

Goal Setting & Action Planning Guide

CAREER CENTER

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Smooth Sailing

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Developing Career Goals

To begin developing career goals start with the end in mind: where do you see yourself in ten years? What will you be doing?

It is important to think in short-term and long-term time frames. Think about what is important to you. Consider taking some assessments through the Career Center if you are unsure.

What are your long-term goals?

Where do you want to be in ten years?

*"Whatever you
can do, or
dream you can,
begin it.
Boldness has
genius, magic,
and power in it."
--Johann
Wolfgang Von
Goethe*

Five years?

What are your short-term career goals?

One year?

Where do you want to be in six months? List any issues about your current work situation that concern you.

Next, review the career options section listed on the next page for ideas regarding your options for career development and what avenues you might take to achieve your goals.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS SECTION

Option One: Stay In Your Current Agency: Grow in Current Job

Sample Goals

- Improve my current job performance
- Improve my work relationships
- Expand my professional network
- Obtain feedback about leveraging my talent/strengths better
- Improve my image
- Expand my skills, range, or exposure to priority business areas
- Enrich my job for more satisfaction
- Redesign my job for greater alignment, productivity, change of hours, flexibility, etc.
- Develop an educational plan or professional development plan to close gaps
- Other (please indicate)

Option Two: Stay In Current Agency: Move to a Different Job

Sample Goals

- Make internal job change; either obtain new job or same job in different unit/agency
- Create a new job and market it to management successfully
- Explore a new career direction within agency
- Deliberately expand network; research other areas of interest within agency
- Enter agency's temporary labor pool
- Volunteer for task force or major community outreach project
- Do volunteer work to build new skills and add to your resume
- Develop an educational plan or professional development plan
- Other (please indicate)

Option Three: Seek Same Job/Career in Different Agency

Sample Goals

- Conduct an external job search
- Conduct research to identify potential agencies/employers
- Deliberately expand network to connect with colleagues in desired agency
- Other (please indicate)



Option Four: Seek Different Job/Career in Different Agency

Sample Goals

- Identify new career goal
- Conduct an external job search
- Re-skill/retrain/upgrade skills
- Moonlight or seek temporary work
- Job Shadow
- Utilize network to get necessary advice and information regarding new direction
- Do volunteer work to build new skills or resume credentials
- Other (please indicate)

Option Five: Stay in Current Agency, Work towards Advancement

Sample Goals

- Create networking partnerships
- Work on gaining visibility in agency
- Take on additional projects
- Review additional training opportunities
- Work on aligning yourself with agency goals and vision
- Develop an educational plan or professional development plan
- Other (please indicate)

Option Six: Make Major Life-Style or Career Change

Sample Goals

- Explore/research new career direction or different industries
- Return to school to qualify for a better or new job
- Investigate a career change to a different field
- Investigate entrepreneurship through home office, contracting, consulting, etc.
- Re-skill/retrain/upgrade skills
- Do volunteer work to build new skills and add to your resume
- Relocate
- Retire early
- Reduce work hours
- Other (please indicate)



ACTION PLANNING

Goal No.1	Action Items	Timeline for Completion

Resources I Need	Who Needs To Be Involved

Obstacles I Anticipate	How I'll Handle Them

Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek." --Mario Andretti



ACTION PLANNING

Goal No.2	Action Items	Timeline for Completion

Resources I Need	Who Needs To Be Involved

Obstacles I Anticipate	How I'll Handle Them

"Without involvement, there is no commitment. Mark it down, asterisk it, circle it, underline it." --Stephen Covey



ACTION PLANNING

Goal No.3	Action Items	Timeline for Completion

Resources I Need	Who Needs To Be Involved

Obstacles I Anticipate	How I'll Handle Them

*"By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be.
Put your future in good hands — your own." --Mark Victor Hansen*



QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR OBJECTIVE

1. How much risk do you perceive in doing this? (e.g., are you afraid to do this? If so, why?)
2. How much of a change would be required to do this successfully, and are you comfortable with it?
3. How well is the objective aligned with agency priorities and with your own needs?
4. How much energy will this take?
5. What will the financial impact to me and my family be?
6. Can this be done conveniently?
7. Do I have the skills, time, and energy to actually get the information you will need?
8. How ready are you to do this?
9. How much initiative will this step require?
10. What new skills, knowledge and possessions will you need?
11. What kind of emotional support will you need?
12. What feedback will be helpful?



