

Lesson 6: Incorporating External Factors

Overview

Personal factors, including work interests, values, and lifestyle aspirations, have traditionally played a central role in career exploration activities. This makes sense, given that many jobseekers place personal fulfillment in their work at the top of their list of job search criteria. However, to make the best career decision possible, additional factors should be considered. There are a number of external factors that often go unnoticed or get dismissed as irrelevant criteria. Most important among these is the labor market. Awareness of the labor market can help individuals take job demand, growth rates, wage, and other helpful statistics into consideration. One of the greatest dangers for any jobseeker is to unknowingly prepare for a career that has limited opportunity. Understanding what the market will be like can help individuals avoid risky occupations and embrace those with the greatest potential.

This lesson contains....

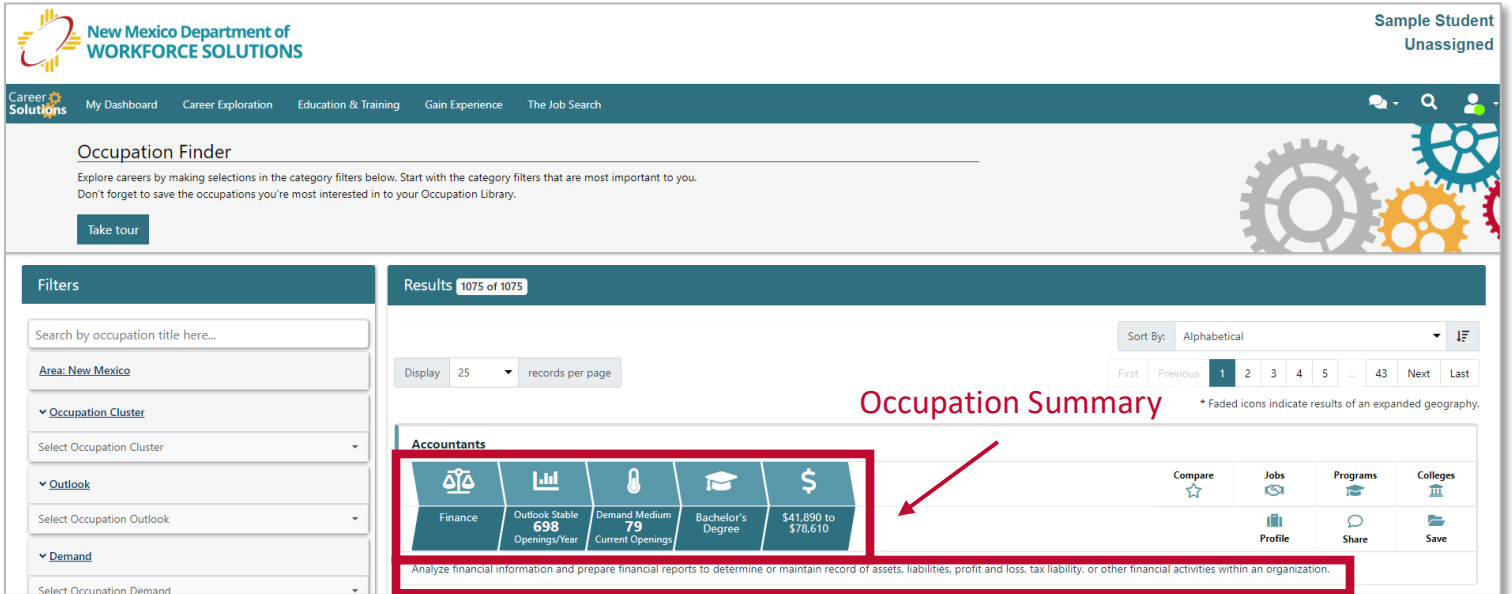
- A summary of how to access and use the Occupation Finder.
- An overview of labor market information to share with students.
- Strategies for identifying high-value careers with students.
- Methods for incorporating labor market information into career exploration.
- A review of next steps for students using insights gained from this lesson.

How to Use This Tool






Before beginning, be sure to sign into the system. The Occupation Finder is located within the Career Exploration section. Simply click the Occupation Finder link in the list of tools to the right.

The screenshot displays the 'CAREER EXPLORATION' interface. At the top, there are five numbered icons: 1 (play button), 2 (question mark), 3 (person icon), 4 (book icon), and 5 (trophy icon). Below these, the '1 GET STARTED' section is active, containing instructions to fill out the 'Career Exploration Worksheet'. To the right, a 'TOOLS' sidebar lists several options: 'Career Exploration Worksheet', 'Work Interests Assessment', 'Work Values Assessment', 'Why I Work', 'Occupation Finder' (highlighted with a red box), 'Compare Occupations', and 'Occupation Library'. A red arrow points from the text 'Click on Occupation Finder' to the highlighted 'Occupation Finder' link. At the bottom, navigation buttons for 'First', 'Back', 'Next', and 'Last' are visible.








When the Occupation Finder is opened, a wealth of information will appear on the page. Initially, all occupations within the system will be displayed. For each occupation a brief summary is provided that identifies the career cluster, market demand, education requirements, and wage.



The screenshot shows the 'Occupation Finder' interface. On the left, there are filters for Area (New Mexico), Occupation Cluster, Outlook, and Demand. The main area displays 'Results 1075 of 1075'. A red box highlights the 'Accountants' occupation summary, which includes icons for Finance, Outlook Stable (698 Openings/Year), Demand Medium (79 Current Openings), Bachelor's Degree, and Annual Income Range (\$41,890 to \$78,610). A red arrow points to this summary with the label 'Occupation Summary'. Below the summary is a description: 'Analyze financial information and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain record of assets, liabilities, profit and loss, tax liability, or other financial activities within an organization.'

				
Finance	Outlook Stable 698 Openings/Year	Demand Medium 79 Current Openings	Bachelor's Degree	\$41,890 to \$78,610
Career Cluster	Annual Openings	Current Openings	Education Requirements	Annual Income Range

To simplify the exploration process at this stage, it is recommended that focus be directed primarily to the Profile section. This section helps familiarize students with basic job descriptions and requirements for each occupation.

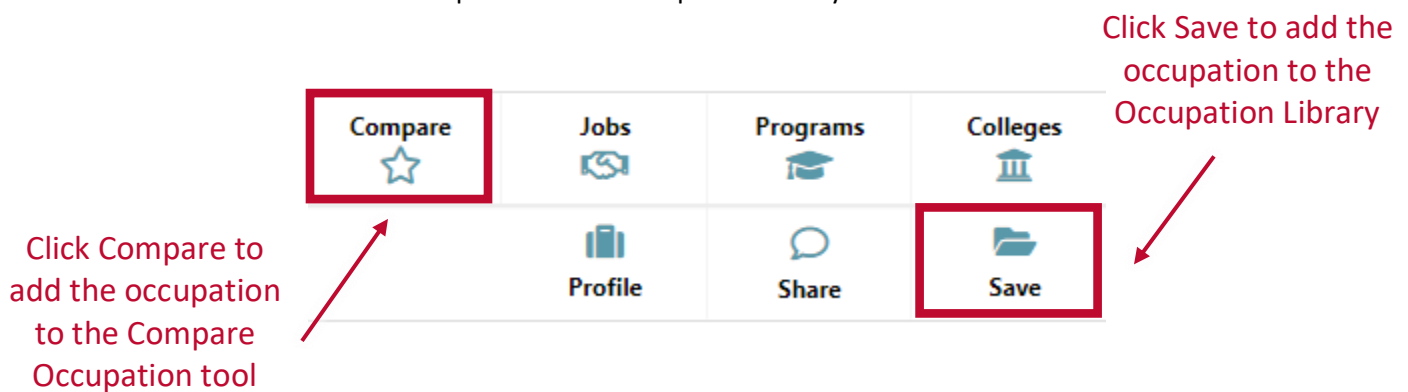
Compare 	Jobs 	Programs 	Colleges 
	 Profile	Share 	Save 

Other sections, such as the Programs and Colleges sections, are useful, but should be explored at a later point to avoid confusion. It is best, for now, to place emphasis on gathering basic occupation information.

