

A sampler from the monograph...



National Career Development Association
Monograph Series

Developing & Managing Career Resources

By Susan A. Epstein, MS and Janet G. Lenz, PhD

"Developing & Managing Career Resources is a refreshing guide and overview on how to develop and manage career resources for a variety of career counseling clients. It is the most comprehensive one I have personally reviewed on this topic, and it would have been an invaluable resource over the years. For career service providers, career counselors, career coaches, corporate career centers, academic career departments and even state employment offices, this is an invaluable source of specific and vital information."

Sharon McCormick, NCDCA Member

"Practitioners in the career development field who have yearned for down to earth, practical, concrete guidance and solutions will finally have their wish. At long last, there is a publication devoted to the administration and management of career materials, *Developing & Managing Career Resources*. Although the role of theory is discussed briefly, this monograph can very well serve as a handbook to develop and manage career resources in different settings, and a total of 20 appendices will prove to be one of its most valuable sections. Members of the Career Resource Managers Association (CRMA) who specialize in the development and management of career information will surely find the publication a gem."

Anne Orange, Career Librarian
University of South Carolina
CRMA Member since 1994

"This monograph can help practitioners in a variety of settings learn how to effectively design and develop career resource centers. As a counselor educator who trains students preparing to work in the schools at all levels, I find this resource to be one of the best and most current for my students to use. It will be a part of my curriculum from now on, as it is chock full of important information that all good counselors need to know. Consider it for your students who are preparing to be counselors, as well as those who are already out practicing in the field. It's a must for every counselor!"

Pat Schwallie-Giddis, Associate Professor
George Washington University



Susan Epstein, librarian at the Florida State University Career Center for 14 years, has created a variety of instructional guides and organizational systems to develop and manage career resources. Her writings and workshops have included such topics as job searching on the Internet, researching potential employers, occupational classification, and best practices for library managers. She keeps current with professional trends and information technology through her memberships in the Career Resource Managers Association, the Special Libraries Association, and the North Florida Library Association.



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Chapter 1

Using Information in Delivering Career Services

Introduction

- Do you know any companies that provide on-the-job training?
- Where can I learn about careers in the military?
- What health careers can I pursue that don't require science?
- Do you have a list of schools that provide training in automotive body repair?
- How do I get a teaching position with Department of Defense schools overseas?
- Where can I get certification as a child development specialist?
- Do you have a list of pharmaceutical firms that are hiring sales reps?
- What major is best for being an event planner?
- What fields will be in demand in the next 10 years?
- I am re-entering the workforce after being at home...where do I start?
- Can I get tuition reimbursement to retrain for a new job within the company?

The questions above illustrate the kinds of queries that persons working in career resource centers encounter daily from individuals seeking career assistance. While it is essential that career services practitioners have basic counseling skills, it is equally essential that they know how to locate and use career information resources effectively, regardless of the format or delivery system associated with a particular resource.

The career counseling and development profession has a long history relating to the use of career information resources. Frank Parsons, a pioneer in the career guidance field, acknowledged the importance of career information in discussing his view of the guidance process, which according to Parsons involved:

1. a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes;

2. a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work;
3. true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts (1909, p. 5)

Since Parsons' day, the process of career decision making has undoubtedly become more complex. Some scholars would argue that we need completely different approaches and ways to think about careers and career development. We believe that the need for individuals to locate and make use of high-quality career information resources has not abated in this Information Age. Indeed, it is probably more important than ever.

National and International Perspectives

In the recently revised U.S. National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG), (<http://www.acrnetwork.org/ncdg.htm>), one of the primary goals stated under the Career Management section is that persons of all ages will "use accurate, current, and unbiased career information during career planning and management" (NTSC, 2006), followed by specific indicators that describe how the goal is measured through

- (1) knowledge acquisition
- (2) knowledge application
- (3) reflection on what has been learned

The guidelines are intended to be a framework for use in building and evaluating comprehensive career development programs for youth and adults. These guidelines recognize such things as the importance of information in career planning, the various types of information needed for career decision making, and the role of information in helping individuals find career options suited to their personal characteristics.

