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.

Follow Alexis’ Career Navigation Journey

Alexis’ journey represents Black workers in the IT industry. The experiences represented align with the stories we heard, not a predetermined order or number.

Walk through her career navigation journey map by following her 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.
Alexis has early learning opportunities in coding, engineering, data analytics, prelaw, and more. Alexis appreciates the early exposure she has gotten to industry professionals who look like her – representation is impactful. While she enjoys these programs, Alexis feels like she spends more time with adults than kids her age. Alexis notices she is perceived as different than other Black girls – makes her feel like an outsider and she’s often excluded by peers. Alexis realizes opportunities open to her are correlated with her ability to “speak well” or code switch. Through youth programs, Alexis builds skills and understanding around IT career options. Her childhood learning experiences lead to more opportunities, including college internships. Experiences micro-aggressions from supervisors and colleagues. Alexis is diagnosed with ADHD. Through this experience, Alexis recognizes the role of self-advocacy. Completes bachelor’s degree and several short-term, industry-recognized certificates. Help desk internship becomes a full-time job after college graduation. Early in her career, Alexis experiences discrimination during the hiring process. Networking beyond the workplace, including online forums and groups for Black women in IT. Continues work on short-term certificates for career advancement.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are your observations about Alexis’ 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 Birmingham Black IT Workers?