

Chapter 5. Pursue Your Path – Job Search

If you've jumped ahead to this chapter, STOP! Return to the beginning of the Guide.

There are no shortcuts in the career development process and the information presented in the previous chapters is critical to launching a successful job search that will lead you to a satisfying and sustainable career. Career Development is like farming- if you don't care for the soil and nurture the seeds while they grow, you won't have any crops to harvest.

Looking for a job is a job in and of itself. It is filled with ups and downs, ambiguity and uncertainty. It requires persistence, motivation, optimism, risk-taking and a bit of luck. However, if you take charge of your job search, use proven techniques, and remain determined, you can accelerate the process of finding your next opportunity. Think of other times when you've persisted through something difficult- conquering all the levels of a video game, saving money to buy a large ticket item such as a new phone or car, or finishing finals in high school or college. Use these successes as inspiration for tackling your job search. Consider your job search an opportunity rather than a burden and you'll be more likely to enjoy the process AND find satisfying work.

Deciding at what point during your year of service you should begin applying for positions can be a challenge. You've made a pledge to complete your service term, which is important to honor, and at the same time you will likely want to minimize the time between the end of your service term and your next position. A typical job search can take from six weeks to six months; a standard that is often applied is that for every \$10,000 you want in salary, you will need to search for 1 month (so for a \$30,000 position your search might take 3 months). However, there are many factors that can impact the length of your search- some of which are out of your control but many of which are in your control:

- The current state of the economy both nationally and in the city or cities where you are looking.
- The number of jobs available in your field in the location you are interested in (there are very few marine biologist jobs in Kansas!).
- Your flexibility in moving to another location.
- How in demand your skills are.



- How open you are to a range of opportunities, job titles, and work environments.
- The quality of your job search materials (resume, cover letter).
- The degree to which you do strategic networking.
- Your interviewing skills.
- And MOST importantly, the amount of time and energy you devote to your search.

As you undertake your search and begin talking to employers about possible openings, you may want to say something along the lines of, “I am completing a year of AmeriCorps Service in (state month) so I am interested in exploring opportunities with your organization is this a good time to apply”? If you do receive a job offer before your term of service has been completed, let the employer know that you are obligated to complete your service but are very interested in the position and are hopeful that you can arrange a start date to coincide with the completion of your term.

Preparing for Your Search

Before you can begin applying to positions, it is important to spend some time creating or updating your resume, drafting a basic cover letter, preparing your references, developing a portfolio if appropriate, updating your online brand, and preparing your 30-Second Introduction. Taking the time at the outset to develop these tools will not only help you feel confident that you are making the best impression possible on potential employers but you will also be building your confidence along the way and setting the stage for successfully applying to and interviewing for positions.

Resumes

Your resume is often the first impression an employer will have of you; it serves as your first work sample. An effective resume is a focused, concise summary of your qualifications, customized for the specific position for which you are applying. It serves as a marketing tool that presents your accomplishments, strengths and experience to prospective employers. Remember, the primary purpose of a resume is to get you an interview!

There is no one “right” way to create your resume, but there are some general guidelines and strategies that will help you write a resume that catches the reader’s attention and presents your experience in a compelling manner.

Creating a new or updating an old resume may seem like an insurmountable task, but don’t be intimidated. Begin to conquer your fear with these three steps:

➤ **Seek inspiration:** Ask friends, colleagues, AmeriCorps Alums, mentors, supervisors, and program managers if they are willing to share their resumes with you. This is a great way to view a variety of different formats (and see how others have developed their careers!). You could also visit a bookstore or library and browse through the resume books to identify resume formats and phrasing that appeal to you. Top resume writing books are listed in the Recommended Reading at the end of the Guide. You can also look at resume samples online but be wary of poor examples!



“Use your resume as a record of successes or ‘homeruns,’ giving quantifiable details about how you brought value to the organization.”

Mary Konow,
owner of MK Career Designs

► **Break the task up into smaller steps:** Take each section and work on it over several short sessions. If you take it in stages over a few days or a couple weeks you'll have a completed resume in no time.

► **Get organized:** Gather all the facts before you sit down to write your first draft, including job titles and dates, contact information for employers, salary history, previous job descriptions, past performance reviews, educational history, certifications, licenses, training completed, technical skills, honors and awards, and anything else that you think will help you create your resume. The Job Search Data Worksheet included in **APPENDIX 9** is a valuable tool to use.