Cognitive Information Processing Theory

One career theory that speaks directly to the topic of developing and managing career resources is Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) (Peterson et al., 2002; Sampson, 2008; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004). A key assumption of CIP theory is, "Effective career problem solving and decision making involves (sic) both knowledge and a process for thinking about the knowledge we have gained" (Sampson et al., 2004, p. 3). Sampson et al. further noted that "we can use career resources and career services to help us think about and organize what we have learned, allowing us to sort through the vast amount of information available and use the most relevant information in making choices" (p. 3). Effective career problem solvers and decision makers are characterized by their ability to locate information, integrate it into their previous life experiences and schema, and apply information to solving the career question at hand. This CIP perspective has implications for how career information resources are accessed and used in the Internet age, which has resulted in an explosion of information delivered via the Web.

Some might ask why career resource centers, staffed by career practitioners and related personnel, are even needed in the Internet age. Isn't it "all on the Internet?" While the Internet has become an indispensable tool for career practitioners and clients alike, not only has it failed to eliminate the role of career practitioners in helping clients make good use of information, in some ways it has made their role even more critical. The data and resources available on the Internet can be overwhelming and intimidating to many clients, who vary greatly in their capacity and readiness (Sampson, 2008; Sampson, et al., 2000) to effectively gather and process information relevant to their career choices. In addition, it is often difficult to judge the validity of many Web-based resources or the extent to which these resources meet the standards for "evidence-based practice." As Sampson et al. (2004) have noted, the helping professionals who use information with undocumented validity, without disclosing the limits of the information, are considered in violation of ethical codes. Clients may focus on the practitioner as the expert ("can **you** tell me...") or believe they are always dependent on someone else to find the answer. A goal of CIP theory is to help individuals improve their ability to locate, use, and integrate career information resources, thus ultimately helping

them become more effective problem solvers and decision makers over their lifetime.

Setting Some Limits

As noted earlier, the career development field includes a wide variety of publications that address career assessment, career theory, ethics, multicultural issues, impact of technology, program design and evaluation, strategic planning, and other topics besides career information resources. Space limitations in this monograph, however, prevent us from connecting career resources to each of these topics. Our emphasis will be on obtaining, organizing, and managing resources that enable clients to learn about key knowledge areas associated with the career decision-making process, such as:

- initial career choice, career transitions, workforce trends
- available options, e.g., education/training, occupations, leisure, employment, and
- strategies for implementing those decisions (job search, gaining admission into training programs, etc.)

We know that most readers who are designing or managing career resource centers include career assessment tools as an essential component of a center's resources. Providing access to a variety of career assessments allows clients to explore their self-knowledge (Sampson, et al., 2004), including values interests, skills, and related personal characteristics. Readers seeking information related specifically to career assessment resources may find it helpful to review *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments* (Whitfield, Feller, & Wood, in press) published by the National Career Development Association, (<http://www.ncda.org>). Osborn and Zunker (2006) provide comprehensive information on the use of assessments in the career counseling process. Schutt and Finkle (2008) in their chapter on "Critical Center Resources" include an example of important issues to consider when selecting assessments. In addition, various computer-assisted career guidance (CACG) systems (such as e-Discover, Choices Planner, Focus, and SIGP) that play a valuable role in providing career information also include self-assessment activities. Information on these systems can be obtained directly from the system publisher or vendor. The Florida State University

Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development maintains a Web site (<http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/>) that provides information on selected CACG systems. In addition, Sampson (2008) provides extensive details regarding the role of resources in implementing career programs across a variety of settings.