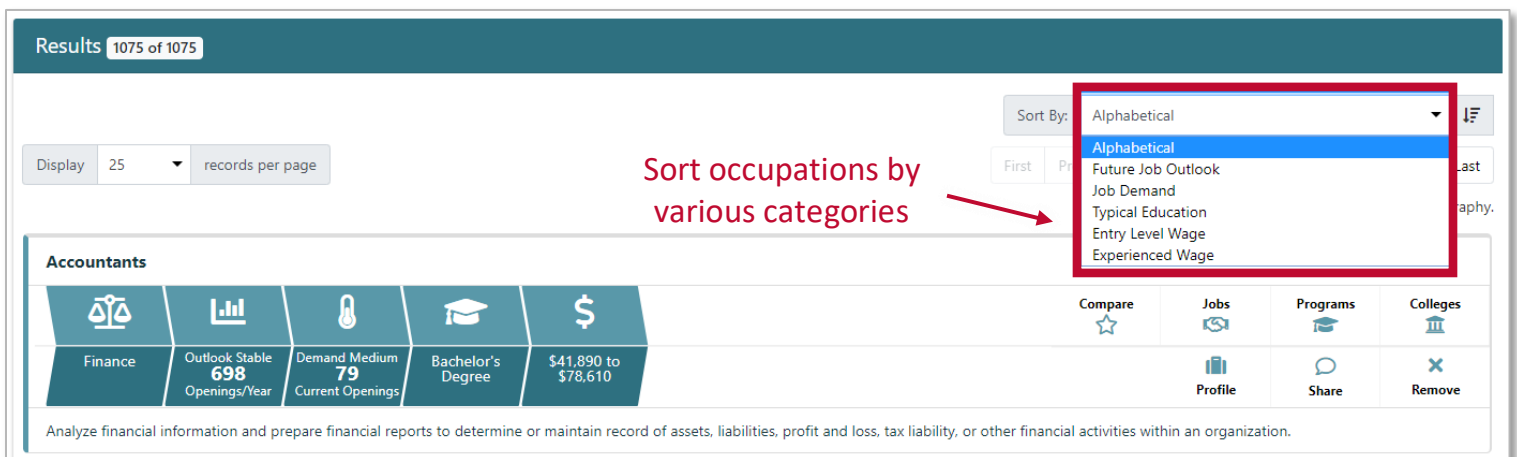
Students may venture into the Jobs section. If questions arise, here are a few tips that may help.

- The jobs listed on the page are for the entire state of New Mexico.
- The area can be limited by clicking “Change job search criteria” at the bottom of the page.
- Job information is not guaranteed (see disclaimer at bottom of Jobs page in Career Solutions).
- There is no direct method for applying for jobs within the system.
- To gain more information about the jobs, students can visit the employer websites directly.
- The job listings are pulled from various sources. These are displayed at the bottom of the Jobs page.
- The Jobs section is best used to gain a sense of what employers are looking for in certain occupations.

There are two additional tools listed beside each occupation that can be helpful. The Compare button adds the occupation to the Compare Occupation tool. Up to three careers can be marked for comparison at a time. The Save button will save the occupation to the Occupation Library.



To sort occupations, there is a dropdown menu at the top of the occupation list. This menu provides the ability to sort by various categories. Each sort category is explained below.








- **Alphabetical:** This will arrange occupations in alphabetical order.
- **Future Job Outlook:** This will sort occupations by annual openings. Occupations with the most openings expected each year will appear at the top or bottom of the list.
- **Job Demand:** This will sort occupations by current openings, placing jobs with the most current openings at the top or bottom of the list.
- **Typical Education:** This will sort occupations by degree level. Those requiring higher degrees will appear at the top or bottom of the list.
- **Wage – Entry / Experienced:** This will sort occupations by wage. Occupations with higher entry level or experienced wages will appear at the top or bottom of the list.

Helpful Tip: When a sort category is selected, the list may initially be sorted from lowest to highest. To reverse the order, click on the button next to the sort dropdown menu.





Click here to reverse the order of the sort

Helpful Tip: If the education box is empty, this means that postdoctoral training is required. If N/A appears, there was not enough information or the data was suppressed to avoid revealing private information.

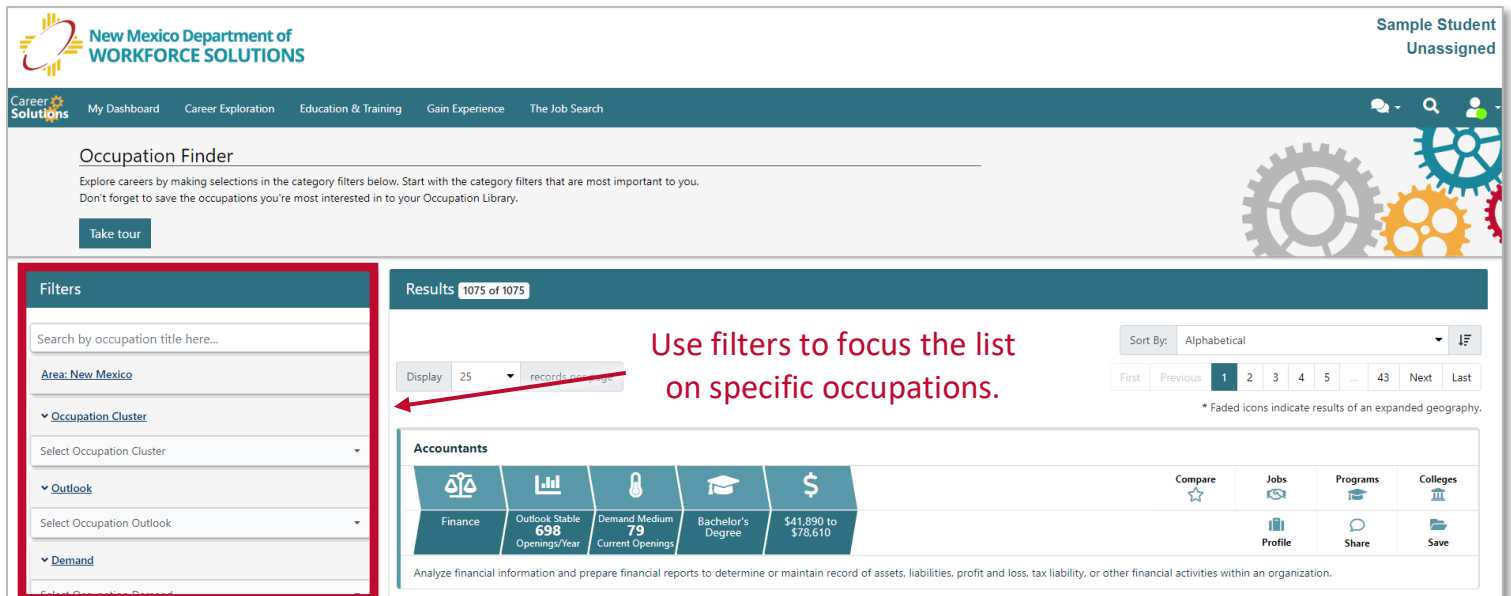
				
Human Service	Outlook Stable 90 Openings/Year	Demand Medium 12 Current Openings		\$48,710 to \$86,040

If the education box is empty, this means that postdoctoral training is required.

				
N/A	N/A	Demand Low 2 Current Openings	N/A	N/A

If N/A appears, there was not enough information or data was suppressed to protect individuals' privacy.

In addition to the ability to sort occupation, there are various filters listed on the left side of the screen that can help focus the list on specific occupations.



Filters

Search by occupation title here...

[Area: New Mexico](#)

Occupation Cluster

Select Occupation Cluster

Outlook

Select Occupation Outlook

Demand

Select Occupation Demand

Results 1075 of 1075

Display 25 records per page

Sort By: Alphabetical

First Previous 1 2 3 4 5 ... 43 Next Last

* Faded icons indicate results of an expanded geography.

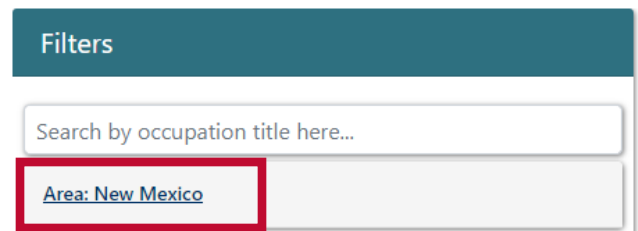
Accountants

Finance	Outlook Stable 698 Openings/Year	Demand Medium 79 Current Openings	Bachelor's Degree	\$41,899 to \$78,610
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Analyze financial information and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain record of assets, liabilities, profit and loss, tax liability, or other financial activities within an organization.

