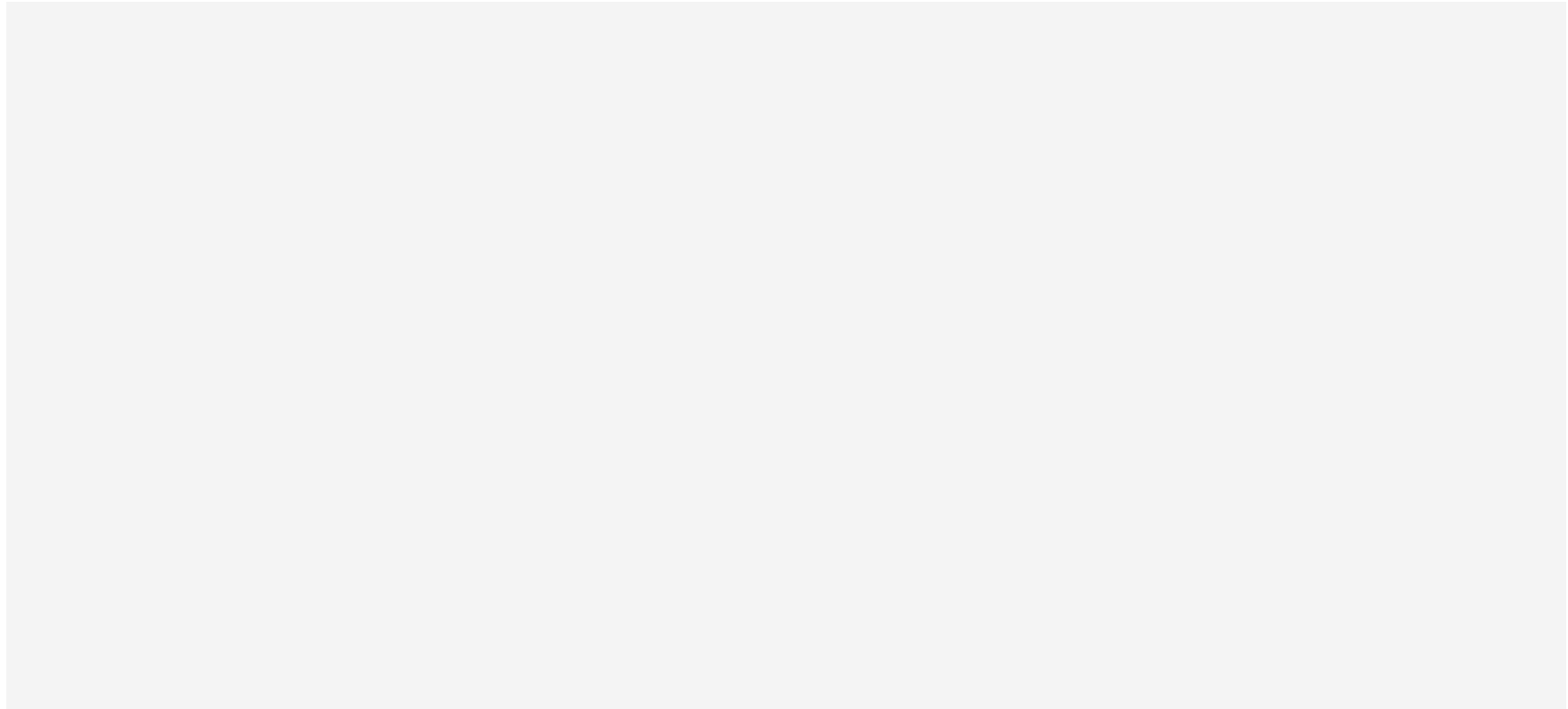
The next step in the career planning process is to develop career goals. What you have learned about your work interests and work environment preferences in the **My Career Fit Tool** will help you to start this process. Goals in the **PREPARE** phase are broad, help set direction and guide your career research.

Things to think about as you develop your goals:

- Do you want to remain in your current [occupational family](#) and progress within it?
- Are you interested in finding a new job? Or would you like to find similar work in a different geographical area or occupational family?
- Should you make a move to another job that is better aligned with your work interests and work environment preferences?

Keep in mind, your goals may change as you learn more about yourself. You will be more effective in your career decision making and planning if you have clear goals in mind.

Record your career goals here:



Visit the **My Career Fit Tool**, think about your goals and then proceed to the next phase: **EXPLORE**.

# EXPLORE

The [EXPLORE](#) phase helps you to learn more about the jobs you discovered in the PREPARE phase. You will be able to find additional career opportunities that may interest you, including:

- Specific jobs, occupational families and **career paths** at VA that you want to target
- The knowledge and skills you need to develop to help you reach your goals



MyCareer@VA's interactive tools and resources provide powerful information to help you understand what skills you need to develop and how you can prepare for your long-term career at VA.