Summary

Despite advances in technology and virtual resources, there is still a clear need for career practitioners to improve the development and management of career resources in both physical and virtual environments to better meet the needs of clients, students, and others seeking career assistance. Career practitioners, regardless of their work setting, need to consider a variety of issues related to developing and managing career resources, including such things as:

- who they are trying to serve
- what theory or concepts guide their practice and service delivery
- organizational philosophy and goals
- access to physical and virtual resources
- sources of quality career information resources

This monograph addresses many of the key factors to consider in developing and managing career information resources, gives in-depth guidance to persons who wish to increase their understanding of this topic, and provides practical guides, samples, and tools that allow readers to easily implement the concepts outlined in the chapters that follow. Readers new to the topic of developing and managing career resources may find it helpful to read the chapters in sequence, while more experienced practitioners may choose to focus on selected chapters that speak to a particular area in which they seek more in-depth information. Our goal for all readers of this monograph is to improve the career information resources for the clientele they serve.

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Chapter 4

Technical Services

Introduction

A career resource center (CRC) collection may be small, medium, or large, and may include print, multimedia, and/or online resources. When career practitioners and their clients search for information in the collection to assist in the career decision-making process, they want to find appropriate resources quickly and easily. Searching for information and finding resources, known as information retrieval, will be most effective in a CRC if several procedures have taken place prior to the time of searching. These procedures may be collectively known as “technical services,” and include all the aspects of managing career information that focus on the career resources themselves. How resources are acquired, processed, and organized will determine how successful career services practitioners and clients are in retrieving the information needed to make good decisions.

A familiar illustration of the concept of technical services can be found in Internet search engines, such as Google or Yahoo. When Internet users type appropriate keywords into a search box or select appropriate terms from a pull-down list, they can usually locate the resources they need in a proficient manner. This occurs because search engine professionals have previously developed (and continually update) many systems of standards, procedures, and indexes to evaluate and manage the huge number of Web sites on the Internet and make their contents accessible to users. These systems are not obvious to search engine users, but must exist for users to easily locate Web sites that meet their needs.

Like search engine developers, an information resource manager in a CRC should use a systems approach to technical services to help clients locate the information they seek. The resource manager must understand career center administrative issues in order to develop policies, procedures, and organizational schemas for a high-quality career resource collection. This chapter focuses on various types of technical services, including how to develop career collections, where to acquire quality career resources, ways to evaluate current and future resources, suggestions

for processing print and multimedia resources, and methods for indexing career resources. Readers of this chapter must determine the technical services appropriate for a particular type of career resource center, then use or modify the following information as needed.

Evaluating, Acquiring, Updating and Deleting Career Resources

Producers of career information include book and multimedia publishers, professional and trade associations, federal, state and local governments, colleges and universities, newspapers and magazines, independent career professionals, and others not in any of the previous categories. A resource manager can identify career resources through staff member requests, client suggestions, publisher mailings, professional networks, e-mail announcements, and producer Web sites, and acquire career resources through planned purchases, staff contributions, publisher samples, gifts, giveaways, and Web sites. Career information may be housed in a variety of formats, including books (print, electronic, and downloadable), guides, articles, brochures, audio or video recordings, CD or DVDs, computer software, job listings, Web pages, streaming videos, podcasts, blogs, mailing list archives, and so forth. As the number of career resource producers, products, and formats grows, so will the challenge of keeping up with potential career resources.

Career resource collections typically contain a combination of free and purchased, in-house and online resources, based on client needs and product availability. Most purchased resources have traditionally been owned outright by the CRC, with a small percentage made accessible to clients through various subscriptions, rental plans, and leasing or licensing agreements. As more career information producers offer such agreements, however, CRCs may increase resources such as subscriptions to job listings, leases for directories, and licenses for career planning and job search resources. The time needed for resource managers to set up and monitor agreements for recurring resources would also increase, and in fact is a

growing area of responsibility for many information professionals (Fourie & Dowell, 2002). Another important aspect to note about recurring resources is that they must be renewed on a regular basis or access is terminated. The cost over time for these recurring resources can be much higher than the cost for resources purchased only when new editions are available. Thus, resource managers must determine the balance of resources actually owned by the CRC, as compared to those which are, in effect, temporary.

