



Truly Alive | Youth and Family  
Foundation Inc.

# EmpowerEd

## YOUTH CAREER IDEATION TOOLKIT



**A self-help guide for Black, Indigenous, and  
People of Colour (BIPOC) Youth on their  
career discernment journey**

Created by Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation Inc. (TAYFFI) with funding  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of the toolkit	1
Knowing Yourself	2
Career Research	5
Goal Setting	6
Networking and Informational Interviewing	8
Job Search Strategies	10
Writing your Resume	11
Writing your Cover Letter	12
Job Interviewing	13



# Purpose of the toolkit

It is entirely normal for young individuals to be uncertain about their future career paths. Many young people share these feelings, and it is perfectly acceptable to explore various interests and take the time to discover what truly inspires you.

This toolkit is customized to offer guidance, ignite ambition, and eliminate obstacles. It provides a diverse range of insights to empower Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth to uncover their passions, explore opportunities, and construct a path to success in their chosen fields.

# Know Yourself!

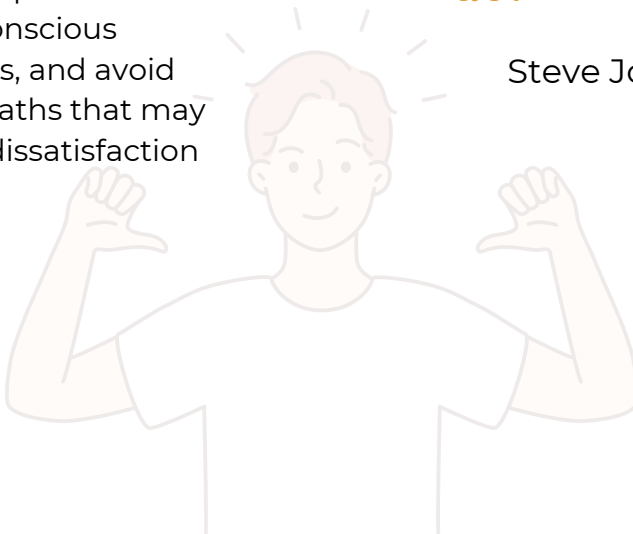
Choosing a career is like navigating a maze of possibilities. The first step is self-awareness.

Understanding your Values, Interests, Personality, and Skills (VIPS) empowers you to make informed decisions about your career direction.

Knowing yourself allows you to recognize your limitations and areas for growth. You also become more empowered to make conscious decisions, and avoid career paths that may lead to dissatisfaction

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do."

Steve Jobs



# What are Your Values, Interests, Personalities and Skills (VIPS) ?

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**Values** are core beliefs, guiding decisions and reflecting priorities like money, helping people, stability, fame, independence, or security. Aligning them with career choices impacts living these values.

**Interests** are your passions, hobbies, or activities that captivate and excite you. When you deeply enjoy something, turning it into a career can sustain motivation and engagement.

**Personality** includes unique traits, behaviors, and preferences that influence how you engage with the world. Aligning your career with your personality enhances job satisfaction and success.

**Skills** are your strengths, including natural talents and learned abilities through practice and learning. They range from interpersonal and technical skills, to athletic abilities.

# Want to find out what's in your **VIPS** package?

**Here are some resources available to assist you in your self-assessment process:**

- The **Government of Canada** offers career assessment tools:  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/workpreference>
- **Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation Inc.** provides guidance for BIPOC youth:  
<https://trulyalivefoundation.org/>
- **Educational institutions** like the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic offer career services with assessments.
- Consider seeking guidance from a certified **career counselor** for personalized assessments and advice.

# Career Research

After self-assessment (VIPS exploration), career research is essential. This involves exploring diverse careers to gather comprehensive information, including responsibilities, skills, work environment, and growth opportunities. Avoiding assumptions is vital to prevent disappointment, and ensure alignment with your aspirations.