SAMPLE OF ACTION PLANNING STRATEGIES

Note: This is a selection of strategies focusing on some of the most commonly selected career objectives. Use it as a starting point for thinking through your own actions.

1. Focus: Current Job

A. Improve My Performance in Skills/Relationship/Image in Current Job

1. Consider the important issue of your motivation. Do you want to concentrate more on leveraging your talents or remedying your developmental needs? Remember that if the developmental need is worked on, for all your effort, you may only reach “mediocrity.” However; the result may still be worth it.
2. Review your last three performance appraisals. What are the themes and patterns that you see?
3. Understand that outstanding performance is the foundational basis for any career advancement.
4. Imagine you are just starting in your current job. Think of yourself as having a “New Broom” gusto! What changes would you make in the way the job is currently being done? Write these down. Act on the findings.
5. Do you already have the answer to what needs to be done to improve your performance? If so, and it involves skill development, write out an action plan with specific timetables. However, if you don’t know how to “fix” the problem, seek some career counseling.
6. The best way to develop a skill is by on-the-job experience. To develop the skill, you can probably volunteer at work to get the practice, or you can develop the skill through community volunteer work, formal education or self-study.
7. Solicit feedback from trusted colleagues about your “image”. Listen to their answers to the following question: “I’m interested in improving my job performance. Can you think of anything, based on your observations of me at work, which might be useful to me in thinking through this issue? I would really appreciate any thoughts you have.”
8. Read a book about improving job performance, such as; Steven Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* (available in Career Center Library).
9. Answer the question, “What is the only thing that you could do differently in your job tomorrow that would make the biggest different to those whose opinion counts most?” For example: better grooming, punctuality, team behavior, longer hours, positive thinking, or volunteering for a project.
10. Interview a role model who demonstrates expertise at a skill you value.
11. Go through an extensive competencies or skills assessment process.



B. Enrich My Current Job

1. Diagnose your “issue” with your current position. Are you not using your gifts and talents to their maximum potential? Are you bored? Is there a personality conflict with your supervisor or co-workers? Is the pay not enough to meet your *basic* financial needs – no, not cable TV and eating out, but your *basic* needs!
2. Assess your degree of autonomy; your satisfaction will increase if you can target goals that don’t need the approval of others.
3. Another way to enrich your job is to eliminate inefficient and time consuming processes. Act as a consultant to your own job, if only to create “room” in it.
4. If there is a skill or knowledge that you are interested in acquiring, identify a strategic alignment or “linkage” between it and your own job priorities. Does it make good sense for you to be spending time in this way? If not, find a goal that does.
5. If you aren’t sure how to enrich your job, use lunch hours to greater advantage to expand your network and support your information gathering processes. Ask advice of colleagues. “What area do you think I should get into to enrich my job?” Be prepared to go to your manager with 3 or 4 ideas if those ideas need his/her support or approval.

