



Scarecrow, Tin-man or Wizard - What do I want to be?

When you were growing up did you want to be a fireman or a nurse? Or maybe, you thought you would grow up to be a circus clown, sword swallower, big game hunter, a race car driver or a professional baseball player? Maybe you actually ended up in one of those professions or perhaps you found yourself in a career as far away from your childhood dreams as an astronaut landing on Mars.

Now fast forward to 2009. You were just laid off from your employer of 10 years. You are looking at the employment prospects. The prospects appear pretty glum in (*insert your prior employment field*) the area where you have spent a good part of your life trying to hone your skills. What do you do now?

In the economic forecast of the new administration, there are a number of career paths to which you may be drawn. The big question is - are you appropriately suited to those career paths? On your list of things to do is to complete some occupation exploration and skills assessment. There are a number of resources available with which you can assess your skills and interests.

What is Self-Assessment?

Self-assessment is a process by which you learn more about yourself -- what you like, what you don't like, and how you tend to react to certain situations. Knowing these things can help you determine which occupations and work situations could be a better fit for you. You may recognize some of these tools if you ever worked with a career counselor or consultant.

On the internet, there are a number of self-assessment tools. Most of them will let you answer a number of questions, but will eventually ask you for money to give you a "complete" answer to your assessment.

One tool recommended by KCDEE is the self-assessment tool on Illinois workNet. When individuals setup an Illinois workNet account, their personalized home page includes a link to "My Skills and Interests." These skill and interest self-assessments are free for customers to use, and they can now share their results with workforce professionals. The following self-assessments are available:

- **Skills** - Use SKILLS to identify present job skills, identify occupations that match those skills, understanding what skills are required for a given occupation, and determining what training and skills are needed for a particular job.
- **Work Importance Locator** - Use the Work Importance Locator to learn more about the individual's work values and help decide what is important to them in a job.
- **Interest Profiler** - Use the Interest Profiler to identify individual's strongest work-related interests and match occupations to job-related interests.

While this is a good start, the results should be discussed with a workforce professional to see how your job search and career plan should progress. Your present job skills alone may not be marketable in today's workplace. By having a discussion about your assessment and career exploration, the employment and training representatives from KCDEE can help you focus on an a career area that you may have overlooked. Or they can direct you toward a high growth pathway in which you can use or "transfer" skills that you have already developed in your previous employment.

What is Occupation Exploration?

While you may still look for a job in the occupation from which you were just employed, you may want to explore the high-growth pathways such as health care, manufacturing and transportation, or some of the newly designated fields such as environmentalism, terrorism (protection), globalization, genomics or the digital world.

Knowing the growth potential, basic job duties, and the average pay are all part of the exploration. Websites like www.payscale.com takes you through a series of questions that will give you range of salaries for a variety of careers. Other sites like www.ilworkinfo.com will provide a multitude of area specific information. Again, meeting with an Employment and Training Representative at KCDEE will help you interpret all of this information to help guide you into your next steps down your career path.

How we can help - There are many resources available to help you find a job that can turn into a career. The Employment and Training Representatives at **Kane County Department of Employment and Education** can help you find all the information you need to find your passion, make a plan, and achieve your dreams.

Four Offices to serve you:

Elgin	30 DuPage Court 847-888-7900 x 230
N. Aurora	2 Smoketree Plaza 630-844-6640 x 203
DeKalb	1701 E. Lincoln Hwy. 815-756-4893 x 240
Yorkville	811 W. John St. 630-553-8304

www.kcdee.org

