



Getting Started

A quick guide to get your job search off to a strong start. Don't undermine your job searching efforts by skipping these steps!

1. Define Your Goal

It's hard to pack for a trip if you don't know where you're going, and the same is true of your job search. Figuring out what types of work you're wanting (or willing) to do will be the foundation on which you build the rest of your job search.

If you're saying "I'm willing to take *anything* right now", prove it! Go on a job search site, look at entry level jobs, and apply for the first job you see. If you find yourself not wanting to apply for that job... what's keeping you back? *Most* people will have some line they're not willing to cross, even if they are open to "anything". Figuring out what you **don't** want to do, can be just as important as figuring out what you **do** want to do.

QUICK TIPS:

- Think about previous jobs (volunteering counts) you've had and develop a list of what you liked about working there, what you hated about working there.
- Take a Career Test online that uses questions to determine your interests and suggests job fields you might be interested in. www.ONETonline.org is a great **free** place to start.
- Think about companies you love to do business with, what do you like about them and would you want to work there? Reach out to them to see if you can interview *them* to ask about their company and the types of positions they hire for.
- Set a realistic goal for when you want to have gotten hired, if it doesn't happen by then, do you need to change your strategies or broaden what you're looking for?

2. Gather Your Info

Once you have an idea of what you're looking for, save yourself future headaches and gather together all the information you might need for your job search now. Your **complete** work history, letters of recommendation, reference contact information, your most recent resume, I-9 documentation and anything else you think might be important.

So many job seekers will come across the job they've been looking for, only to discover the job posting closes that night and they can't find the information they need to complete the application. Not only that, but if you have all of your work history in one place, online applications can go significantly faster, saving you from having to look up old employment dates. Better yet, if you have all your work history saved in a Word document, you can just copy and paste the info you need.

QUICK TIPS:

- Store all your information in one easy to access place, and store everything digitally that can be. Using a cloud drive like Google Drive or Microsoft's One Drive is a great free way to access your documents from any device.
- Keep one "Master Resume" that lists all of your jobs, skills you did at those jobs, dates worked, salary earned and supervisor information. You'll never submit this, but will be able to pull from it to complete applications as well as your resume.

3. Build a Resume

This is really an ongoing process throughout your job search. As you apply for different companies, you should be altering your resume for each new position. While this might sound like a lot, if you know what you're looking for, then the jobs you're applying for are likely fairly similar and you shouldn't have to completely rewrite your resume each time, but tweak it to match keywords located in the job posting. This is especially true for your cover letter which should be a bit more personalized to the job posting, a 'one size fits all' approach is not an effective strategy for cover letters.

QUICK TIPS:

- Start by looking for a job posting online that you want to apply for, and make a resume for that position. This will be the **longest** you spend your resume the rest of your job search. After this initial effort, you'll just be tweaking keywords and phrases.
- Have your "Master Resume" handy to pull jobs and skills from to include on your resume. You don't need all of your jobs on your resume unless specifically asked by the employer.
- Go to www.connectedwithcareerpath.com and get the Resume Sample Guide to make the most of your resume, you'll find it in the Resources tab. While you're at it, sign up for a meeting with a Certified Professional Resume Writer (free for Community Jobs participants) to really get an effective resume.

4. Networking

If all you ever do is sign into a job board from morning to night scrolling the want ads, your job search is going to be long and motivation will wane. Reach out to friends or former employers, let them know what you're looking for. There's a lot of truth in 'not what you know but who you know' and networking allows you to tap into the hidden market, jobs that haven't been posted to the public yet.

The other great strategy here is Informational Interviewing. Contacting companies you might be interested in, regardless of if they're hiring or not, and asking about the types of positions they hire for and the benefits of working there. You'll be surprised at how many companies will speak with you about that and how often that can turn into an actual interview.

QUICK TIPS:

- Use job search sites as a jumping off point, taking the time to contact companies within the industry you're interested in outside of job applications.
- Friends and family often hear of leads that haven't been posted yet, take advantage of the referrals!
- Find a job coach who can help you connect with employers and hold you accountable so that you're doing this thing alone. Meet with one of our job coaches at www.connectedwithcareerpath.com.

5. Get After It

If you want interviews, you have to get applications out there. Too often people apply for one company every couple of weeks and wonder why they aren't hearing anything back. While you don't want to spam applications to every employer (unless you truly will take anything), it can take a lot of applications to start getting interviews.

Also, taking interviews for jobs even if you're not 100% sure you're interested is a *great* thing to do! For starters, it will get you interview practice so that you're ready for the job you really want. Not only that, but you may discover that job may be a better fit than you realized or that they had another opportunity available for you that is a better fit.

QUICK TIPS:

- Don't just search, actually apply! Set a weekly application goal for yourself and stick to it.
- Take advantage of interviews to ask the hiring managers about that company and all it encompasses, it could lead to another job opportunity.
- If you're hitting a wall, shake things up! If you let your job search get stagnant, it's going to be that much harder to keep at it.