Compare Jobs Programs Colleges Profile Share Save

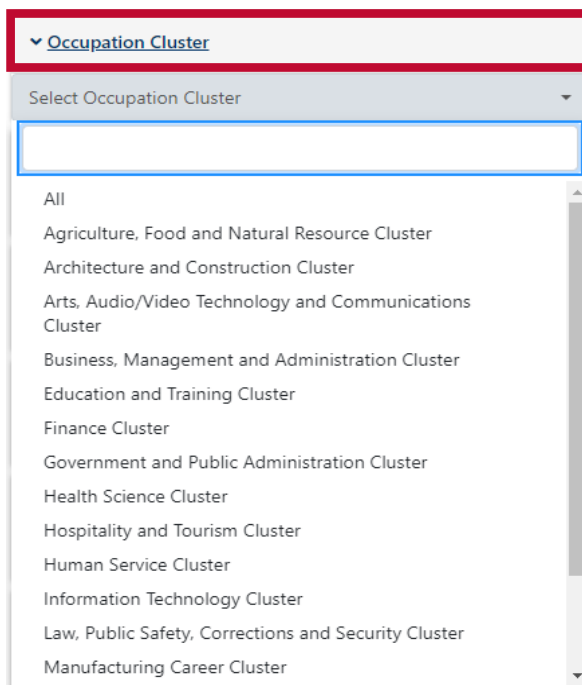
Helpful Tip: Information displayed in the Occupation Finder is for the state of New Mexico. Regional information is not available within this specific tool. For national data, visit onetonline.org.



Filters

Search by occupation title here...

[Area: New Mexico](#)



Occupation Cluster

Select Occupation Cluster

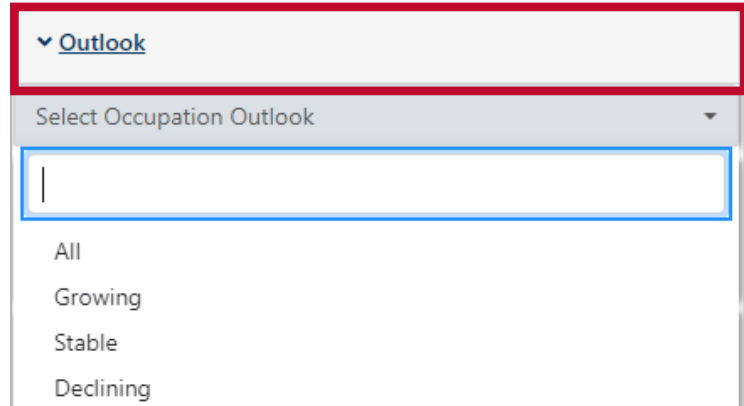
- All
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource Cluster
- Architecture and Construction Cluster
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications Cluster
- Business, Management and Administration Cluster
- Education and Training Cluster
- Finance Cluster
- Government and Public Administration Cluster
- Health Science Cluster
- Hospitality and Tourism Cluster
- Human Service Cluster
- Information Technology Cluster
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster

To limit the occupation search to a specific career cluster, use the **Occupation Cluster** filter. Selecting a cluster will focus the list on occupations in that cluster.

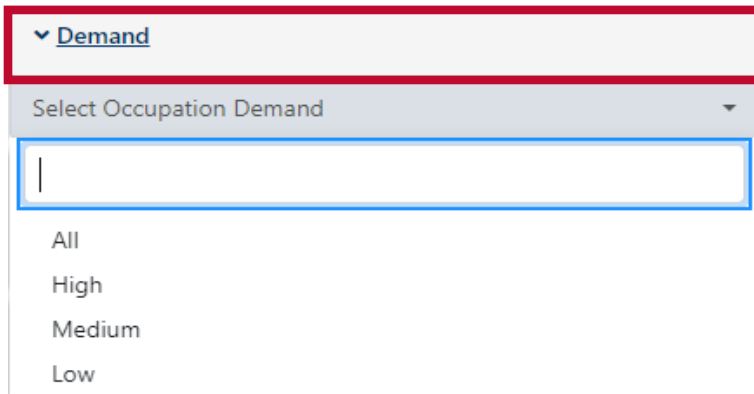
Helpful Tip: The career clusters listed within this filter option align with the [National Career Clusters Framework](#). These clusters are described in detail in the [New Mexico Career Clusters Guide](#).

The **Outlook** filter provides the option to limit the occupation list based on growth rates. Growing, stable, or declining occupations can be displayed.

Helpful Tip: Selecting Stable or Growing and the sorting the list by Future Job Outlook (highest to lowest), will put occupations with the greatest opportunity (with regard to growth and annual openings) at the top of the list.



The screenshot shows the 'Outlook' filter dropdown menu. The menu is titled 'Outlook' and has a search bar. Below the search bar, there are four options: 'All', 'Growing', 'Stable', and 'Declining'.

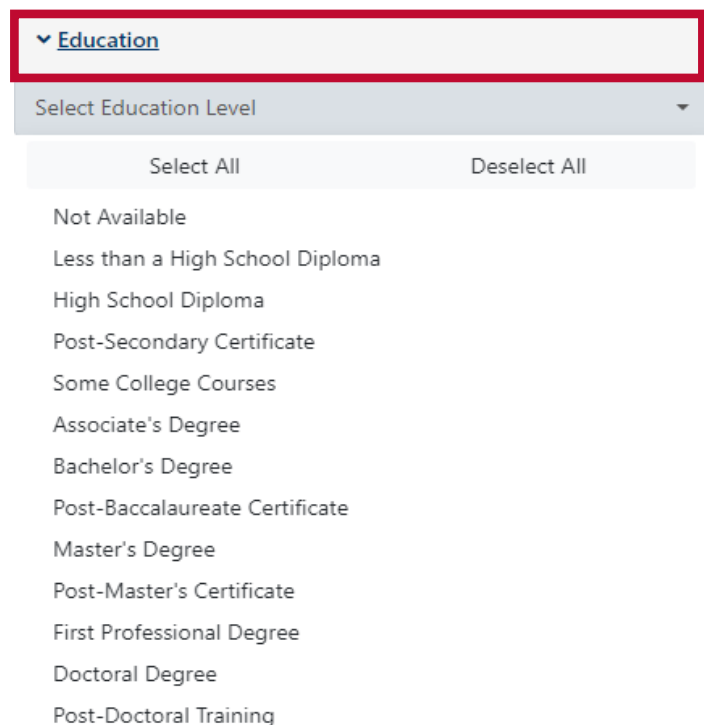


The screenshot shows the 'Demand' filter dropdown menu. The menu is titled 'Demand' and has a search bar. Below the search bar, there are four options: 'All', 'High', 'Medium', and 'Low'.

The **Demand** filter can be used to focus the list of occupations on current openings. Selecting High will display occupations with several current openings. Medium or Low will display occupations with some or few current openings.

The **Education** filter can help limit the list to occupations that have specific education requirements. One or many education types can be selected at one time.

Helpful Tip: Most advanced occupations will fall within the master's degree, doctoral degree, and postdoctoral training categories. There are only a handful of careers that require an advanced certificate, such as a post-baccalaureate or post-master's certificate.



The screenshot shows the 'Education' filter dropdown menu. The menu is titled 'Education' and has a search bar. Below the search bar, there are two buttons: 'Select All' and 'Deselect All'. Below these buttons, there is a list of education levels: 'Not Available', 'Less than a High School Diploma', 'High School Diploma', 'Post-Secondary Certificate', 'Some College Courses', 'Associate's Degree', 'Bachelor's Degree', 'Post-Baccalaureate Certificate', 'Master's Degree', 'Post-Master's Certificate', 'First Professional Degree', 'Doctoral Degree', and 'Post-Doctoral Training'.