Regardless of their format or source, the career resources in the collection must meet specific guidelines if they are to be useful to clients. Following the criteria set in the resource center's collection development policy (see Chapter 3 for more information on creating collection development policies) and a consistent procedure for determining the ideal contents of the career resource collection, the resource manager and other designated staff members evaluate the quality and comprehensive nature of both potential new resources and the career resource collection as a whole. More specifically, the evaluation process consists of applying standard criteria to two basic types of resources:

1. New individual resources prior to their acquisition
2. Existing resources in a collection on a regular schedule

Because each career resource collection is unique, and the knowledge and experience of each resource manager varies greatly, a "one size fits all" process cannot be effective. Using a systems approach like the one outlined in Chapter 2, the resource manager and other professional staff can develop an evaluation process tailored for a particular resource center.

New Resources

New resources may be acquired to start a career resource collection, fill a gap in the current collection, or complement existing resources. Many issues must be considered when acquiring resources, including client needs, budget limitations, technology challenges, and quality concerns. Ten of these issues are listed in Appendix K. In addition to addressing these issues, having a systematic evaluation process in place can increase the likelihood that appropriate and high quality resources will be obtained for a career collection. A central factor to consider in the evaluation

process is whether the resource covers a subject that the CRC's clients will need. For example, a career collection in a high school will need few (if any) resources on transitioning from military to civilian careers or job search strategies for executives.

Another critical aspect of evaluating new resources entails identifying the credentials of the author(s) or producer of the information, as well as any sources used to produce the resource. If little or nothing is known about the origin of the information in a career resource, the resource manager will have difficulty assuring the quality of the information to the center's clients. Resources produced by well-established career publishing companies, professional associations, colleges and universities, reputable newspapers and magazines, and respected career and human resources professionals require less analysis than resources produced by self-identified "experts" and other organizations that don't identify authors or their credentials.

Additional evaluation areas include the timeliness and validity of the information contained in a resource, accessibility concerns for people with disabilities, and the level to which information in the resource is organized. Schutt (2008) addresses the issues of bias and stereotyping in depth in his chapter on evaluating materials. He features a list of questions, adapted from the National Organization for Women, which may be used as guidelines for career resources. The FSU Career Center's resource evaluation checklist in Appendix D may be modified for any type of resource, either print or online. A sample career Web site evaluation form (Osborn & Zunker, 2006) is included in Appendix L, and Appendix M contains an example of a sample career and occupational literature review worksheet produced by the National Career Development Association (NCDA), (<http://www.ncda.org>). Chapter 5 continues this discussion with the topic of using standards to determine the quality of career information.

The resource manager should determine that each new resource meets four basic conditions:

1. Relevant to client needs
2. Free or within budget
3. Compatible with existing space or technology facilities
4. Compatible with any other criteria established by the resource center

Chapter 5

User Issues for Practitioners and Clients

Introduction

There are a number of practical topics that impact how practitioners provide services in career resource centers and clients access resources. This chapter will focus on several of these, including arrangement of resources both in physical settings and in a virtual format, how the design and arrangement of resources can complement service delivery and the needs of clients, and standards that should be followed. Related topics include the types of reference services provided to ensure client access, the circulation policies followed, and the evaluation or feedback to improve services. We begin by focusing on the physical arrangement of resources.

