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Career resource centers (CRCs), located in many educational settings and in the workplace, provide information and services on planning a career and finding a job.

Each CRC has its own mission and clientele, and the staff required, services offered, and materials included will vary depending on the purpose and audience of the particular center. This ERIC Digest focuses on establishing and operating a CRC and identifies sources of materials that would be appropriate for inclusion. It is an update of ERIC Digest No. 7 (Marshall 1981), and a companion to ERIC Digest No. 85 (Wagner 1989) and ERIC Digest No. 121 (Wagner 1992).

WHAT IS A CAREER RESOURCE CENTER?

Career resource centers offer information, materials, and services to individuals interested in career planning and development. Centers are typically found in secondary, postsecondary, and higher education institutions. Businesses are beginning to see the value of career resource centers and are establishing them in the workplace. Companies that have created CRCs have noted such benefits as increasing employees' career development skills and knowledge, having employees make a greater commitment to their own career development, and reaching more employees than possible through seminars or individual counseling (Kaye et al. 1984).

STEPS IN ESTABLISHING A CRC



--Select a coordinator



--Secure administrative support



--Select steering committee



--Identify clientele



--Determine client needs



--Determine the most effective delivery system



--Decide how the CRC will meet those needs



--Prepare a detailed written statement of purpose



--Determine goals and objectives



--Prepare a detailed plan



--Ensure coordination with existing programs



--Investigate funding sources



--Encourage community and staff support



--Select staff



--Identify, evaluate, order materials



--Conduct orientation (Boyle 1985; Marshall 1981)

SERVICES OF CRCS

Each career resource center will offer services appropriate to its clientele. Typical services include providing occupational and educational information; assisting individuals in using CRC resources; promoting thoughtful career planning and decision making; providing job placement and employability skills information; assisting

individuals in assessing and understanding their attitudes, values, interests, and aptitudes; preparing individuals for life-role transitions; and offering seminars and workshops on various aspects of the career development process (Marshall 1981).

CENTER ORGANIZATION

Of the several models for organizing a career resource center, a usable and common device is the station concept, whereby materials with a common focus are grouped together. Clients begin at an orientation station that outlines the career development process and motivates those who may be skeptical. At the next station, individuals use inventories to help them understand what they value about work, how personal interests translate into work interests, and identify the skills and abilities they already possess. At another station, participants complete forms that help them perceive how others see them. Finally, individuals find alternatives for career development within an organization by using such resources as organizational charts, department descriptions, and job skill requirement lists.

STAFFING THE CENTER

Ideally, CRC staff will be a diverse group of professional, paraprofessional, and support staff that might include a coordinator, a placement specialist, a career information specialist, counselors, and a work study coordinator. In reality, a single person or several part-time people often perform these functions. It is important that staff can perform such duties as



--Identification, collection, selection, and processing of materials



--Retrieval and dissemination of materials



--Counseling and personal assessment



--Job placement



--Curriculum development



--Community resource development and coordination

MATERIALS SELECTION

Once materials have been identified, established selection criteria should be used to choose those materials that are most appropriate for a particular center. A variety of types of materials--print, nonprint, and computer assisted--should be included in the collection. Selection criteria include price, reading level, appropriateness, accuracy, balance, user appeal, applicability, comprehensiveness, and absence of sex and racial bias.

CORE MATERIALS

Certain resources belong in every career resource center. Selection will depend upon the purpose and clientele of the center. Types of materials to include are

- --Directories of secondary schools, two-year and four-year institutions, home study courses, certificate programs, professional associations, and trade and technical schools

- --Materials on all steps in the job search process--locating employers, resumes, cover letters, networking, job application, interviewing, and follow-up

- --Materials pertaining particularly to the career needs of women, minorities, special needs groups, government jobs, and the military, including information about financial aid and scholarships

- --Occupational information about specific careers and jobs including details regarding job entry requirements, working conditions, salary and benefits, duties, advancement opportunities, occupational opportunities, and supply and demand

- --Self-awareness materials that help users examine attitudes and values, encourage positive outlooks, and improve interpersonal and employability skills

--Information about the local job market and support groups

SOURCES FOR MATERIALS

Information about additional sources can be found in the public library.



ACT Educational Programs, 4480 North Shallowford Road, F276, Atlanta GA 30338
(Software)





Bob Adams, Inc, 260 Center Street, Holbrook MA 02343 (Print)





America Media Inc, 4900 University Avenue, West Des Moines IA 50266-6769,
800/262-2557 (AV)





Career Design Software, PO Box 95624, Atlanta GA 30347, 404/321-6100 (Software)





Career Development Software Inc., 2501 Southeast Columbia Way, Vancouver WA
98661, 206/696-3529 (Software)





Career Press, 180 Fifth Avenue, Hawthorne NJ 07507 (Print)





CareerTrack Publications, 3085 Center Green Drive, PO Box 18778, Boulder CO 80308-1778, 800/334-1018, FAX:800/622-6211 (AV)





Careerware, 1319 Spruce Street, Boulder CO 80302, 303/449-1631 (Software)





Chronicle Guidance Publications, PO Box 1190, Moravia NY 13118-1190, 800/622-7284 (Print, software)





COIN, 3361 Executive Parkway, Suite 302, Toledo OH 43606 (Software)





Gale Research, 835 Penobscot Building, Detroit MI 48226-4094 (Print)





Garrett Park Press, PO Box 190M, Garrett Park MD 20896 (Print)





Impact Publications, 9104-N Manassas Drive, Manassas Park VA 22111-5211,
703/361-7300, FAX:703/335-9486 (Print, AV, software)





JIST Works, 720 North Park Avenue, Indianapolis IN 46202-3431 (Print)





Macmillan New Media, 124 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge MA 02138, 617/661-2955
(Software)





MCE Inc/Division of Lawrence Productions, 50 Gilbert Road, Belmont MA 02178,
617/484-9457 (Software)





Micromash, 6402 South Troy Circle, Englewood CO 80111, 303/799-0099 (Software)





National Career Information Systems, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene OR 97403-5214,
503/346-3872 (Software)





National Data Center, 640 North LaSalle Street, Chicago IL 60610, 800/828-0422
(Software)





New Careers Center, 1515 23rd Street, PO Box 339-UJ, Boulder CO 80306,
800/634-9024, FAX:303/447-8684 (print, AV, software)





Peterson's Guides, 202 Carnegie Center, PO Box 2123, Princeton NJ 08543-2123
(Print, software)





Riverside Publishing Company, 2550 Beckleymeade Avenue, Suite 125, LB-14, Dallas
TX 75237, 800/442-8855 (Software)





Ten Speed Press, PO Box 7123, Berkeley CA 94707 (Print)





VGM Career Horizons, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood IL 60646-1975 (Print)





Vocational Biographies, PO Box 31, Sauk Centre MN 56378-0031 (Print)

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ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING A CAREER RESOURCE CENTER: A

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