▼
Wage Requirement

Select Wage Requirement

Any
\$2.50 hourly (Approx. \$5,000 annually) or more
\$4.75 hourly (Approx. \$10,000 annually) or more
\$7.25 hourly (Approx. \$15,000 annually) or more
\$9.50 hourly (Approx. \$20,000 annually) or more
\$12.00 hourly (Approx. \$25,000 annually) or more
\$14.50 hourly (Approx. \$30,000 annually) or more
\$16.75 hourly (Approx. \$35,000 annually) or more
\$19.25 hourly (Approx. \$40,000 annually) or more
\$21.75 hourly (Approx. \$45,000 annually) or more
\$24.00 hourly (Approx. \$50,000 annually) or more
\$26.50 hourly (Approx. \$55,000 annually) or more
\$28.75 hourly (Approx. \$60,000 annually) or more
\$31.25 hourly (Approx. \$65,000 annually) or more
\$33.75 hourly (Approx. \$70,000 annually) or more

The **Wage Requirement** filter will allow for occupations that meet a specific wage criterion to be displayed. The wages displayed in this filter are the entry level wages.

Helpful Tip: Once a wage is selected, the list of occupations can be sorted by Entry Level Wage (lowest to highest) to explore occupations closest to the selected income level.

The **Experience** and **Training** filters provide the ability to filter occupations based on how much experience is required and the amount of training that may be necessary. For both of these filters, multiple one or many options can be selected.

▼
Experience

Select Experience Level

Select All

Deselect All

None
Less than 1 year
1 to 5 years
More than 5 years
Information N/A

▼
Training

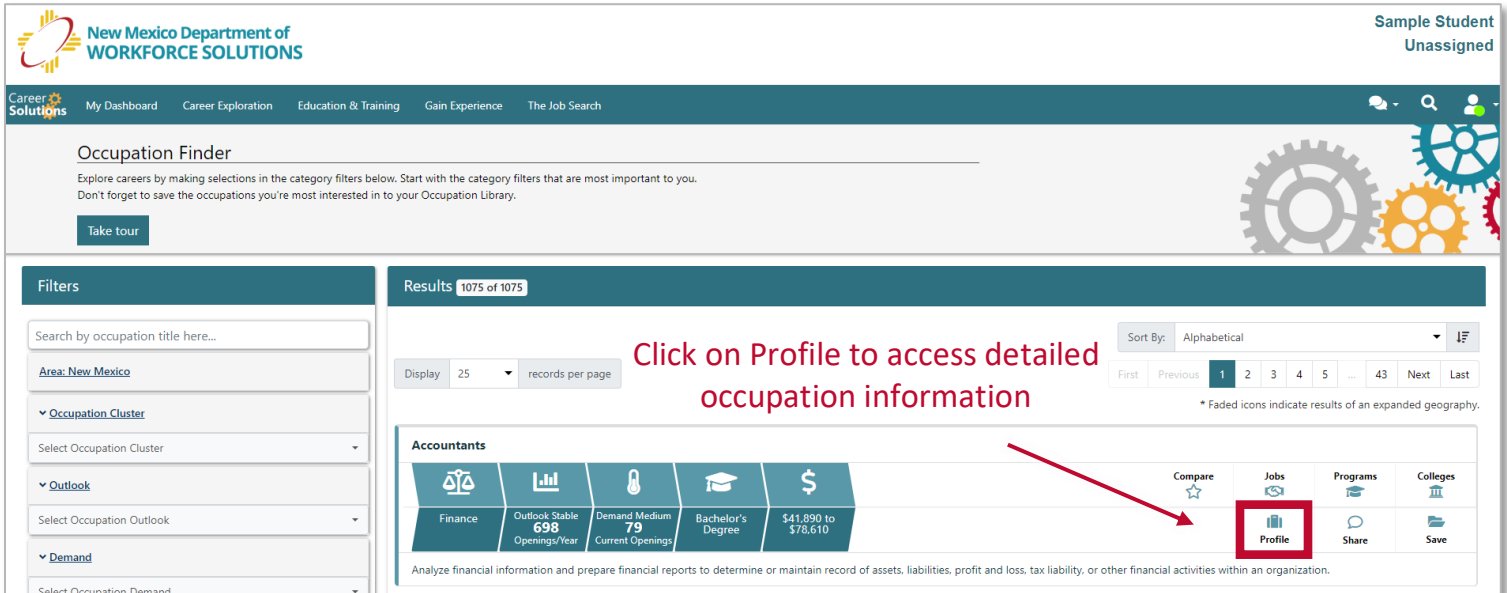
Select Training Level

Select All

Deselect All

None
Short-term on-the-job training
Moderate-term on-the-job training
Long-term on-the-job training
Apprenticeship
Internship/residency
Not Available

Detailed information about each of the occupations that appear in the list can be found by clicking on Profile. The occupation profiles display information related to job duties, requirements, market demand, and more.



Filters

Search by occupation title here...

Area: [New Mexico](#)

Occupation Cluster

Select Occupation Cluster

Outlook

Select Occupation Outlook

Demand

Select Occupation Demand

Results 1075 of 1075

Display 25 records per page

Sort By: Alphabetical

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Accountants

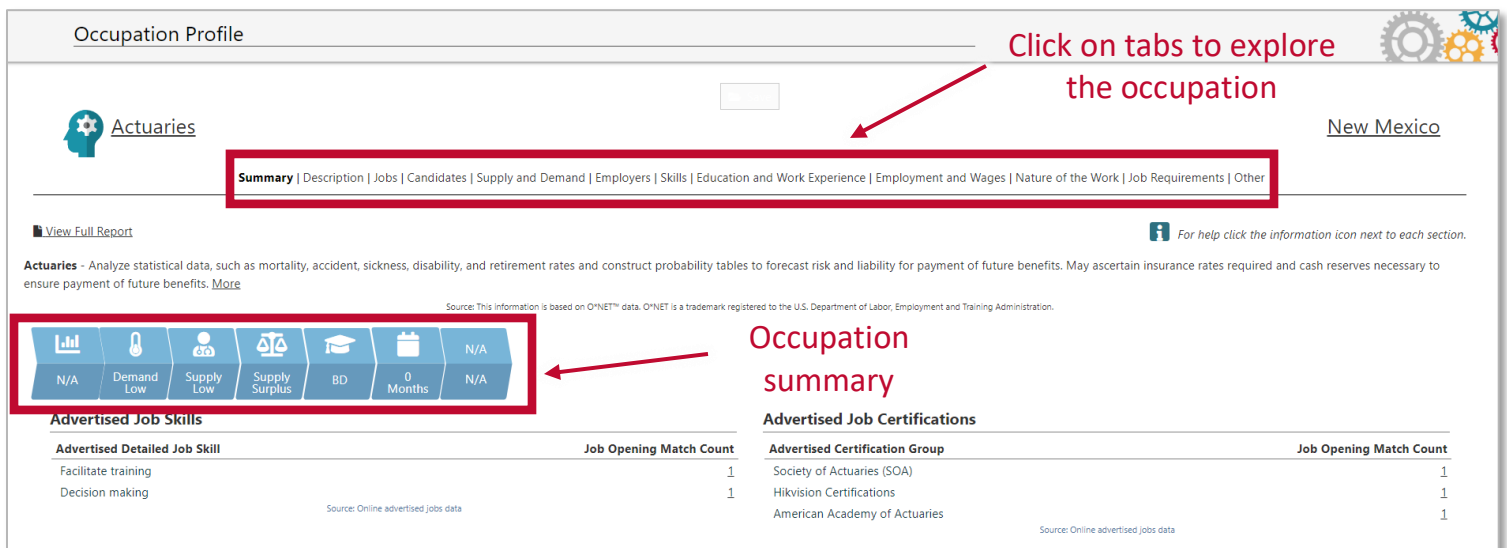
Finance	Outlook Stable 698 Openings/Year	Demand Medium 79 Current Openings	Bachelor's Degree	\$41,890 to \$78,610
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Analyze financial information and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain record of assets, liabilities, profit and loss, tax liability, or other financial activities within an organization.

Click on Profile to access detailed occupation information

To explore the occupation profile, scroll down the page or click on the tabs that appear at the top of the profile. An occupation summary appears under the job description. This summary provides a very quick idea of the market for the occupation, as well as education and work experience that may be required.