Physical Arrangements

Career resource centers can be found in a wide variety of settings, ranging from government agencies, workforce centers, educational institutions, community centers, libraries, and related organizations. Earlier we discussed the notion of “storefront appeal” for a career resource center that can motivate clients to seek out needed information and make effective use of it to address their career concerns. Sampson (2008) discussed the importance of providing an area near the entrance where clients can be greeted, which in turn helps to foster a welcoming and supportive environment conducive to learning. Sampson, Peterson, Reardon, and Lenz (2007) described key elements in their cognitive information processing (CIP) approach to designing career services, one of which included the career resource center. The CIP approach described by Sampson et al. (2007) places great emphasis on the role of career resource centers and Internet Web sites in the delivery of information and services. Initially, career resource centers and virtual libraries can provide clients with access to resources that meet their self-identified learning needs. In terms of physical arrangements, career resource centers would ideally be located in an open space within the larger facility and include a reception area, bookshelves, and files for maintaining resources, tables and computer work sta-

tions for the use of resources, and adjacent group rooms and staff offices. Appendix A shows three sample layouts of career resource centers, two from university settings and one from a public library. The layouts range from complex to basic. Schutt (2008) stresses the importance of developing a layout that can handle short-term capacity overload, as well as accommodate long-term growth. In Chapter 3, Table 3 shows a sample list of furnishings that can be useful in displaying resources and accommodating clients. Sampson (2008) provides additional suggestions about other key aspects associated with the design of the physical space for a career resource center, including signage, wall postings, and related items.

A career resource center can be designed to complement various levels of service delivery, including self help, brief staff-assisted, and individual case managed. Sampson, Carr, Panke, Arkin, Minvielle, and Vernick (2004) noted that the effectiveness of self-help services delivered in career resource centers is dependent on five elements:

1. A classification schema for organizing resources that is understood by career practitioners and clients (see sample CRC categories in Appendix C)
2. An index to identify available resources
3. Resource guides to help individuals select resources that meet their needs (staff may wish to design instructional module sheets related to common client concerns that identify key resource center materials related to those concerns; a sample can be found in Appendix S)
4. Clear signage to physically locate resources
5. A comfortable and attractive place to use resources and receive services

A career resource center can also be effectively used in other service delivery levels by having staff assist clients in selecting, locating, and using resources based on the clients' identified needs. Clients requiring more assistance and who are typically seen through individual appointments can be brought into the resource center during a session.

Reference Instruction

In addition to reference interviews and subsequent research activities, resource managers and career practitioners may also provide reference services through an instructional approach oriented towards individuals and/or groups. They use their knowledge of actual client needs from one-on-one interactions to develop instructional reference services. Although not as personalized as one-on-one reference activities, the instructional approach addresses perceived client needs through various tools and group activities. Tools that provide guidance for identifying, locating, and retrieving career information and resources may include bibliographies, blogs, cross-reference lists, indexes, guides, posters, step-by-step instruction sheets, and PowerPoint slides on a special topic. For example, a chart that lists possible activities and resources for researching specific occupations or a booklet on how to use the Internet in job searching can help both staff and individual clients. Sampson (2008) provides detailed information on the creation of instructional guides for use in CRCs. Group activities that provide guidance for retrieving career information and resources may include workshops, instructional tours of the CRC, online group chat sessions and discussion boards, and mailing lists on special topics. For example, a resource manager may conduct a workshop for clients or a training session for career practitioners on how to access and use online databases to research possible employers, obtain salary data, or find advice on working abroad.

Regardless of the type of reference activity, career resource managers and practitioners must understand career resources at two levels to successfully connect clients and staff with the information they need. To determine where specific career resources may be found, managers and practitioners should first be able to answer the “big picture questions” about career information:

- Does the client need the most recent data or time-tested advice and strategies?
- What type(s) of resources may have what the client needs — books, directories, articles, videos, brochures, Web sites, and so forth?
- Which resources can be found in-house and which may be found online?