EXERCISE Job Search Data Worksheet

Complete the Job Search Data Worksheet in **APPENDIX 9**.

Resume Formats

Select the right format for you, your industry, and your experience.

Chronological

A Chronological resume lists and describes your work history in reverse chronological order with your most recent position first. Considered the most traditional resume style, it is straightforward and clearly presents your background to the reader. A chronological resume is best when:

- You are looking for a position in the same field as your current position.
- You want to highlight your most recent employer.
- Your most recent position highlights the skills and qualifications required for the position you are applying to.
- Your career path shows steady progress and increasing responsibilities.
- Your work history has been consistent with minimal gaps in employment.

Functional

A Functional resume focuses on your areas of skill or expertise (e.g., teaching, public relations, customer service, leadership, communication) rather than describing your work experience for each job. It also includes a short employment history section. A functional resume is best when:

- You are changing careers and want to focus on your transferable skills.
- You have been employed by the same organization for a long time.
- Your work history contains gaps in employment.
- You have had a wide range of jobs that don't point to a specific career path.
- The skills and experience you want the employer to notice are from a long time ago.

Resume Tips and Guidelines

Employers spend just 10-15 seconds to initially review your resume, quickly scanning the document to find past responsibilities and accomplishments. To improve your chances of capturing their attention, review these tips and guidelines, which apply to any resume format:

- Your resume should focus on where you want to go rather than documenting where you've been.
- Have a foundational resume that you can customize for each position.
- Always ask yourself if what you are putting in your resume is relevant to the position you are applying for. If it's not, it is just taking up space and will distract the reader from more relevant information.
- Consider the Field of Work
The industry you are targeting will influence the style of your resume. Applying for a job as a data analyst with an insurance company would call for a traditional, straightforward resume. On the other hand, applying for a marketing assistant position with a technology start up would call for a resume that showcased your creative flair. Your resume should communicate your understanding of the job and the industry so make sure you're communicating the right message.
- One page or two? It depends!
If you are just starting out in your career and can make the case for why you are a good fit for the job in an easy to read one page resume, then there is no need to have two pages. However, if you have relevant information to share and it won't fit on one page then two pages is perfectly fine. If you are only using a few lines on the second page, do some editing and reformatting so you can stick to a one-page format. Otherwise, don't worry if you are only using ¼ to ½ of the second page.
- How far back to go?
Typically a resume will present your past ten to fifteen years of experience unless there is something further back that is particularly relevant to the position.
- Always put the most important information first to ensure the reader sees it.
- Refer to the exercises and self-assessments you completed earlier in this Guide. These can provide words and phrases that can be used in your resume.
- Emphasize accomplishments rather than job duties. Accomplishment Statements will help make your resume different from someone else with the same position description. Accomplishment Statements, not fancy graphics, bright paper, or other unnecessary flair are what make your resume stand out in a crowd.
- Quantify information whenever possible using numbers, percentages, and dollar amounts.
- Include keywords relevant to the position and industry. If you've done the work in the previous chapters- analyzing position descriptions, informational interviewing, and occupational research- you should already have a list of these.
- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms unless you are absolutely certain the reader knows what the abbreviations mean. Remember that someone without industry knowledge, such as a recruiting specialist, may be screening your resume.
- Make your resume easy to read.
 - Use plenty of white space.
 - Use bullets to highlight key points.
 - Use a readable font and size- Arial or Calibri 11pt fonts are good choices; 12pt font for section headers, and 14pt font for your name. Avoid using anything below 11pt font!
- Indent or double space to separate sections.

- Be selective and strategic with your use of color, fonts, and graphics.
- Do not use personal pronouns such as “my” or “I”.
- Keep your verb tense consistent. Use present tense for your current work and past tense for previous positions.
- Make sure your resume is clean and professional looking (e.g., no hand corrections, misspellings or grammatical errors.) Use spell check AND ask someone to proofread your resume. Sometimes a word can be spelled correctly but it is the wrong word!
- If you are submitting a hard copy of your resume use high quality paper in light tones, such as white, ivory, or light gray. Use the same paper for your cover letter, references or any other attachments to your resume.
- If you are submitting an electronic version of your resume it should be in PDF format and use a professional subject line if sending it in an email (e.g. Sam Avakian Resume for Program Assistant Position).
- Have your resume critiqued by someone knowledgeable about your field.
- Every time you send out your resume, you need to re-evaluate. You may need to shift the order of the text or rewrite certain sections (more later in this chapter on customizing your resume).
- Leave off personal information and hobbies unless they are particularly relevant to the position. For example, if you spend your time fostering kittens and are applying for a position with the SPCA.
- Be truthful and don't exaggerate.

