

CAREER NAVIGATION JOURNEY MAPS

BLACK CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Career navigation is rarely – if ever – a linear journey. Enhancing career navigation for workers and learners provides a valuable opportunity to actively address structural barriers contributing to occupational segregation.

Phases of Career Navigation



Follow Devin's Career Navigation Journey



Devin's journey represents Black workers in the construction field. The experiences represented align with the stories we heard, not a predetermined order or number.



Walk through his career navigation journey map by following his experiences, which are numbered, color-coded, and listed in chronological order.



Each phase is further illustrated through the *Timeframe*, *Thinking*, and *Pain Points* that were notable in each phase.



Career navigation phases varied in order, timeframe, and number of experiences.



Persona: Devin
Age: 31
Race: Black
Occupation: Asbestos and lead contractor
Salary: \$43,000
Living Wage¹: \$102,648

Background and Family Life

As a child, Devin assisted his grandfather doing construction work. He moved to Milwaukee with his mother at age 12. He has two children, ages 11 and 3, and prides himself on being an active parent. Devin didn't graduate high school, but did complete his GED. Devin was incarcerated for one year.

Quote

"It does get a little frustrating seeing something you want to do, but not knowing how to get there."

Goals

- Find a position with a black-owned construction company.
- Own his own construction business.

Barriers

His felony record shows up on background checks, leading to limited career pathway opportunities.

Expectations

My hard work will pay off – "I had this idea of what I could be. Seeing my potential and seeing it manifest."

Self-Assessment

Timeframe: Intermittent during life transitions

Thinking: I felt lost about what I could do after incarceration, but I know I'm a hard worker.

Pain points: Limited access to available career options.

Career Exploration

Timeframe: Three years

Thinking: I wanted to work in construction, but there weren't a lot of jobs available.

Pain points: Got laid off from temp service job and started doing pass by work to earn money.

Connect to Job

Timeframe: One week

Thinking: I wanted to see how the black folks did it. I wanted to see what resources they have. I wanted them to put me in a position to win.

Pain points: Criminal record is a barrier to employment opportunities.

Skills and Credentials

Timeframe: Six months
Career Pathways

Thinking: I was doing jobs and people said, "You know, you can get certified for that, you pretty much know this stuff."

Pain points: "I became a felon. It made it harder to get certain certifications and get into jobs."

Career Pathways

Timeframe: Ongoing

Thinking: I'm either the youngest and/or the only black employee.

Pain points: "I feel like there were a lot of resources given to not my type of people. Either the oldest or with the white skin."

Devin's Career Journey

- ★ Devin is incarcerated for one year and feels unsure of his path, but is motivated and knows he's a hard worker.
- After getting out of prison, Devin applies to as many jobs as he can. He wants to work in construction, but doesn't find those opportunities through his temp service.
- Without an opportunity to work construction, Devin works at a factory for six months, but then is laid off.
- Out of work, Devin isn't sure what to do next. He takes a self-assessment quiz and construction comes up as the top career choice.
- As a justice-involved individual, Devin has a harder time obtaining certifications and getting jobs.
- Devin enrolls in a construction program with a local workforce development organization.
- He is successful in his program and obtains a lead and asbestos certificate.
- Devin starts job as a lead and asbestos contractor.
- Devin looks into different pathways within the construction field but struggles with finding guidance on where to start.
- Devin is interested in working for a Black-owned construction company.
- Devin feels like his criminal record is impeding him from being hired.

How Devin Experienced His Career Journey

Positive

Negative



1: Glasmeier, Amy K. Living Wage Calculator. 2024. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://livingwage.mit.edu>.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

▶ **What are your observations about Devin's journey?**

▶ **Which experience was most surprising to you, and why?**

▶ **Which experience was least surprising to you, and why?**

▶ **What is the experience you'd want a client to have in their career navigation journey?**

▶ **What stands out to you on this journey map as a crossroads, where a resource or support intervention might have benefited this individual's career journey?**

▶ **What shifts can you make in your work to offer, improve, or publicize that support or intervention?**

▶ **Are there policy recommendations that would improve outcomes for Milwaukee Black Construction Workers?**