**Here are some free job related resources to get you started on your career research journey:**

- [SaskJobs](#)
- [University of Saskatchewan](#)
- [Saskatchewan Polytechnic](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Indeed](#)

# Set Goals

## Goals guide our actions and decisions.

They help you focus on what you want to achieve, and provide a clear sense of direction, motivation and purpose.

The **SMART** goal setting framework is a popular method used to create clear and achievable objectives. **SMART** is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

“  
Winners can tell you  
where they are going,  
what they plan to do  
along the way, and who  
will be sharing the  
adventure with them  
”

Denis Watley



# How to Write SMART Goals

**Specific:** Clearly outline your career aspirations by identifying your interests, preferred skills, and desired work environment.

**Measurable:** Establish concrete milestones to track your progress. Define actionable steps like industry exploration, networking, or gaining experience through internships.

**Achievable:** Stay realistic about your abilities and available resources. Focus on attainable goals and gradually expand them as you gain experience and expertise.

**Realistic:** Ensure your career objectives align with your values, interests, personality, and skills (VIPS).

**Time:** Set a timeline with deadlines for your goals. This time-bound approach will maintain your focus and motivation as you work towards your desired career path.

# Networking

**Networking in your industry is essential for career growth. It broadens your connections, enabling information exchange, collaboration, mentorship, and professional advancement.**

**Explore industry-specific groups to expand your network:**

## **Saskatoon Technology & Business**

**Meetup:** A group for tech professionals to network, share knowledge, and discuss industry trends.

### **Women in Tech Saskatoon:**

A community for women working in technology and IT to connect and support each other.

## **Saskatoon Content Marketing**

**Meetup:** For marketing and content professionals to discuss strategies and network.

## **Saskatchewan Professional Marketing Association (SPMA):**

A community for marketing professionals with networking events and resources.

## **Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan (APEGS):**

Offers networking and professional development opportunities.

## **Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce:**

Offers various networking events for local businesses.

## **Saskatoon Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs (SYPE):**

Focused on connecting young professionals and entrepreneurs.

## **Saskatchewan Environmental Industry and Managers Association (SEIMA):**

Focuses on environmental professionals and hosts networking events and conferences.

## **Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES):**

SES is a non-profit organization committed to environmental sustainability and advocacy. They organize events and campaigns on various environmental issues.

## **Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) Saskatchewan:**

Provides networking events and resources for accounting professionals.

# Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing is a valuable networking approach. It involves connecting with professionals in your desired field to gain insights into their industry experience, learn about emerging trends, and receive guidance on overcoming challenges. It's not a job interview but a chance to gather valuable perspectives from experienced individuals in your chosen career path.

## What to do before, during and after an informational interview

**Research:** Gain industry and professional knowledge for informed conversations.

**Leverage Contacts:** Start with friends, family, professors, and peers.

**Attend Events:** Engage in conferences, seminars, job fairs, and webinars.

**Online Platforms:** Utilize LinkedIn and social media.

**Reach Out:** Send personalized messages expressing interest.

**Diversify Contacts:** Connect with a range of professionals.

**Ask Questions:** Inquire about career journeys, challenges, and insights.

**Express Gratitude:** Send thank-you notes after conversations.

**Follow Up:** Maintain relationships with periodic updates.

# Job Search Strategies

**Job hunting can be challenging, but strategies like customized resumes, compelling cover letters, and interview readiness can boost your likelihood of finding the ideal position.**

## **LinkedIn Engagement:**

Establish expertise on LinkedIn through insights and industry discussions.

## **Define Expectations:**

Clarify job preferences: culture, responsibilities, growth, compensation.

**Networking:** Build connections through industry events, workshops, and seminars.

## **Direct Contact:**

Proactively contact desired companies, highlighting skills matching their needs

## **Online Portfolio:**

Showcase skills and accomplishments in an online portfolio for employers.

## **Job Application Timeline:**

Organize job search with a structured timeline: research, network, apply, follow-up.