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AmeriCorps Career Webinars:
 “Translating AmeriCorps onto Your Resume”: <http://www.americorpsalums.org/?CareerWebinars>

Tips and Guidelines

To get started on your resume, follow the 6 Step Resume Writing Process below. Have your Job Search Data Worksheet handy so you can access the information you've already gathered, which may be needed on your resume.

1. Open a new Word document. Avoid using resume templates. Although they are attractive, they often don't allow you to customize the information, they force you to include sections that aren't appropriate for your experience, and they can be difficult to update.
2. Set your margins to .75 at the top and sides, .5 at the bottom.
3. Set your font to 11pt Arial or Calibri. Anything smaller will be difficult on the reader's eyes. Your name can be in 14pt and section headers can be in 12pt.
4. Type your contact information at the top: It is becoming more common to not list your street address but just your city, state, phone, email, and LinkedIn URL. If your school address is temporary or you are searching for jobs outside of the area in which you currently live, consider using both a local and permanent address.
5. Decide which format- chronological or functional- best fits your situation.
6. Now list and complete the components that you need to have in your resume, which may include:
 - Objective: On modern resumes, the Objective is completely optional. You do not need to write that fluff sentence or two about why you want the job. Your interest in the job can be expressed in your cover letter. If you just can't give up the idea of having an Objective on your resume, simply list the job title and job number and save those extra lines of space for more important information.

- Summary of Qualifications: (see Summary of Qualifications Guide in **APPENDIX 10**).
- Experience (paid work, internships, extracurricular leadership roles, or significant volunteer experience can be included):
 - For a Chronological Resume starting with your most recent position list organization, location (city and state only), job title, start and end dates in months and years. Under each job list bullet points that are accomplishment based to show what you did in each position. (Use the Accomplishment Statements Guide in **APPENDIX 11** and list of Action Words in **APPENDIX 12**). You may also want to review the “Choose Your Words” information on California Career Café: <http://www.cacareercafe.com/prepare/resume/>
 - For a Functional Resume, select the 3-4 skill categories you want to use and write 4-5 Accomplishment Statements for each category. Then add a Work History section where you can list your job titles, employer, location, and start and end dates in months and years.
- Education, Certifications, Licenses, and Training – List your formal education first, including name of institution, and location, degree earned, major, minor, educational honors/awards, study abroad, (GPA only if you graduated within the past two years and it was 3.0 or higher). In some instances, listing relevant course work completed may be appropriate. Add any relevant certifications, licenses, or training.
- Other components might include: Honors and Awards, Volunteer Service, Languages, Publications, Professional Affiliations, Activities, and Interests and Hobbies (but only if they are relevant to the position!).
- Do not include References on your resume.

You don't even need to say “References Available Upon Request.”

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL AND FUNCTIONAL RESUMES ARE FOUND IN APPENDIX 13.



EXERCISE

Draft Resume

Create a draft resume and seek feedback.

Cover Letters

While a resume presents the facts, a cover letter, (sometimes referred to as a letter of interest or letter of intent), is a chance for you to show your personality, not to mention your written communication skills. Some employers place a great deal of weight on your cover letter and some employers won't even bother reading it. Unfortunately, you never know what the approach will be of the person reading your materials, so you have to create a strong cover letter that is tailored to each position. To write a great cover letter follow these guidelines:

- While your resume can be two pages, your cover letter should only be one page.
- Use the same header information, font, and margins for your cover letter that you use on your resume. If you are submitting hard copies, use the same paper. This will allow you to present a unified package.
- Use a standard business letter format with date and address of employer.
- The ideal situation is to have the name of a specific person that you can address the cover letter to. However, if, after conducting some research, you are not sure who to address the letter to, you can address it to “Dear Human Resources”, “Dear Hiring Committee”, or “Dear Recruiter”. Do not use “To Whom It May Concern” or Dear Sir or Madam”. These are outdated terms.

- A three paragraph format is a good formula to follow for the text of the letter:

Paragraph 1: State the position you are applying for, what interests you in the position and/or organization, and the name of anyone who referred you to the position or who you've had previous contact with at the organization.

Paragraph 2: The information in this paragraph should explain why you are a good fit for the specific position you are applying for and why the organization should hire you. Try focusing on three core parts of the job and telling brief stories (1-2 sentences) that highlight your experience, skills, and personal attributes that are relevant to the job requirements. Show how you can contribute to the organization's success.

