

Going to Work Series

# Choosing a New Direction – Making a Career Change

Easter H. Tucker  
Family and Consumer  
Sciences Specialist

Career change may involve not only changing who you work for, but changing the kind of work you do. Before making a career change, it is important to have certain habits and skills. Build a reputation at work that shows you are able to make decisions, finish tasks, meet deadlines, work without direct supervision and keep your attention on your job. In addition, it is important to show you have confidence in your ability and are able to organize your daily routine.

Before you actually start pursuing a career change, you must know what you want. It may be to your advantage to choose a field where you already have some experience. If you choose this route, there may be no need for further training before attempting to get the job you want. On the other hand, training programs may enhance your experience. The experience you take with you when applying for the training program, or a new job, will give you an edge over people applying who have less experience. To help you make a wise decision about the type of job you want, identify your strengths and special skills.

Following are some questions which will help you find your interests and special skills.



Taking time to answer the questions will help you decide about making a career change. List three things you enjoy doing in your spare time.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List three things you do well.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List three things you would like to change about your present career.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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List three goals you have for next year.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are your five-year goals?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In order to make a good choice about a career change, it is important to put your thoughts on paper. After you have done this, sit back and review everything you have written. Weigh the good and bad points about changing careers at this point in your life.

When looking for a better or different career, some points to consider are:

- Would I enjoy this new job?
- What could I offer to this particular job?
- How much can I expect to earn working in this particular field?
- What types of retirement benefits does it offer?
- Is health insurance provided for the employees and their families?
- Can I expect paid-vacation time?
- Is there a need for workers in this field in my town now, or will I have to move elsewhere to find this type of job?
- How hard is it to move up the ladder in this particular work field?
- How much education and training is required?
- Will my past work experiences help me?

Most adults recognize that a career change in midlife is a major decision to have to make. When trying to think about the good and not-so-good aspects of starting a new career track, do you say:

*“I am too old.”*

*“I already have a good-enough job.”*

*“I have children to support.”*

*“I can’t afford to quit my job and go to school.”*

Believe it or not, there are ways to go into a new career with very little risk to the security you’ve already built. There are talents you already have that you probably don’t even realize you have. Let’s try to find out what those special qualities and talents are that make you a unique individual.

If you have been working at the local plywood mill but want to get into a whole new field of

work, start by examining your skills and talents in the field you wish to enter. For example, cooking may be one of your special talents. If you enjoy cooking, you may consider a new career in some area of food service. You will be able to put a talent you already have to work. Visit the following places to find out about food service jobs:

- Restaurant
- School or public cafeteria
- Prison kitchen
- Hospital kitchen
- Bakery
- Child care center

If you enjoy taking care of the lawn, gardening or working with plants, put your talents to work in horticulture, landscaping or irrigation. Look into the following places for a job in this area:

- Landscaping companies
- Golf courses, parks
- Nurseries, greenhouses
- City, state or national parks or forests
- Lawn care services

If you have pets and enjoy working with animals, a career in animal care might be of interest. Visit the following places to get information about work in an animal-related field:

- Kennels
- Pet stores
- Science laboratories that have animal research
- The Humane Society
- Zoos
- Veterinary clinics

If you enjoy taking care of children or have experience working with children, you may find opportunities as a:

- Daycare teacher
- Church nursery school teacher
- Teacher’s aide
- Nanny
- After school child care worker

An important consideration when deciding whether or not to make a career change is finding out if you can afford it financially. Figuring out what a job change will cost is like planning a budget. Write down your total monthly income now and in the new job. Then list all your fixed (monthly or weekly) expenses, such as rent or a mortgage payment. If your new job requires you to move, what will your rent or mortgage payment and other fixed expenses be? Then write down estimates for bills that may vary from month to month such as the electric or gas bill,

child care or food costs. Will these be different if you change jobs? For example, if uniforms are provided, will your clothing costs be less? Will

any meals come with the new job? What benefits will you lose? Below is an example of a budget plan for you to complete.

ITEM FOR A MONTH	CURRENT JOB	NEW JOB
1. Total money earned 2. Taxes 3. <b>Take home pay</b> 4. Total expenses 5. MONEY LEFT OVER	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
<b>HOUSING EXPENSES</b> Rent or mortgage payment Taxes Maintenance and repair Furniture rental/payments Household supplies		
<b>INSURANCE</b> Life Auto Property Medical		
<b>CAR NOTE</b>		
<b>LOAN PAYMENTS</b>		
<b>FLEXIBLE EXPENSES</b> Credit card payments Food (per week x 4) Utilities Gas Electric Cable Phone Water, sewer, garbage		
<b>CLOTHING, UNIFORMS</b>		
<b>PERSONAL ITEMS</b> (tools, haircare, tobacco, alcohol)		
<b>RECREATION</b>		
<b>CHURCH DONATIONS AND GIFTS</b>		
<b>AUTO UPKEEP</b> License Gas Oil Repairs Car fare, bus, transportation		
<b>MEDICAL OR DENTAL BILLS</b> medicine not covered by insurance		
<b>CHILD CARE (PER WEEK x 4)</b>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		

After you have filled out these items, add up the expenses. Write this amount on the bottom line (total expenses). Subtract your **taxes (item 2)** from your **total money earned (item 1)**. Write this amount in as **take home pay (item 3)**. Subtract the bottom line (**total expenses**) from **Take home pay (item 3)**. Write this amount in as your **MONEY LEFT OVER (item 5)**. Now you have a better idea of whether your career change is financially possible at this time.

Even if you are interested in a field in which you have limited experience, don't let that stop you. Take advantage of training programs available to you. Keep in mind jobs you enjoy and will take pride in doing while making a living for you and your family. If you would like to find out more information about a particular career, training programs or job placement services, visit your local employment commission. Read about jobs in the newspaper or at the local library or observe someone doing a job that interests you. A job change is a major decision to make in your life. Don't be afraid to change your career. Check out all options and make it a smart move.

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This material was prepared by Dorothy Taylor, Extension family life specialist, The Texas A&M University System, and Tracey R. Jones, graduate assistant, Minority Job Skills Project, The Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University, and is recommended to Arkansans by Easter H. Tucker, family and consumer sciences specialist, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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**EASTER H. TUCKER** is family and consumer sciences specialist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock.

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