



**The services of career counselors differ,** depending on competence. A professional or Nationally Certified Career Counselor helps people make decisions and plans related to life/career directions. The strategies and techniques are specific to the person seeking career guidance

- Conduct individual and group/personal counseling sessions to help clarify life/career goals.
- Administer and interpret tests and inventories to assess abilities and interests and to identify career options.
- Encourage exploratory activities through assignments and planning experiences.
- Utilize career planning systems and occupational information systems to help individuals better understand the world of work.
- Provide opportunities for improving decision-making skills.
- Teach job-hunting strategies and skills and assist in the development of resumes.
- Help resolve potential personal conflicts on the job through practice in human relation skills.
- Assist in understanding the integration of work and other life roles.
- Provide support for persons experiencing job stress, job loss, and career transition.

**Credentials of the Professional Career Counselor:** A Nationally Certified Career Counselor (NCCC) signifies that the career counselor has achieved certification in a regulated profession. A Master Career Counselor, MCC, is the highest certification an individual can receive. Further, it means that the career counselor has:

- Earned a graduate degree in counseling or in a related professional field from a regionally accredited higher education institution
- Completed supervised counseling experience that included career counseling
- Acquired a minimum of three years of full-time career development work experience
- Obtained written endorsements of competence from a work supervisor and a professional colleague
- Successfully completed a knowledge-based certification examination

## What Career Counselors Do

### Professional Career Counseling Organizations

Two professional associations provide licensing credentials for an individual to call or market himself or herself as a “career counselor”. These associations are:

- [National Board for Certified Counselors](#)
- [National Career Development Association](#)

Other professional counselors may be trained in one- or two-year counselor preparation programs with specialties in career counseling and may be licensed by state counselor licensure boards or certified by the National Board for Certified Counselors.

### Career Counselor, Career Coach or Consultant

Individuals providing career services often refer to themselves as a career coach or consultant. It is important to ask for the specific credentials, training or assessment expertise that qualifies the individual to provide career services. Check out the qualifying or training programs. Remember, only professionals who meet the standards of the counseling profession can refer to themselves as a career counselor.

### How to Selecting a Career Counselor

Career counseling requires the expertise of a trained professional. Be skeptical of services that promise more money, quick promotions, better jobs, resumes that get speedy results or an immediate solution to a career problem. Career issues are complex and require a multifaceted approach by a professional with extensive education, training, and experience.

These guidelines developed by the National Career Development Association (NCDA) can assist you in making this selection.

**Ask for a detailed explanation of services:** (career counseling, testing, job search, self promotion and resume writing). Make sure you understand the service, your degree of involvement, and any financial commitment.

## What Career Counselors Do

**Fees:** Select a counselor who is professionally trained and will let you choose the services you desire. Make certain you can terminate the services at any time, paying for services rendered.

**Promises:** Be skeptical of services that make promises of more money, better jobs, resumes that get speedy results, or an immediate solution to career problems.

**Ethical Practices:** A professional or Nationally Certified Career Counselor is expected to follow ethical guidelines of such organizations as the National Career Development Association, the American Counseling Association and the American Psychological Association. Professional codes of ethics advise against grandiose guarantees and promises, exorbitant fees, and breaches of confidentiality. Ask for a detailed explanation of services offered, but also of your financial and time commitments, and a copy of the ethical guidelines used by the career counselor.

**Obtaining a Career Counseling Referral:** The following are sources that you could contact for a referral to a career counselor:

**National Career Development Association** – [www.ncda.org](http://www.ncda.org)

**Association for Career Professionals International** - [www.acp.org](http://www.acp.org)

**Your network of contacts:** Ask around, including family and friends, if anyone knows of a qualified career counselor.

**Local college career counselor:** Contact career counselors at local community or universities for referrals to private-practice career counselors who offer their services to the public. In fact, they themselves might also have a private practice, in addition to the college position.

**Local college placement office:** Directors or assistant directors of placement will know those in the community doing career counseling. Their offices may be called:

- Placement Office
- Career Placement Office
- Career Planning and Placement Office
- Career Planning - Development Office
- The university you graduated from might have services for its alumni. If you do not live in the area, call the university for a referral to someone near you, or they may have (or be willing to set up) a reciprocal agreement with a university placement office closer to where you live.

**Social service organization staff:** Jewish Vocational Service, Forty Plus, Operation Able, women's centers either provide the services your looking for or provide a referral.

**Churches and synagogues:** Churches and synagogues may offer support groups, resources for researching career ideas and employers, and individual counseling.

**Public libraries:** Librarians in business reference sections or educational and job information centers (more than 100 nationwide) offer workshops, lectures, resource materials and computer use, as well as possible referrals to career counselors and related resources in the community.

**Regardless of how you make contact, you want answers to these basic questions:**

- What are the specific services offered?
- Who is going to provide the services, and how long have they been doing it?
- What are the fees for these services?
- Can I pay as I go?

***Always request the names of current or past clients. Counselors need the permission of the client before giving out any personal information.***

**Cynthia Kivland is a Master Career Counselor with over 15 years client experience, teaches a Career Facilitators Certification Course and is on the International Board of the Association of Career Professionals. Contact Cynthia at 877-60-COACH**