

Job Search Methods

Personal contacts

Eighty percent of available jobs are never advertised, and over half of all employees get their jobs through networking, according to BH Careers International. Therefore, the people you know—friends, family, neighbors, acquaintances, teachers, and former coworkers—are some of the most effective resources for your job search. The network of people that you know and the people that they know can lead to information about specific job openings that are not publicly posted. To develop new contacts, join student, community, or professional organizations.

School career planning and placement offices

High school and college placement offices help their students and alumni find jobs. They allow recruiters to use their facilities for interviews or career fairs. Placement offices usually have a list of part-time, temporary, and summer jobs offered on campus. They also may have lists of jobs for regional, nonprofit, and government organizations. In addition to linking you to potential employers, career planning offices usually provide career counseling, career testing, and job search advice. Some have career resource libraries; host workshops on job search strategy, résumé writing, letter writing, and effective interviewing; critique drafts of résumés; conduct mock interviews; and sponsor job fairs.

Employers

Through your library and Internet research, develop a list of potential employers in your desired career field. Employer Web sites often contain lists of job openings. Web sites and business directories can provide you with information on how to apply for a position or whom to contact. Even if no open positions are posted, do not hesitate to contact the employer and the relevant department. Set up an interview with someone working in the same area in which you wish to work. Ask them how they got started, what they like and dislike about the work, what type of qualifications are necessary for the job, and what type of personality succeeds in that position. Even if they don't have a position available, they may be able to put you in contact with other people who might hire you, and they can keep you in mind if a position opens up. Make sure to send them your résumé and a cover letter. If you are able to obtain an interview, be sure to send a thank-you note. Directly contacting employers is one of the most successful means of job hunting.

Classified ads

The "Help Wanted" ads in newspapers list numerous jobs. You should realize, however, that many other job openings are not listed, and that the classified ads sometimes do not give all of the important information. They may offer little or no description of the job, working conditions, or pay. Some ads do not identify the employer. They may simply give a post office box to which you can mail your résumé, making follow-up inquiries very difficult. Some ads offer out-of-town jobs; others advertise employment agencies rather than actual employment opportunities.

When using classified ads, keep the following in mind:

- Do not rely solely on the classifieds to find a job; follow other leads as well.
- Answer ads promptly, because openings may be filled quickly, even before the ad stops appearing in the paper.

- Read the ads every day, particularly the Sunday edition, which usually includes the most listings.
- Beware of "no experience necessary" ads. These ads often signal low wages, poor working conditions, or commission work.
- Keep a record of all ads to which you have responded, including the specific skills, educational background, and personal qualifications required for the position.

Internet networks and resources

The Internet is an invaluable resource. Use it to find advice on conducting your job search more effectively; to search for a job; to research prospective employers; and to communicate with people who can help you with your job search. No single Web site will contain all the information available on employment or career opportunities, so in addition to the Web sites listed below, use a search engine to find what you need. The different types of sites that may be useful include general career advice sites, job search sites, company Web sites, trade and professional association Web sites, and forums. Internet forums, also called message boards, are online discussion groups where anyone may post and read messages. Use forums specific to your profession or to career-related topics to post questions or messages and to read about other peoples' job searches or career experiences.

In job databases, remember that job listings may be posted by field or discipline, so begin your search using keywords. Some Web sites provide national or local classified listings and allow job seekers to post their résumés online. When searching employment databases on the Internet, it usually is possible to send your résumé to an employer by e-mail or to post it online.

CareerOneStop is a database consisting of three separate career resource tools. It can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://www.CareerOneStop.org>, or by telephone at: (877) 348-0502. Alternatively, each resource tool can be accessed directly at its own Internet address.

America's Career InfoNet provides information on educational, licensing, and certification requirements for different occupations by State. It also provides information on wages, cost of living, and employment trends, and helps job seekers identify their skills and write résumés and cover letters. Job seekers can access America's Career InfoNet at: <http://www.acinet.org>.