After possible resources are identified, managers and practitioners must draw upon their detailed knowl-

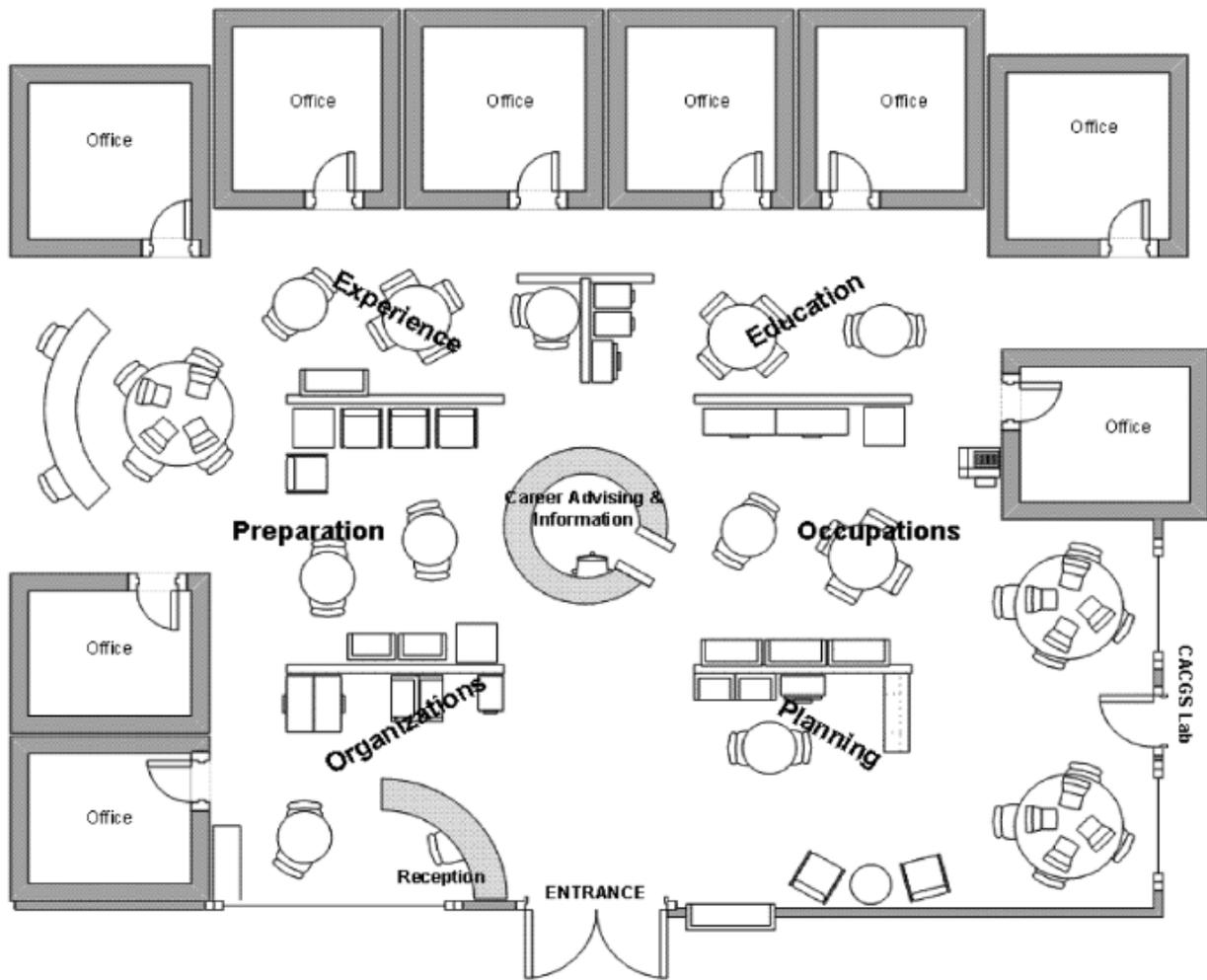
edge of specific resources and the client’s career development needs to suggest the best possibilities for the individual. They should demonstrate the process of accessing those resources, and involve the client in finding the desired information using a variety of research strategies. These strategies may include something as straightforward as explaining the system for organizing certain files or as intricate as performing sample database searches using keywords and topic headings.

