



LAES has developed a series of immigrant issue instructional modules entitled "Tierra de Oportunidad" for orientation to our complex society.

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LAES - Making Choices About Jobs

Tierra de Oportunidad - Module 1

## Thinking About Earnings and Work Life Planning

**There are sometimes trade-offs between hourly wage rate and employment stability.** Workers need to think carefully about those compensations. It is always a good idea, if possible, to talk to workers currently working at a company about it before taking the job, in part to find out whether there's high turnover because the work is difficult, because the supervisors are bad, or because the employer often fires workers.

**An important aspect of thinking about earnings is to think about the costs of working as part of choosing a job.** Financial costs often ignored in thinking about a job possibility include transportation costs, child care costs, and the costs of living near a given job. Sometimes non financial costs are also ignored, time away from one's children, conflict with family or with co-workers.

**The best time to think about getting a better job is when a person is employed.** Thinking about getting a better job should start by thinking about whether there are opportunities for promotion at the place where a person begins working. But, in order to get ahead, a worker should always keep a network going, asking friends about job openings, looking in the newspaper, reading help wanted signs, and even stopping by the Job Service office. Part of getting a better job is doing well at one's current job, even if its not one that the worker likes. U.S. employers like people to show ambition and make it clear that they are trying to advance themselves.

**If there seems no way to get a better job, the only answer is to consider how best to learn new skills.** There are actually lots of ways to learn new skills. They include talking to friends who do the kind of work one likes, helping those friends, talking to co-workers and helping co-workers. And reading books, as well as going to an adult education class, a vocational skills training class or an employment training program. Looking for a new job is like a business in itself. One should always consider what it costs, in time and money, and what benefits it might bring.

**People have different earning needs at different points in their life.** Young workers can afford to take a job that pays less but which is better in terms of job advancement potential, than a slightly older worker who has a family to support. Older workers need to worry about whether they can keep on working in the work they do if it is physically demanding. Sometimes it is better to take a job for less well pay if it provides more security.

**In the next 20 years, almost every kind of company will need more supervisory and managerial workers but less line workers. Demand for bilingual/bicultural supervisors will increase rapidly.** A very useful strategy for many workers is to understand that if they get along well with other people, enjoy helping them learn something new, and like to

take initiative, they should build on those skills to maximize their chances of moving into a supervisory or managerial position. The need for bilingual workers will be particularly acute, so there is a real payoff learning English well, not simply to get along.

**In the next 20 years, almost every kind of company will require workers to be constantly learning on the job.** Very few workers will learn how to do a trade or occupation before they are employed. Some will learn on the job, or going to special training sessions; others will learn by reading technical manuals, watching videotaped operations, working a computer-based learning system; and other workers will decide to take special classes that will help them compete for better jobs. Practicing life long learning is an important investment.

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