



## Career Information Delivery Systems



**What is a Career Information Delivery System (CIDS)?** A CIDS is the career information equivalent of a voter information guide. Like a voter guide, it presents information that is unbiased, accurate, current, relevant, specific, and understandable to students, workers, parents, administrators, job seekers, and others.

The comprehensive nature of a CIDS means that it contains information on a variety of topics. It describes occupational characteristics that correspond to someone's personal strengths such as interests, skills, or work values. It contains assessments to help people learn about themselves. It describes educational programs intended to prepare people for occupations of interest, and the schools that offer them. It also includes facts about getting money to pay for school, finding a job, starting your own business, and working in the military. All of this is explained using content and interfaces that are appropriate to audiences such as high school students and adults. In short, a CIDS presents information necessary for making informed and successful career decisions.

**Why are CIDS important?** Everyone makes a myriad of decisions throughout their education and working life. As with voting, decisions about one's education and career path are very important. No one can make choices about options they don't know about. For those decisions to be successful, they must be based on sound facts. The content in a CIDS is not just facts, however. CIDS explain the facts in a manner that people who are just beginning to explore their career options can understand. CIDS also provide links between the content, such as from occupations to majors to schools, to help people plan their career training. CIDS present relevant facts such as local labor market information and local education and training options.

**How do CIDS deliver information?** The goal of CIDS is to serve as many people as possible. Most CIDS available today are delivered via the Internet or specialized computer software. To serve a wide audience, CIDS have user-friendly interfaces, are accessible to people with disabilities, and provide support and assistance. Many CIDS also come with materials, training, and technical support to help institutions (e.g., schools) and intermediaries (e.g., counselors) get the most value out of the resource. CIDS can be comprehensive tools that provide developmental portfolios for students, guides and information for parents, and accountability and support tools for practitioners. CIDS tools are integrated to provide a more effective career and education planning tool than a list of unrelated website hyperlinks.

**Who creates and supports CIDS?** The primary federal support for CIDS is provided through Section 118 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. CIDS are currently available from public and private non-profit and for-profit entities. In many cases a CIDS is available to users through an effective public-private partnership. Maintaining the quality of the information (i.e., accuracy, currency) and delivery systems requires an ongoing commitment. In some cases CIDS are available to individuals or institutions as a free resource. In others, there is a subscription fee. Either way the system requires constant evaluation and updating to maintain its value. Some CIDS solicit user and practitioner feedback to address changing needs by enhancing the system's content and features. Evaluating information about the sponsoring entity (i.e., purpose, financial support) is important when determining if a system meets standards of being comprehensive and unbiased. This is similar to knowing if something that promotes itself as a voting guide was actually produced by a political action committee.

**Where can one find out more about CIDS?** America's Career Resource Network Association ([www.acrna.net](http://www.acrna.net)) is an association of entities with a common interest in providing occupational and career development information and resources. The Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information ([www.acsci.org](http://www.acsci.org)) is another professional association for the advancement of career information and its delivery. ACSCI publishes the *Handbook of Standards for Computer-based Systems of Career Information* to help both developers and consumers understand what a quality CIDS entails.