## **Interview Preparation:**

Prepare for industry-specific interview questions effectively.

# Writing your resume

**Creating a powerful resume is crucial for presenting your skills and experiences to potential employers.**



**Tailor** your resume for each job application.  
**Use a clear format** and employ consistent format with professional fonts, bullet points, and headings.

**Write a concise summary that** showcases your career goals and values.

**Incorporate job description keywords** to pass automated screenings.

**Include your contact information.** Ensure your resume includes your name, phone number, email, and LinkedIn profile.

**Use action verbs:** Begin bullet points with strong action verbs.

**Include metrics if possible,** use quantifiable numbers, e.g., "increased sales by 20%, managed a team of 10".

**Avoid vague** objective statements.

**Don't overcrowd** your resume with excessive text or visuals.

**Exclude unrelated** jobs, skills, or experiences

**Omit personal details** like age, marital status, or photos.

**Long Paragraphs:** Use concise bullet points for readability.

**Spelling/Grammar Mistakes:** Proofread carefully and consider tools like Grammarly.

**Unprofessional Email:** Use a professional email address without nicknames or special characters.

**References:** No need to include them; provide separately if requested.



# Writing your Cover Letter

**Crafting an effective cover letter is a crucial introduction to your resume, offering a chance to highlight your qualifications, enthusiasm, and suitability for the desired position.**



**Research the company** and align your skills with their needs.

**Highlight specific achievements** showcasing your qualifications.

**Address it to the hiring manager** if possible.

**Keep it concise**, focused on job requirements.

**Express genuine enthusiasm** for the role and company.

**Customize each letter** to the job and company culture, emphasizing your value.

**Avoid repetitions.** Use your cover letter to add context and explain why your experiences make you a strong fit.

**Do not skip over proofreading** your cover letter. Double-check for spelling and grammar mistakes before submitting your document.

**Do not use excessive jargon**, that would overwhelm the reader.

**Do not focus solely on yourself**, do not make the cover letter all about you. Also emphasize how you can benefit the company.

**Avoid negative language** about past employers or experiences. Stay positive and focus on your strengths.



# Tips for a Successful Job Interview

## Before the Interview

- **Research the company's** mission, values, products, and recent updates.
- **Study the job description,** responsibilities, and required skills.
- **Prepare concise answers** to common interview questions.
- **Identify achievements** showcasing your skills.
- **Practice with mock interviews** to build confidence.
- **Dress professionally** to fit the company culture.
- **Organize necessary** materials like resumes and references.



## During the Interview

- **Arrive early**, demonstrating punctuality.
- **Maintain confident body language**, with eye contact and a firm handshake.
- **Actively listen** to questions and respond thoughtfully.
- **Express enthusiasm** for the role and company.
- **Ask insightful questions** about the role, team, and company.
- **Showcase how your skills** align with the job's requirements.
- **Stay composed** and gather your thoughts when faced with challenging questions.

## After the interview

- **Send personalized thank-you** emails to each interviewer.
- **Reflect on the interview**, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Follow up** within the specified timeline.
- **Continue exploring** other opportunities.
- **Use constructive feedback** for future interviews.
- **Evaluate offers** in terms of compensation, benefits, and alignment with your goals.
- **Professionally communicate** your decision to accept or decline the offer.





# SMART GOALS

USE THIS WORKSHEET TO CREATE YOUR SMART GOALS

S	<p><u>SPECIFIC</u></p> <p>WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?</p>	
M	<p><u>MEASURABLE</u></p> <p>HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?</p>	
A	<p><u>ACHIEVABLE</u></p> <p>HOW CAN THE GOAL BE ACCOMPLISHED?</p>	
R	<p><u>RELEVANT</u></p> <p>DOES THIS SEEM WORTHWHILE?</p>	
T	<p><u>TIME BOUND</u></p> <p>WHEN CAN I ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?</p>	

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