Determining if a client has obtained the appropriate data to make well-informed career decisions may be accomplished through various means, and will benefit the resource manager and career practitioners in several ways. Ways to gather data include asking clients directly for feedback, using paper or online surveys, or observing reference transactions. For example, the Comment Form in Appendix T specifically asks clients to rate the quality of information/resources obtained. As data is collected, reference services can be modified, resources can be updated, and organizational systems can be improved. For example, after observing that most clients look up occupations by title rather than by using an occupational classification schema, a resource manager may decide to emphasize the alphabetical listing of titles, rather than the broad occupational categories, on a Web page. A workshop presenter may decide to have fewer PowerPoint slides and more interactive activities with the workshop participants. The process of getting feedback from clients and making changes in reference services is a constant one that can lead to continual improvement.

Circulation

A CRC’s decision to circulate resources outside the center depends on the center’s mission, the type and number of resources, client needs and expectations, and staff available for circulation procedures. Circulation policies and practices can vary greatly, running the gamut from not circulating any resources, to lending resources on certain topics only, to lending all resources except designated reference books. As in-house collections increasingly move to online sources of information, such as having videotaped workshops available on a Web site rather than on videotapes that circulate, the issue of whether or not to circulate resources may even become a moot point. At present, however, most centers have some physical resources that they may choose to lend their clients, and policy and procedure decisions must be made accordingly.

Appendix A (continued)



Design of FSU Career Center's new library with information and service zones

Appendix D

Resource Evaluation Checklist for the Career Resource Center (CRC)

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Name of Resource: _____

ISBN or Web site address*: _____

*For online resources, please attach the first page of the resource to this form!

Criteria: place a check in the space if the resource meets the criterion

_____ Content: The CRC collects and/or provides access to materials that meet the needs of our clients. A resource should fall within the career planning and job search topics covered in our collection development policy.

_____ Source: The CRC collects and/or provides access to materials from professional associations, government agencies, credible publishers, college and university sources, and professional network sources. If a resource does not fall under one of the above categories, it should have an "About Us" or similar sections(s), with the physical address of the producer, the credentials of content writer(s), and any other qualifications or expertise clearly documented. Source information should be easily and clearly identified in/on resources.

_____ Currency: The CRC collects the most recent edition of print and multimedia resources possible; Web sites for the online library collection

should have been created or updated within the past year. For example, a resource added to the collection in 2008 should have a date of 2007 or 2008. It is acceptable for a Web site to contain documents with earlier dates, provided that the site itself was updated within the past two years.

_____ Organization:

- Information is easy to find via indexes, table of contents, menus, internal search engines, etc.
- Layout is consistent from page to page and throughout resource
- Resource is broken down into manageable sections

_____ Design / Presentation:

- Resource is free of grammatical, spelling, and other typographical errors
- Typestyles and background make pages clear and readable
- Any graphics, sound or video enhances the resource
- Advertising does not "overshadow" the content of the resource

_____ Leads to other resources:

- Suggested readings, Web site addresses, links, etc. should add value to the resource
- Web site links should:
 - contain a policy or explanation of their purpose
 - be organized into easily-understood categories or sections

Appendix J

Possible Elements for a Collection Development Policy

- I. About the policy
 - a. Purpose
 - b. Distribution and use
- II. Resource center philosophy
 - a. Mission statement
 - b. Community and clientele to be served
 - c. Goals and objectives
 - d. Budget limitations
- III. Selection of resources
 - a. Subject areas to be covered
 - b. Person(s) responsible for selection
 - i. Information resource manager
 - ii. Designated professional staff
 - c. Format(s)
 - i. Books, monographs, guides
 - ii. Newspapers, magazines, journal articles
 - iii. Brochures from organizations
 - iv. Audio/video recordings
 - v. Computer tools: CDs, DVDs, software
 - vi. Internet tools: Web pages, blogs, podcasts, etc.
- IV. Gift acceptance
- V. Collection review
 - a. Evaluation of the collection
 - i. Gaps in subject coverage
 - ii. Quality of individual resources
 - b. Weeding criteria
- VI. Censorship, complaints, and copyright issues