Helpful Tip: The information displayed on this page is based on O*NET data. If additional information is needed, it may be helpful to visit the O*NET site at onetonline.org.



Occupation Profile

Actuaries

New Mexico

Summary | Description | Jobs | Candidates | Supply and Demand | Employers | Skills | Education and Work Experience | Employment and Wages | Nature of the Work | Job Requirements | Other

View Full Report

For help click the information icon next to each section.

Actuaries - Analyze statistical data, such as mortality, accident, sickness, disability, and retirement rates and construct probability tables to forecast risk and liability for payment of future benefits. May ascertain insurance rates required and cash reserves necessary to ensure payment of future benefits. [More](#)

Source: This information is based on O*NET™ data. O*NET is a trademark registered to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Occupation summary

N/A	Demand Low	Supply Low	Supply Surplus	BD	0 Months	N/A
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Advised Job Skills

Advised Detailed Job Skill	Job Opening Match Count
Facilitate training	1
Decision making	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Advised Job Certifications

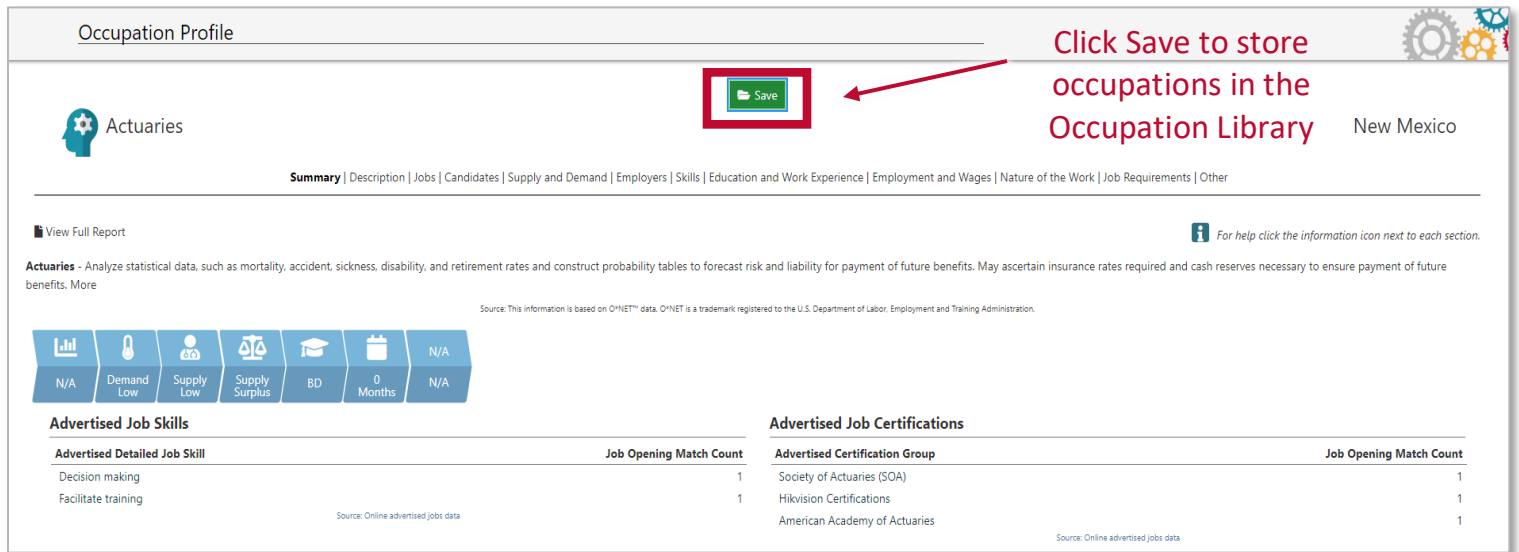
Advised Certification Group	Job Opening Match Count
Society of Actuaries (SOA)	1
Hikvision Certifications	1
American Academy of Actuaries	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Click on tabs to explore the occupation

At the top of each page, there is the option to save the occupation to the Occupation Library. It is recommended that students save desired occupations so they can be reviewed and compared.

Helpful Tip: If the option to save does not appear, click the white box at the top of the screen. It will turn green. Clicking it again will save the occupation.



Occupation Profile

Actuaries

Click Save to store occupations in the Occupation Library

Summary | Description | Jobs | Candidates | Supply and Demand | Employers | Skills | Education and Work Experience | Employment and Wages | Nature of the Work | Job Requirements | Other

View Full Report

For help click the information icon next to each section.

Actuaries - Analyze statistical data, such as mortality, accident, sickness, disability, and retirement rates and construct probability tables to forecast risk and liability for payment of future benefits. May ascertain insurance rates required and cash reserves necessary to ensure payment of future benefits. More

Source: This information is based on O*NET™ data. O*NET is a trademark registered to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

N/A	Demand Low	Supply Low	Supply Surplus	BD	0 Months	N/A
N/A						N/A

Advised Job Skills

Advised Detailed Job Skill	Job Opening Match Count
Decision making	1
Facilitate training	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Advised Job Certifications

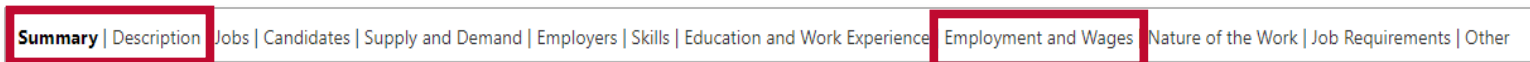
Advised Certification Group	Job Opening Match Count
Society of Actuaries (SOA)	1
Hikvision Certifications	1
American Academy of Actuaries	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

There is a lot of information displayed in the occupation profile and it can be easy for students to get overwhelmed. They will need some guidance to help focus their attention.

The following sections are recommended at this stage in the exploration process.

- Summary
- Description
- Employment and Wages



Summary | Description | Jobs | Candidates | Supply and Demand | Employers | Skills | Education and Work Experience | Employment and Wages | Nature of the Work | Job Requirements | Other

Helpful Tip: Unless a specific city, county, or region is specified in a table, the data displayed is for the entire state of New Mexico.

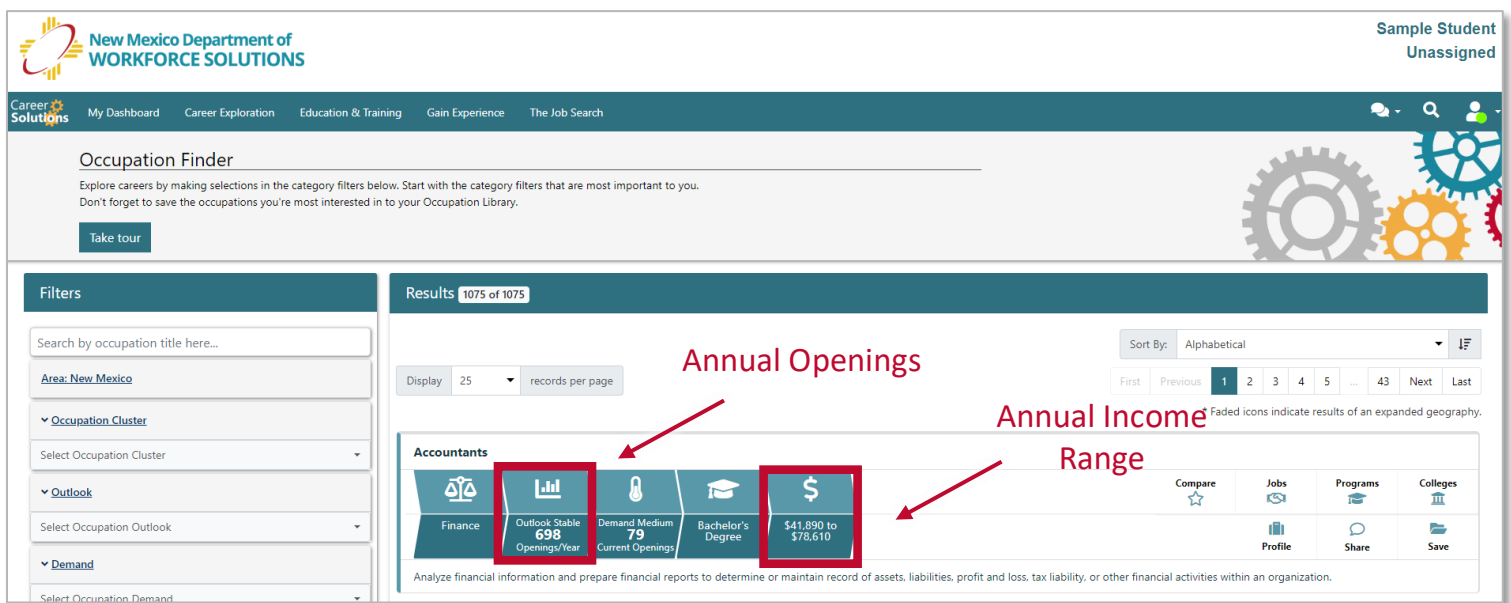
Helpful Tip: Information in the occupation profiles was gathered from various data sources, including online advertised jobs data. Reading the table descriptions (at the top of each table) and the source information (at the bottom of each table) can help identify where the data came from.

