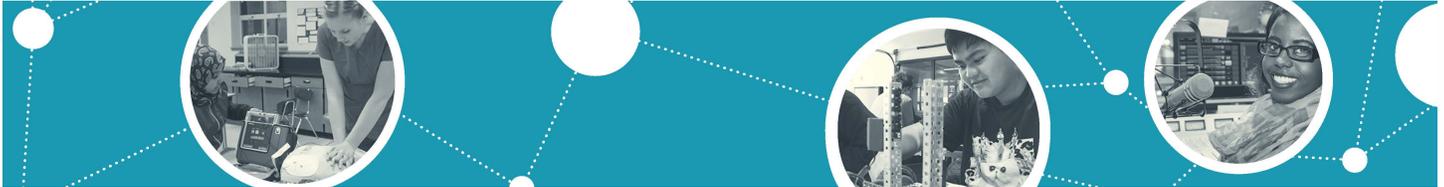




# Partner Connect: *Informational Interviews*



*Informational interviews afford students with an opportunity to connect one-on-one with a professional and hear firsthand about a particular career and the traits necessary to be successful.*

During an Informational Interview, the interviewer is the prospective employer who can provide the interviewee with unique insight and guidance on a profession or organization. This strategy enables students to connect with a professional in a career they may have interest in and gather insight into the career, knowledge, skills and work environment of the interviewer.

## WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

- *An informational interview is an informal conversation* with someone working in an area of interest to the student and willing to provide information and advice.
- *Informational Interviews are low-stress way for students to explore job and career opportunities* in various fields and would generally last anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes.
- *The information interview greatly benefits those high school students*, generally upper grades, who are beginning to think about college and careers.

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Get firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a particular field, industry or position.
- Get tips about how to prepare for and enter a given career.
- Improve your communication skills and confidence speaking with professionals.
- Initiate a professional relationship and expand your network of contacts in a specific career field; meet people who may forward job leads to you in the future.

## EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION

- Contact the Career Coordinator so you have some basic information about the students you will be interviewing.
- Encourage schools to have students send resumes or letters outlining their key skills, experiences and interests.
- Send company information. Make sure the school and the student have information about the company so the student can prepare for the interview.
- Prepare key questions. A good interview should flow like a conversation. If it is too scripted, it will seem uncomfortable for both participants.
- Take notes so you can provide feedback to the student after the interview has been completed.



## LIABILITY EXPOSURE

Liability Exposure at the company place of business and while the student is in transit is the responsibility of Portland Public Schools. You should think of liability issues in the same manner that you handle them for visitors who spend time in your facility.





## EMPLOYER BENEFITS

- Employers have the opportunity to expose students to their company and industry and generate student interest in career and jobs in their organization and industry.
- Employers can help students understand the education and skills necessary to secure jobs with their companies.
- Employers advance their reputation as supporters of education and help shape the trajectory of their future workforce.

## STUDENT BENEFITS

- Students gain valuable experience and insight by connecting with future employers and learning about the essential knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to work for prospective employers.
- Informational Interviews afford students with opportunities to evolve their understanding of an organization and where they need to develop in preparation for employment in that profession.
- Though the Informational Interview won't immediately result in a job, it's a great way for a student to gain exposure for future employment.

## TIPS FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: MAKING IT EFFECTIVE AND EDUCATIONAL

- Coordinate with the Career Coordinator/teacher and set up a date and time. Be sure to ask the Career Coordinator what background knowledge students have about the company or career field.
- Greet the student as an adult business associate, with a handshake and a warm hello. Introduce yourself, provide your name, job title and business card.
- Let your student know you volunteered to facilitate Informational Interviews because you think it is important for students to experience firsthand the processes businesses use to screen and hire potential employees.
- Ask to see the resume, and then use it as a tool to provide an initial basis for conversation.
- Discuss how many people work for the company, and provide a quick overview of the various types of jobs they hold, as well as the technical and "soft" skills necessary for those jobs.
- Follow up with the Career Coordinator/teachers, determine what went well and what might need to be adjusted in the future.

## POTENTIAL STUDENT QUESTIONS

- What do you see as the pros and cons of this type of work? What are the qualifications and educational requirements for this type of work?
- What factors would make one fail or succeed in this type of work? What are the current challenges faced by this industry?
- What do you see as the nature of the job market in this field? What kinds of experience would you suggest that someone pursue to make them more marketable in this field?
- Can you recommend any websites related to your field or industry?
- Can you recommend any area employment agencies, newspapers, etc. that post job openings for your career field or industry?
- Can you recommend any professional journals, conferences/workshops, or professional associations that relate to your line of work?
- Are there specific employer directories, industry leaders, or employer research guides I could further explore for targeting potential networking contacts?
- Can you refer me to anyone else I might speak with to continue my research?

Learn more at [www.pps.net/partnerconnect](http://www.pps.net/partnerconnect)