America's Service Locator provides listings of local employment service offices which help job seekers find jobs and help employers find qualified workers at no cost to either. At the State employment service office, an interviewer will determine if you are "job ready" or if you need help from counseling and testing services to assess your occupational aptitudes and interests and to help you choose and prepare for a career. After you are "job ready," you may examine available job listings and select openings that interest you. A staff member can then describe the job openings in detail and arrange for interviews with prospective employers. Job seekers can access America's Service Locator at: <http://www.servicelocator.org>. A list of offices is also in the State government telephone listings under "Job Service" or "Employment."

Using Internet Resources to Plan your Future, a U.S. Department of Labor publication, offers advice on organizing your Internet job search. It is primarily intended to provide instruction for job seekers on how to use the Internet to their best advantage, but recruiters and other career service industry professionals will find information here to help them also. How to Use the Internet in your Job Search; The Job Search Process; and the Career-Related Pages, other U.S. Department of Labor Internet publications, each discusses specific steps that job seekers can follow to identify employment opportunities. Included are daily tips and hints, plus a large database of links and job search engines. Check with your State employment service office, or order a copy of these and other publications from the U.S. Government Printing Office's

Superintendent of Documents. Telephone: (202) 512-1800. Internet: <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> or <http://www.doleta.gov>.

State employment service offices

The State employment service, sometimes called the Job Service, operates in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Local offices, found nationwide, help job seekers to find jobs and help employers to find qualified workers at no cost to either. To find the office nearest you, look in the State government telephone listings under "Job Service" or "Employment."

Job matching and referral. At the State employment service office, an interviewer will determine if you are "job ready" or if you need help from counseling and testing services to assess your occupational aptitudes and interests and to help you choose and prepare for a career. After you are "job ready," you may examine available job listings and select openings that interest you. A staff member can then describe the job openings in detail and arrange for interviews with prospective employers.

Services for special groups. By law, veterans are entitled to priority for job placement at State employment service centers. If you are a veteran, a veterans' employment representative can inform you of available assistance and help you to deal with problems.

State employment service offices refer people to opportunities available under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. WIA reforms Federal employment, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs to create an integrated, "one-stop" system of workforce investment and education activities for adults and youths. Services are provided to employers and job seekers, including adults, dislocated workers, and youths. WIA's primary purpose is to increase the employment, retention, skills, and earnings of participants. These programs help to prepare people to participate in the State's workforce, increase their employment and earnings potential, improve their educational and occupational skills, and reduce their dependency on welfare, which will improve the quality of the workforce and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation's economy.

Federal Government

Information on obtaining a position with the Federal Government is available from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through USAJOBS, the Federal Government's official employment information system. This resource for locating and applying for job opportunities can be accessed through the Internet at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov> or through an interactive voice response telephone system at (703) 724-1850 or TDD (978) 461-8404. These numbers are not tollfree, and charges may result.

Professional associations

Many professions have associations that offer employment information, including career planning, educational programs, job listings, and job placement. To use these services, associations usually require that you be a member; information can be obtained directly from an association through the Internet, by telephone, or by mail.

Labor unions

Labor unions provide various employment services to members, including apprenticeship programs that teach a specific trade or skill. Contact the appropriate labor union or State apprenticeship council for more information.

Private employment agencies and career consultants

These agencies can be helpful, but they may charge you for their services. Most operate on a commission basis, with the fee dependent upon a percentage of the salary paid to a successful applicant. You or the hiring company will pay the fee. Find out the exact cost and who is responsible for paying associated fees before using the service.

Although employment agencies can help you save time and contact employers who otherwise might be difficult to locate, the costs may outweigh the benefits if you are responsible for the fee. Contacting employers directly often will generate the same type of leads that a private employment agency will provide. Consider any guarantees that the agency offers when determining if the service is worth the cost.

Community agencies

Many nonprofit organizations, including religious institutions and vocational rehabilitation agencies, offer counseling, career development, and job placement services, generally targeted to a particular group, such as women, youths, minorities, ex-offenders, or older workers.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics