

## The Individual Development Plan (IDP) Conversation

Everyone on a journey to grow and develop their career can significantly benefit from receiving input and support from those who know them. In fact, asking for this input and support can help you to create a more robust [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) and increase your success in meeting your career goal.

Consider talking with your supervisor, manager, mentor, or some other person whose input you value, to ask for ideas, feedback, and support. Make sure you have a draft version of your [IDP](#) completed so you can discuss it with them. Then ask to schedule 30 minutes to talk with them about your career goal and IDP. Below are areas you might explore in your conversation along with possible questions you can ask.

### OBTAIN THEIR THOUGHTS ON YOUR CAREER GOALS

Talk about your desired career direction/interests/goals and why you are interested in moving that direction. Let them know what you know about that career and how it appears to align with your strengths, skills, values, and interests. Share other additional information to help provide context for your interest in this direction.

- “Given what I have shared with you about my interest in exploring/shifting/advancing my career in the direction of \_\_\_\_\_. What are your thoughts about this career direction based on what you know about me?”
- “Does this direction seem realistic?”
- “Are there additional/different/related career options you might recommend I consider?”

### EXPLORE ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

It is important to understand how your career goal fits into your organization or in the county in general. You will also want to seek alignment between your IDP development activities and King County’s commitment to equity and social justice, the County’s True North and values, and your ability to better serve your customers. By taking the time to explore organizational alignment, you develop a more compelling story if you intend to ask your supervisor or other county staff for support, to help address obstacles or to pay for training.

- “Can you see a way in which my career goals align with those of our organization?”
- “Can you help me explore ways in which my career goal and development activities could align with the County’s True North and any of those values, would enable me to further equity and social justice, and enable me to better serve customers?”
- “What do you see as the biggest organizational barriers to achieving my goals?”
- “What can I do to help address these barriers?”
- “What do you see as the key issues or trends driving our organization and/or the industry?”
- “How might these issues/trends affect my job and/or future opportunities in the field?”
- “What are some things I can do to better to prepare myself for these changes?”
- “Are you aware of any opportunities to support my career growth in this area?”
- “Might you have any advice for me to better prepare for the new opportunities I am seeking.”
- “Are there other people you recommend that I talk with about these types of questions?”

### IDENTIFY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND WAYS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS

It is important to identify areas for growth and development activities towards achieving your career goal along with possible barriers that may hinder you from moving forward. It would be helpful to understand your reputation or how you are perceived within the organization. Ask for and be open to honest feedback and suggestions without becoming defensive.

- “How am I perceived?”
- “What do you see as my strengths?”
- “What do you believe are areas that may be helpful for me to develop?”

- What barriers, if any do you see?
- (If applicable) “What might I do to recover from mistakes I’ve made and repair my reputation?”

If they **DO** have the knowledge or expertise in your chosen career direction, you could ask:

- “Might you know what I need to do to become qualified for this career goal?”
- “What knowledge and skills do you think I already have for my future role?”
- “What knowledge and skills do you think I may want to develop for this future role?”
- “How long do you think it might take me to learn and master that knowledge or skills?”
- “Are there any special development opportunities that you think would benefit me?”
- (For current supervisor or manager) “Are there any special projects I could take on in my current role that would help me obtain needed knowledge, skills, competencies, or experience?”

If they **DO NOT** have the knowledge or expertise in your chosen career direction:

- “Might you know of experts or resources that I might talk to about my career and development goals?”

### EXPLORE WAYS AND OBTAIN AGREEMENT IN HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT YOU

Think about the **specific actions** you would like from the person to help you towards achieving your career goal. Then ask for them. Remember - nothing ventured - nothing gained. Examples of requests you could ask of a supervisor or of others include:

- Participate in periodic meetings to discuss and update your IDP development activities
- Help address any organizational barriers
- Shift in assignments or projects or be given extra duties related to your career goal
- Be part of a project team, advisory committee, or task force
- Allow you to take special duty assignments
- Flex your work hours so you can pursue a development activity
- Take training on paid time
- Pay for all or part of the training costs
- Ability to meet with King County Career Support staff and/or attend their online workshops on paid time. (Go to: [www.kingcounty.gov/CSS](http://www.kingcounty.gov/CSS) for workshops and resources.)
- Be allowed to job shadow them or others on paid time or personal time
- Approval to participate or become involved in one of [King County’s Affinity Groups](#)
- Share knowledge or serve as a mentor for you

Questions you could ask:

- “Can we discuss ways in which you could support me in meeting my career goals? I have a few ideas I would like to explore with you.”
- “I really appreciate the support you are willing to provide to me. Could we summarize the ways in which you are able to support me just so I am clear on them? I’d like to list them in my IDP.”

Remember to thank them for their suggestions and honest feedback. Take all that you learn from your conversation and add what you believe is most important and relevant to your IDP form.