Identifying Labor Market Information

Labor market information is plentiful within the Career Solutions system. To simplify the exploration of this information, focus can be directed to employment demand and wages.

The data category that is often used to assess demand is **Annual Openings** (i.e., the average number of job openings that are expected each year). Wage is typically assessed by examining **Median Wage** (i.e., the midpoint at which about 50% of individuals employed in the occupation are expected to earn more and 50% are expected to earn less).

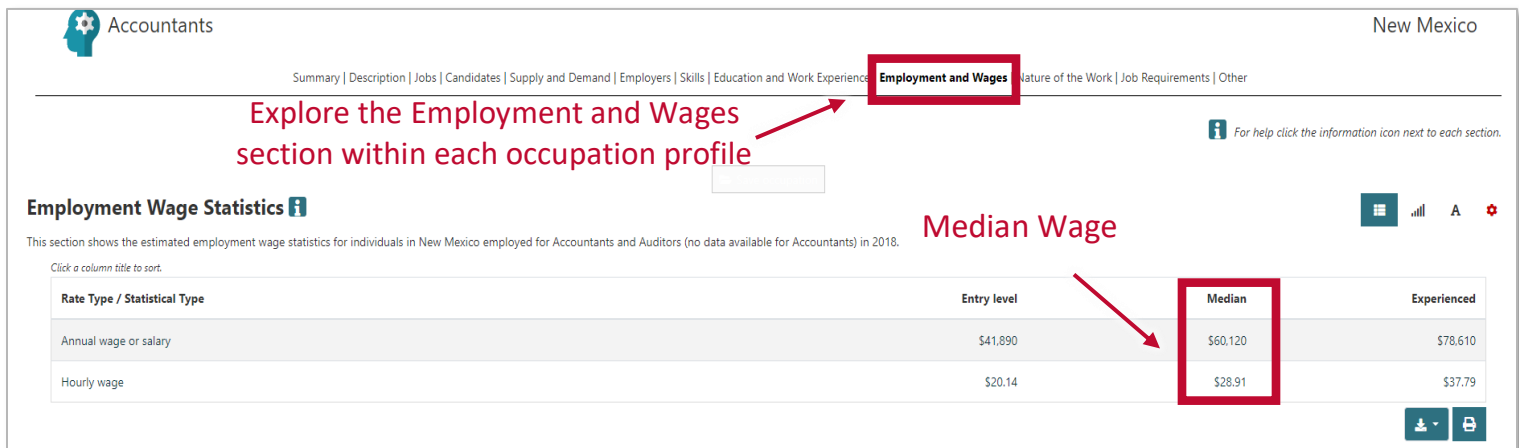
There are a couple places where this information is displayed. The first is on the main page of the Occupation Finder (see below).



The screenshot shows the 'Occupation Finder' interface. On the left, there are filters for Area (New Mexico), Occupation Cluster, Outlook, and Demand. The main results area shows 'Results 1075 of 1075'. A table of results is displayed, with the 'Accountants' row highlighted. Red boxes and arrows point to specific data points in the Accountants row: 'Annual Openings' (698) and 'Annual Income Range' (\$41,890 to \$78,610).

Occupation	Outlook	Demand	Education	Income Range
Accountants	Stable	Medium	Bachelor's Degree	\$41,890 to \$78,610

The second location is on the Employment and Wages page within each occupation profile.



The screenshot shows the 'Accountants' occupation profile. The 'Employment and Wages' section is highlighted with a red box and an arrow. Below this, the 'Employment Wage Statistics' table is displayed. A red box and arrow point to the 'Median' wage for 'Annual wage or salary'.

Rate Type / Statistical Type	Entry level	Median	Experienced
Annual wage or salary	\$41,890	\$60,120	\$78,610
Hourly wage	\$20.14	\$28.91	\$37.79

Information related to annual openings is displayed further down under the heading Projected Annual Openings.

Projected Annual Openings

This section shows the long term projected annual openings for Accountants and Auditors (no data available for Accountants) in New Mexico from 2016 to 2026.

Click a column title to sort.

Occupation	Annual Openings	Annual Change	Annual Transfers	Annual Exits
Accountants and Auditors	698	58	423	217
Business and Financial Operations	3,537	260	2,154	1,123

Annual Openings

Below the Projected Annual Openings table, annual openings for each of the workforce development regions in New Mexico is displayed.

Projected Annual Openings Area Distribution

This section shows the distribution of the annual openings for Accountants and Auditors (no data available for Accountants) in New Mexico by workforce development region from 2016 to 2026.

Click a column title to sort.

Rank	Area	Annual Openings
1	Central	385
2	Northern	146
3	Eastern	72
4	Southwestern	61


Annual Openings by region

When students concentrate on these two data categories – Annual Openings and Median Wages – it can simplify the exploration of labor market information, keeping them focused on some of the most critical information needed to make informed career decisions. Students can explore other types of helpful data within the system, but it is suggested they spend time understanding these two first.


IMPORTANT: As students complete the activities within each lesson, they need to save occupations they believe are a good match. These saved occupations will be referenced in future lessons.

Helpful Tip: If the option to save does not appear, click the white box at the top of the screen. It will turn green. Clicking it again will save the occupation.

Occupation Profile



Click Save to store occupations in the Occupation Library



Actuaries

New Mexico


Summary | Description | Jobs | Candidates | Supply and Demand | Employers | Skills | Education and Work Experience | Employment and Wages | Nature of the Work | Job Requirements | Other

View Full Report


For help click the information icon next to each section.

Actuaries - Analyze statistical data, such as mortality, accident, sickness, disability, and retirement rates and construct probability tables to forecast risk and liability for payment of future benefits. May ascertain insurance rates required and cash reserves necessary to ensure payment of future benefits. More


Source: This information is based on O*NET™ data. O*NET is a trademark registered to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.




N/A




Demand Low




Supply Low




Supply Surplus



BD



0 Months



N/A

Advertised Job Skills

Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Job Opening Match Count
Decision making	1
Facilitate training	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Advertised Job Certifications

Advertised Certification Group	Job Opening Match Count
Society of Actuaries (SOA)	1
Hikvision Certifications	1
American Academy of Actuaries	1

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Connecting with Students

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will be given the opportunity to...

- Review the major components of an informed career decision.
- Identify external factors that can play a role in employment success.
- Evaluate the usefulness of labor market information in making career decisions.
- Locate and apply labor market information to the selection of careers.
- Determine next steps in exploring career opportunities and developing a career plan.