Paragraph 3: Keep this to two or three sentences that express your enthusiasm for the position, address next steps such as an interview, and thank the reader for their time and consideration of your application. Also, indicate how you can be contacted.

- Have an appropriate closing signature such as "Sincerely" or "Best Regards" and be sure to sign the letter.
- Proofread carefully as correct spelling and grammar are critical!

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS ARE FOUND IN APPENDIX 14.

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AmeriCorps Career Webinars:
 "Write a Cover Letter that Won't Get Ignored": <http://www.americorpsalums.org/?CareerWebinars>



EXERCISE

Cover Letter

Create a cover letter and seek feedback.

References

The purpose of a List of References is to provide a potential employer with a list of people who can verify and elaborate on your professional experience and personal character. Employers will rarely ask for actual letters of recommendation but if you have one AND it is current and relevant to the position, you might consider providing it to the employer.

- Like the cover letter, the reference page should match the resume header and font.
- Have 3-5 work-related references who can address your skills and experience in a work setting. References should not be close friends or family.
- While your references can be current or previous supervisors, you also might want to include a co-worker, a colleague from another organization that you interacted with, a customer or a client, or even a teacher.
- Place references on a separate sheet of paper from your resume and only distribute when asked.
- ALWAYS contact someone to ask if they are willing to serve as a positive reference before listing them as a reference!
- Share your resume with your references and provide them with information on the types of jobs to which you are applying.
- If an employer notifies you that they will be checking your references, let your references know to expect a call and share with them why you are interested in the position and why you think you are well qualified.

SAMPLE LIST OF REFERENCES CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX 15.



EXERCISE References

Create a list of references.

Portfolio

In some fields such as graphic design or event planning, having a portfolio (a collection of your best work) to share with a potential employer can be extremely valuable in demonstrating your skills and capabilities; sometimes you are even required to have a portfolio. There are online tools you can use to create a portfolio of your work such as cargocollective.com, dribbble.com, and carbonmade.com, but a hardcopy portfolio is also a useful tool. Your portfolio should be organized, visually appealing, and easy to understand. Follow these guidelines to create an effective portfolio:

- Put items in a loose-leaf binder.
- Use sheet protectors.
- If possible, keep a master copy of all work and use copies in the portfolio as an employer may want to keep items from your portfolio.
- Keep your portfolio to a manageable size: 5-15 pages.
- Omit page numbers—this provides you the freedom to rearrange as necessary.
- Use consistent headings and brief descriptions of all work samples.
- Use index tabs and/or title pages to separate sections.
- Use a computer to create all text.
- Use quality paper.

Your Online Brand

No longer just a fad, the use of social media in hiring is now standard practice. Employers use social media to communicate their brand to prospective employees and they encourage their employees to post job openings on their social media sites so that positions are well advertised and attract quality candidates. At the same time, job seekers use social media to showcase their accomplishments and network with other professionals. Developing a professional online presence can help you “brand” yourself and provide you access to a wide variety of networking and career opportunities.

Let’s focus on the three primary social media sites that will impact your job search:

LinkedIn, which has always been a professional platform, and **Facebook** and **Twitter** which employers use to promote their workplace and job seekers use to brand themselves and stay connected to people and organizations that interest them.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional networking site, with over 500M users worldwide. It has become a must-have in the life of any professional and certainly for all job seekers. According to a Jobvite 2016 Recruiter Nation survey, 87% of recruiters use LinkedIn. Your profile serves as an online resume and the site is a powerful database to help you connect with like minded professionals, search for job openings, and conduct research on people and organizations as you prepare for informational and job interviews. With a strong profile and a strategic approach to making connections, you will have a competitive advantage.

LinkedIn provides easy to follow instructions on how to create an account, develop your profile, and begin connecting to friends and colleagues. Here are some helpful tips:

