



# TRACKS EXERCISE

## I. BRAINSTORM

Download, photocopy, or write on a napkin any job posting that appeals to you on one of two levels:

A. You're drawn to this kind of an organization. You like its mission. You'd like your work to have an impact on this issue, population, or area. You like the agency's approach to the work. And you could see yourself, someday, working for an organization like this. Don't worry about where it's located or whether you like the job description that's attached to the organization. Just focus on the agency's overall purpose. Circle the part you like and put it in a folder.

B. You're drawn to this kind of job description. You like the way the responsibilities are bundled. You like the skills needed to perform the function of the position, and you could see yourself, someday, doing something like this in your day-to-day. Don't worry about the agency the description is associated with or whether you have the skills to perform the job. Just focus on elements within the actual job description. Circle the part you like and put it in your folder.

Do this until you have a bare minimum of 50 selected items. The more you collect, the better. Remember, when brainstorming, we don't evaluate along the way, we just collect ideas. Once you have at least 50, continue to the next phase.

## II. ANALYSIS

Take the selected items out of your folder and see if you can find any patterns or common themes. Some things to look for might include: issue, population to be served, approach to the work, geography, kind of organization, unit or department within an agency, and role.

## III. SYNTHESIS

Using the data gathered from your brainstorming and analysis phases, create at least one and no more than five potential job tracks for yourself. A job track is a way to put parameters around and frame your potential career interests, and can include any of the following that have meaning for you: issue or field of interest; subcomponents of the issue that are of interest; approach to the work; kinds of organizations that do this work; where these

organizations are located; size of the organizations; potential departments within organizations; roles that you aspire to play; and the requirement of skills, education, experience, and knowledge to fulfill those roles. Then, conduct an assessment of your current fit for those roles and create a plan of action to maximize time at Wagner and beyond to meet your goals.

Take stock of your qualifications and experiences as they relate to your potential tracks. Your tracks should connect to Composing Your Career and lead to a plan of action to maximize your time at Wagner using the S.E.E. strategies (Smart, Experienced, and Engaged): Your track(s) should inform which courses you take, the professors you should get to know, how you use your assignments, the internship/job experiences you look for, the events you go to, the groups you join, the people you seek out, and how you craft your message.