Classroom Discussions and Presentations

Introduction

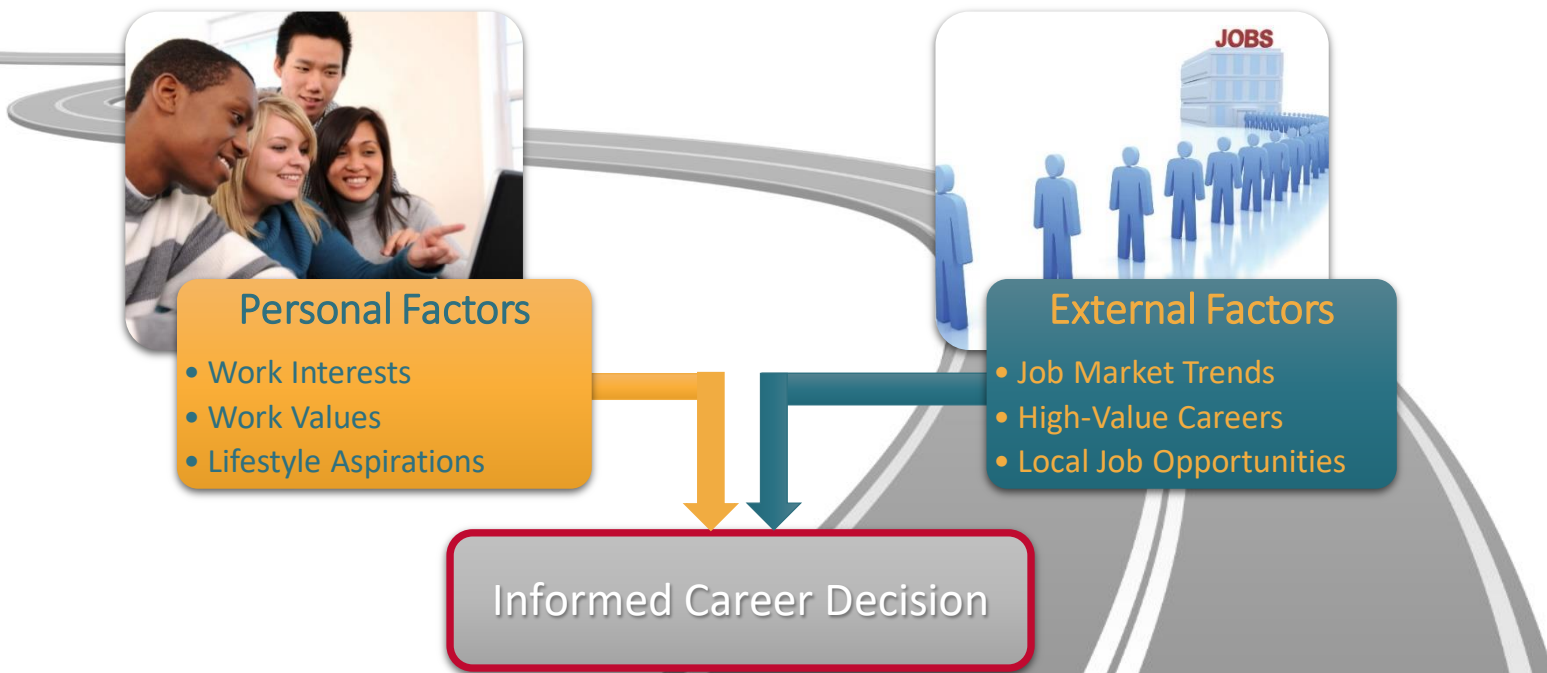
Personal factors play a significant role in making informed career decisions. Equally important, however, are external factors, which include elements in the student's environment that can affect employment success. These factors are often neglected because of the misconception that success or failure resides primarily within the student. In other words, students succeed or fail by nature of who they are and what they can do. This ignores a huge piece of the puzzle – where they live. No matter what a student is capable of, if jobs are not available, employment failure is inevitable. Because the environment can be a supporting or limiting factor, it should be considered when making career decisions. Knowing what jobs are plentiful with a living wage can help students prepare for occupations with the greatest opportunity. Likewise, understanding which jobs are limited or offer low wages can help students avoid these occupations or prepare for difficult employment.

Talking Points

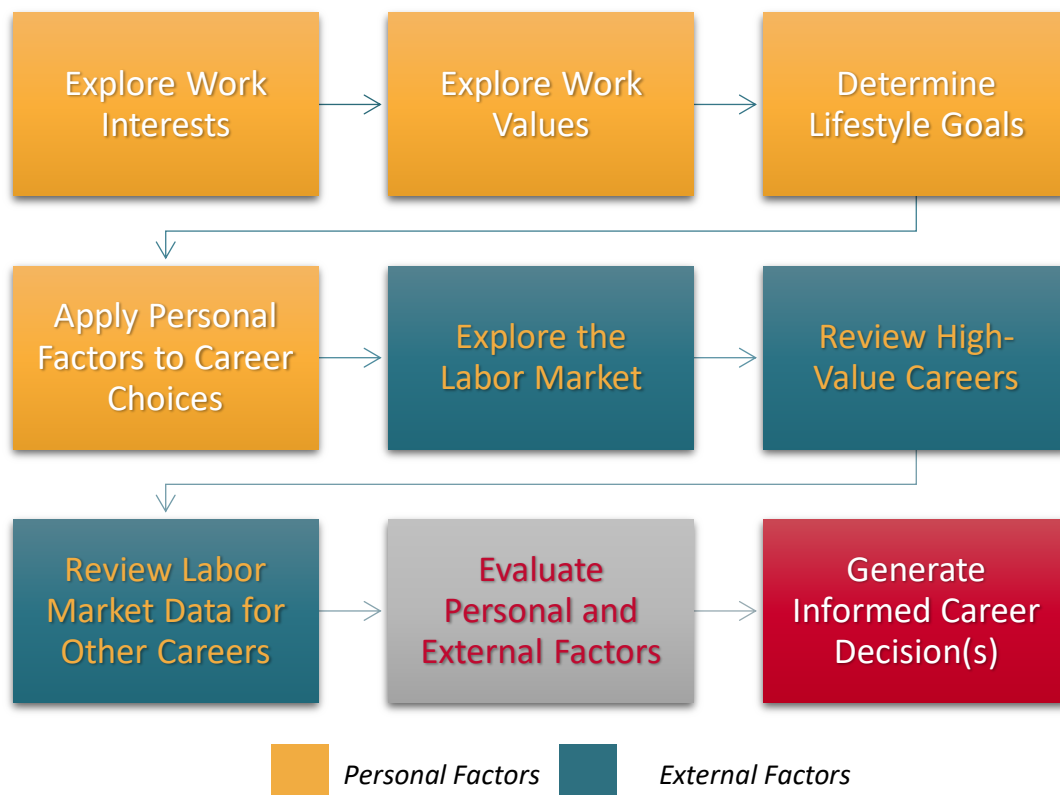
Below are some helpful comments to share with students.

- The ultimate goal of career exploration is to make an informed decision. This often requires a careful review of personal factors and external factors. (**Helpful Tip:** Print and share the diagram below. Use this to introduce the components of an informed career decision.)
- At this time, we are going to shift into external factors, which includes elements in your environment that can affect employment success. These factors are equally important as personal factors.
- There are a number of different external factors that should be considered when making career decisions. Most important among these is the labor market.
- Understanding the labor market can provide a sense of what jobs pay well and which are projected to be most plentiful. In other words, it gives you a picture of where the demand is for good jobs.
- This can be powerful information that can help you identify occupations with the greatest opportunity and avoid occupations that may be declining or have the potential to be highly competitive.
- The intent is not to discourage certain occupations. Rather, the goal is to empower you with the opportunity to choose and prepare for the realities of the job market.

Components of an Informed Career Decision



The Career Exploration Process



Discussion Questions

As a class or in small groups, have students reflect on the following questions. Help students talk about and work through their positive and negative feelings regarding career exploration.

- What are some external factors that could affect your ability to work in your desired occupation?
- Is there anything you can do to change these factors to improve your chances of getting a job?
- When you think of the labor market, what comes to mind?
- How might it be helpful to know the wage and number of job openings for a particular occupation? How might you use this information in choosing a career?
- Would you consider pursuing a career that paid less than \$35,000 a year? Why or why not?
- Would you consider pursuing a career that had only a few job openings in your area? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is possible to find a career that you like that pays well and has a lot of job openings?

Exploring the System

After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of exploring external factors and helping students work through their positive and negative perspectives, they can be introduced to the Occupation Finder in Career Solutions.

The “How to Use this Tool” section above provides a summary of useful information to share with students.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Encourage students to sign into the site to ensure they can access and save data.
- Help students locate the Occupation Finder.
- Review the basic features of this tool, including how to locate useful labor market information.
- Assist students in identifying information that is most useful to explore within this tool.
- Discuss how this tool can be used to focus student searches on specific occupations.
- **Remind students to save occupations they believe are a good match.**

Classroom Activity

Understanding the Labor Market and High-Value Careers

Many students intuitively recognize the need to find a career that fits their interests and personal needs. What is less obvious, though, is the need to set themselves up for employment success by understanding the labor market. Their excitement about the possibilities can sometimes be so powerful that they fail to broaden their scope and reflect on the viability of various career choices. This poses a significant danger for students who can end up spending large amounts of time and money on degrees and certificates that have limited application in the marketplace. Thus, it can be extremely valuable for students to take time to explore the labor market and gain awareness of what occupations offer opportunity versus those that may present employment challenges. Understanding what to expect as they enter the job market can help students prepare for the realities they will face as they seek employment.

To locate the Occupation Finder, review the “How to Use this Tool” section above.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Discuss the importance of incorporating external factors into career exploration.
- Briefly summarize the benefits of using labor market data to make informed career decisions.
- Review the Occupation Finder tool in Career Solutions.
- Identify the purpose of this tool as an information database that contains several occupations.
- Provide an opportunity for students to explore this tool in the classroom or at home.
- Encourage students to complete the Understanding the Labor Market and High Value Careers sheet.
- Assist students in understanding the benefits and limitations of using labor market data in making career decisions.

Exploring the Results

Exploring labor market data for various careers can be a unique experience for students. For some, it can be an eye-opening experience that grounds the career exploration process in reality, resulting in both positive and negative emotions. It will be important to help students work through these emotions and understand that there are numerous pathways to success. All pathways are possible, but some may require a bit of maneuvering to achieve the best possible outcome.

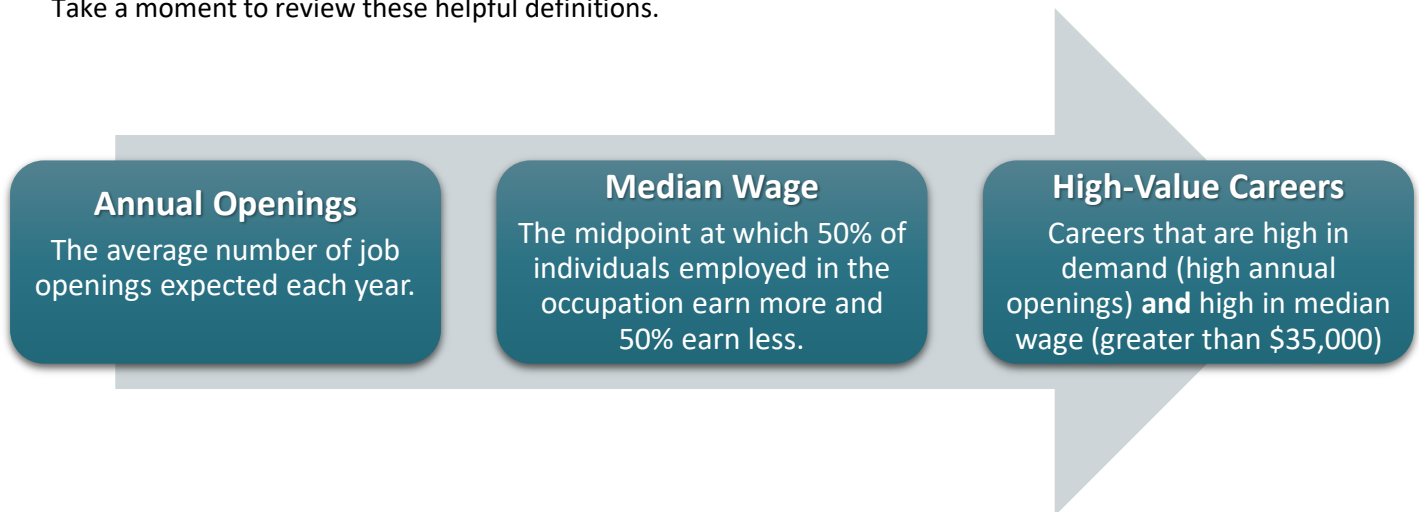
Upon completion of the activity, students will have evaluated their saved list of potential careers, as well as other career choices, through the lens of the labor market. Some will choose to limit their list to only high-value careers, while others will opt to include careers that pose potential employment challenges. Regardless of how students choose to use the information, the message to be communicated is that of preparation. Students will need to be prepared to seize valuable opportunities and seek additional training, when needed, to maintain a competitive edge in more restrictive or specialized fields.

Understanding the Labor Market and High-Value Careers

Instructions: Read the information below and use the Occupation Finder in Career Solutions to answer the following questions.

Helpful Terms and Definitions

When looking at labor market data, there is a wealth of information that can be used to identify good jobs with ample opportunity for employment. It can be most helpful to focus on two important pieces of information – annual openings and median wages. These two pieces of information can be used to locate high-value careers. Take a moment to review these helpful definitions.



The Occupation Finder in Career Solutions can be used to review labor market data for various careers. For each career listed in this tool, a summary is presented that displays the annual openings. Median wage can be found in the profile for each occupation under Employment and Wages. Some examples are provided below.

High-Value Career: Accountants – 698 annual openings expected each year, median wage is \$60,120

Accountants

Finance	Outlook Stable 698 Openings/Year	Demand Medium 83 Current Openings	Bachelor's Degree	\$41,890 to \$78,610	Median \$60,120

Low-Value Career: Physical Therapist Aides – 34 annual openings expected each year, median wage is \$28,220

Physical Therapist Aides

Health Science	Outlook Growing 34 Openings/Year	Demand Low 1 Current Openings	High School	\$20,120 to \$32,260	Median \$28,220

Evaluating Your Saved Occupations

1. Go into your occupation library and review the list of occupations. Choose three occupations and complete the table below.

Occupation Title	Annual Openings	Median Wage	High-Value Career Yes/No

2. After completing this table, are there any of these occupations that you would not consider pursuing as a career choice? Why or why not? (List the occupation titles)

3. Repeat this exercise for the remaining occupations in your library.

How many occupations in your library meet the criteria for a high-value career?

How many occupations in your library do not meet the criteria for a high-value career?

Does this affect how you feel about some of the occupations in your library? Why or why not?

Evaluating High-Value Careers

Locate the Occupation Finder in Career Solutions. Set the Wage Requirement to \$35,000 or more and sort the list by Future Job Outlook, highest to lowest. What will emerge is a list of high-value occupations. Those with the most annual openings will appear at the top of the list.

Helpful Tip: You may need to click the direction button next to the sort menu to get the list to sort from highest to lowest.

Sort By: Future Job Outlook 

1. Explore the list of high-value careers. List 2-3 careers that you would consider pursuing and why. (You may find it helpful to select an occupation cluster from the filter menu to help focus the list on occupations that fit your interests.)

Occupation Title	Why would you consider pursuing this occupation?

2. For you, how important is it that your future career is a high-value career with several job opportunities and a high wage? Why?

Evaluating Low-Value Careers

Locate the Occupation Finder in Career Solutions. Clear all filters and select a cluster from the Occupation Cluster filter that fits your interests. Explore the list of careers within this cluster.

1. Identify 2-3 low-value occupations (with few annual openings or wages under \$35,000) that you would consider pursuing. Add these occupations to the table below.

Occupation Title	Why would you consider pursuing this occupation?

2. What are some potential challenges that these low-value occupations might present with regard to getting a job or achieving lifestyle goals?
3. How might you overcome some of these challenges?
4. Why would it be helpful to know this information now before you start preparing for a career?

Next Steps

At the end of the lesson, take a moment to review and assess the learning objectives. Engage students in a brief discussion of the learning opportunities that were made available in the classroom.

In this lesson, students were provided the opportunity to...

- Review the major components of an informed career decision.
- Identify external factors that can play a role in employment success.
- Evaluate the usefulness of labor market information in making career decisions.
- Locate and apply labor market information to the selection of careers.

After providing a brief overview, encourage students to...

- Continue their reflection on external factors that can affect employment success.
- Think about external factors most relevant to them and the types of occupations that fit their needs.
- Determine how they might use this information in selecting a career.
- Prepare for future lessons that will focus on using all factors to generate an informed career decision.

The Career Exploration Process