- [My Career Mapping Tool](#) – Build a long-term career path and plan your future with career options both within and outside of your current occupational family. Compare **competencies between your starting job and target job** to understand the differences in knowledge areas and skills between the two options – this is called a “[competency gap and analysis](#)”
- [VA Career Guides](#) – Research detailed information about each occupational family, including knowledge areas, education and licensure requirements, and the recommended training and developmental experiences for each career level

Record what you have learned here:

Priority of Interest to Me	Target Jobs/Occupations	Competencies I Need to Develop (“competency gap and analysis”)	Additional Education or Certifications I Need

## Development Priorities

It is important to prioritize your development goals. You need to continue to perform your current job well in order to position yourself for future opportunities. It is important to balance the development of competencies for a future position with the needs of your current job. This is best done through planning discussions with your supervisor or manager. Refer to the [Suggested Tips for Talking with a Supervisor about Career Development](#) in the [Resources](#) tab on **MyCareer@VA** for guidance on how to approach your supervisor and get the most out of a career planning discussion.

Identify and rank the competencies you have identified as important areas you need to develop to reach your career goals:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Take the next step and make a **PLAN** to improve your skills and gain these necessary competencies.

# PLAN

**PLAN** your future by creating an **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** that sets specific goals for learning and job search activities. An **IDP** is an individually tailored action plan and road map that links the skills and knowledge areas identified in your long-term career path to the learning and developmental activities you need to pursue to reach your career goals.



## Create an IDP:

1. Record your **career goals** created in the PREPARE phase.
2. Record your **target jobs** from the EXPLORE phase.
3. Record the **top competencies and knowledge areas** you need to develop from the EXPLORE phase. These competencies and knowledge areas are from your “competency/knowledge areas gap” if you have identified a target job in the My Career Mapping Tool or gathered information from the VA Career Guides on knowledge areas needed for a target job.
4. In the DEVELOP phase, you can search for and record the **developmental activities** that will help you build the competencies you have prioritized.
5. The DEVELOP phase is where you can also **establish target dates for completing each activity** to help you reach your career goal within one to three years.

Career Goals	Target Jobs	Developmental Goals (Competencies and Knowledge Areas to be Developed)	Developmental Activities	Target Date for Completion

Go to the **DEVELOP** phase next, where you can find and participate in the developmental activities you need to grow professionally.

# DEVELOP

In the [DEVELOP](#) phase of the career planning process, you can put your **IDP** into action by building the knowledge, skills and experience you identified in the PLAN phase. Sign up for courses, gain new experiences and build relationships with mentors and colleagues to help you achieve your career goals. Set target dates for completing these activities and courses, and complete exercises within the **My Career Workbook** to help you organize your career planning and job search activities.



## Finding the Right Developmental Activities

MyCareer@VA guides you through a number of ways to improve your skills and knowledge, such as formal training courses, programs or new on-the-job experiences. Visit the following resources today to start building the competencies and knowledge areas you need to prepare for new opportunities in your career.

- Visit the [Education and Learning](#) resources for publicly available guidance on enrolling in training programs, applying for federal jobs, resume writing and interviewing
- Explore the [VA Career Guides](#) for examples of developmental activities and training courses for specific VA jobs
- VA employees can access the [VA TMS](#) to search the online course catalog, sign up for courses and track their progress toward their career goals
- Visit [VA Learning University](#) (VALU) to explore the development programs available to VA employees

## Professionals Who Can Help

Your supervisor or manager is a great resource in this phase of your development. They can recommend and connect you to appropriate developmental activities and possibly restructure your work to help you gain the experiences you need to prepare for a target job. Read the [Suggested Tips for Talking with a Supervisor about Career Development](#) in the **Resources** tab on [MyCareer@VA](#) and find out how you can build a productive relationship with your supervisor that supports your growth.

There are many other professionals that can be helpful in addition to your supervisor or manager, such as HR professionals, training and development professionals and mentors. Your supervisor or manager may also be able to connect you with others who are doing work that interests you or who hold a position in which you are interested. Network with other professionals within and outside of your current department to meet new people who can provide you with career development advice.

## Organizing Your Job Search

When you are ready to apply for specific opportunities, you can carefully track qualifications required, materials requested and closing dates on the table found on the next page. Be sure to give yourself adequate time to complete the application process and ensure that you have submitted everything that is required.

Visit the [Education and Learning](#) tab on **MyCareer@VA** to access links to tools and job search advice from [USAJOBS.gov](#), the official job site for the federal government where openings at VA are posted. USAJOBS.gov has information on how to create and save searches that will alert you to the job openings in which you are most interested.

You can keep track of important dates and information here:

Job Announcement Number	Job Title	Series and Grade	Qualifications Required	Materials and Information Required	Closing Date	Date Submitted
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		





## **Plan your Future Today at MyCareer@VA!**

MyCareer@VA is your one-stop shop for career planning at VA. Visit the MyCareer@VA website to access the interactive and engaging career development tools and resources featured within this workbook - log on and build your future today! Visit [www.MyCareerAtVA.VA.gov](http://www.MyCareerAtVA.VA.gov).