2. Focus: Internal Job Change

A. Internal Job Search for the State of Arizona

1. For many people the prospect of conducting an internal job search is often fraught with fear or a sense of peril. They find it easier to “walk” rather than talk. If you are in this category of the fearful or timid, you will undoubtedly benefit from some independent counsel or a strategy session with a mentor or another trusted colleague. There is a way to behave proactively and discreetly. Meet with the Career Center to discuss this. We can help you through in-person, phone or email support.
2. If you feel anxious about your limited likelihood of success, this anxiety may result from operating in a culture where mobility is limited or where formal systems to support such efforts such as job posting, are minimal. Formal systems alone, no matter how good, never substitute for the energetic use of connecting to access the “informal” system. The majority of positions are gotten through some form of networking. Even if a job is posted on azstatejobs, it will greatly benefit you to be a known entity prior to the posting. Call and try to get the name of the hiring manager for the position(s) you are interested in. Send him/her an email with your resume or Biographical Sketch attached. Once again, the Career Center can assist you with process.
3. The best chances for new internal jobs come to the outstanding performers who have strong internal sponsorship: for example, when a manager with an open job is aware of your interest and wants to hire you; or when influential others believe in you and remember your career interest when they hear of opportunities.
4. Volunteer for task force or ad hoc interdepartmental assignments.



II. Focus: Major Career or Lifestyle Change

A. Career Change

1. In thinking about a career change, it is a commonplace misperception that one needs to give up a current income level and start over at the bottom. In many cases it isn't necessary to do this if you think strategically. For example, when you "piggyback" your present skills/experience/expertise to the new chosen career direction in a way that makes you a "value-add" recruit. Such as when a person with a law degree seeks work in the legal department of a movie company with the eventual hope of becoming a high level movie executive. Or, a person with elementary teaching experience goes into consumer sales in franchising children's learning centers. The key is always to utilize your past to bridge to the future.
2. Before you spend money to take a certificate course or to get a new degree, set up an appointment with the Dean, Placement Officer, and/or the Admissions Director at the school to explore job market vitality in your intended area. Also, ask to speak to recent alumni in a similar situation to yours; learn from their experiences.
3. Change into a field that is a good "fit" for who you really are. To assess this issue properly, spend time mixing with people in the field, preferably by volunteering, moonlighting (via temporary weekend or evening work) or even by attending a local "chapter" meeting of one of the key professional associations.
4. Identify the names of the leading professional associations in your intended career area. Remember that the purpose of the association is to help people currently in the business/vocation but also to help prospective workers. Invest the time to write or call to get information.
5. Learn job market realities about the new area. Find out what, if any, are the key credentials and experience required. Note that the faster the field is growing, the more it may use advertising to recruit. Find out about those special on-line and print services where jobs get advertised nationally, regionally and locally.
6. Research the State of Arizona. There are over 100 agencies, boards, and commissions that offer a wide variety of career positions. The Career Center can assist you with navigating the potential opportunities within the State.
7. Talk with people who have made successful career changes.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What experiences, skills, and credentials will be required to attain my goals?
2. How well do my skills, attributes, and attainments match up today?
3. What have I achieved to date? How do these accomplishments support my goal?
4. What additional information, help, skills, or experience do I need?
5. How can my current position help me achieve my target career goal?
6. How likely am I to achieve my goal at my current Agency?
7. Is what I'm doing today meeting my needs for challenge, personal fulfillment and financial reward?
8. Am I willing to take the risk that a change of agency or career might require? If I decided to change, would I have the necessary support from my family, friends, and colleagues?
9. Can I afford it?
10. What is the potential for experiencing a layoff or RIF in the new position? Remember, you may be starting over with new retention points if you are in a covered, State service position.
11. How do my objectives relate to the objectives of my manager? Of my department? Of the agency or state?
12. How do these objectives contribute to my ability to do my job better?
13. How do these objectives increase my value to my manager, department, function, or company?
14. How can I maximize my manager's receptivity to my objectives?
15. What skills do I possess now that will help me achieve my objectives?
16. If executing this objective appears to be in the control of the agency/state or my manager, what will they need to contribute to make it happen?

Once again, contact your Career Center to receive free, confidential career planning assistance! We can assist you with the development and implementation of a plan to help you realize your career and life goals! You can reach us at 602-542-2733 or via email at careercenter@azdoa.gov to make an appointment!