- Before building your own profile, read other’s profiles to get an idea of how to create your own.
- Turn off the “notify my network of updates” while you are creating your profile or making a large number of changes.
- Fully develop your profile, using as many sections as are relevant to your experience, as this will maximize your chance of showing up in a hiring manager’s search.
- Create a personalized LinkedIn URL for use on your resume.
- Make sure your profile is public.
- Upload a professional looking head and shoulders profile picture in which you are looking at the camera and smiling.
- Have a clear, concise summary that communicates your brand and focuses on your experience, career goals, and interests.
- Create a professional headline that sums up your professional identity in a short phrase.
- Ensure your resume and LinkedIn profile mirror each other. You should summarize your work experience but your profile can also include more details on your accomplishments and projects. Your LinkedIn profile can be a bit more conversational and show your personality.
- Make social impact a part of your professional identity by adding your volunteer experience, causes you care about, and check the box that you are interested in doing skill based volunteering or serving on a nonprofit board.
- Connect with everyone you know- friends, family, current and previous co-workers, classmates, professors, AmeriCorps members and Alums- to expand your network. Always, customize the message for any connection request you send.
- Seek Endorsements and Recommendations and give them in return
- Add and prioritize relevant skills.
- Follow companies that interest you and maximize group affiliations (industry, school, AmeriCorps) that match your experience and interests.
- Publish status updates, comment on posts, ask questions in groups, engage with your connections and the companies you follow.

To Pay or Not to Pay: Having a free account on LinkedIn allows you to access a wide range of tools and until you have exhausted all of the free resources, it is probably unnecessary to pay for a Premium account.



EXERCISE LinkedIn Profile

Create a LinkedIn profile or update the profile you have by using the following resources:

Set up an account at <http://www.linkedin.com/start/join>

LinkedIn’s Help Page will provide you with tips for developing your profile: <https://help.linkedin.com>

LinkedIn offers several helpful webinars on setting up your profile and getting the most out of LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/530?lang=en>



LinkedIn 101 for Young Adults: <https://linkedinforgood.linkedin.com/lifg-resources/linkedin-training-content>

LinkedIn's Official Cheat Sheet for Attracting Great Opportunities: <https://blog.linkedin.com/2017/february/17/-tips-for-building-a-great-linkedin-profile-career-expert>

LeisureJobs Ultimate LinkedIn Cheat Sheet is a comprehensive guide to creating an outstanding profile: <http://www.leisurejobs.com/staticpages/18285/the-ultimate-linkedin-cheat-sheet/>



► **Twitter**

Like your LinkedIn profile you can use Twitter to showcase your expertise, experience, and accomplishments only in a more concentrated form; like a mini resume. Follow industry leaders, organizations you are interested in, and recruiters in your field of interest. Also consider following career experts such as @dailymuse or @jobsearchamanda, and sending private notes to potential mentors. And of course follow AmeriCorps related handles such as @americorps, @americorps alums, @National Service, and @AmeriCorps Vista. This will allow you to monitor what is happening in your field, learn about job opportunities, and join Twitter chats. You can also retweet news from these organizations or tweet articles about your field that you find helpful, which shows engagement and enthusiasm. Remember to fill out your Twitter bio appropriately so people can get a sense of what you are all about and it's a good idea to include a link to your LinkedIn profile.

According to CareerBuilder.com

ONE in FIVE

employers use social networking sites to research job candidates and close to

59%

of them are influenced by your online presence.



► **Facebook**

As you begin your job search, you will need to decide if you are going to keep your Facebook profile purely personal- setting your privacy settings at the highest level- or leave your profile more open, understanding that anything that appears on your page is something that a potential employer might see. Some job seekers create separate personal and professional profiles, with the highest privacy settings on their personal account and a more career focused image on their professional account.

Just as you will need to consider whether or not to include religious and political affiliations or sexual orientation on your resume, you must consider whether you want this type of information to be available via social networking sites. One approach is that if you wish to only work for an employer with whom you can be openly religious and political then making that information available on your web page will make it more likely that you will land with an employer open to your identity and expression.

Across all social media platforms the goal is not to completely sanitize your personality but to put boundaries in place and manage your online presence so that potential employers see you as a professional who they want on their team.

Launching Your Search

Now that you've taken time to prepare the documents you'll need for your job search—resume, cover letter, references, portfolio, and online brand, you are ready to launch your search!

There are a variety of methods that are proven to be effective when undertaking a job search. This Guide will provide you with information on the most useful techniques including:

- Networking (“In Real Life” and online)
- Directly contacting potential employers
- Searching online job boards
- Attending Career Fairs
- Working with staffing agencies
- Reviewing printed job listings

You should use all of these techniques during your job search and each will be explored below. However, because 80% of all jobs are found through networking, this is how you should be spending the bulk of your time during your job search and this is where we will begin.

Networking

Dictionary.com defines networking as a “supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups that have a common interest”. As part of your job search process, networking involves getting your name and abilities out to the community where you wish to be employed; gathering valuable information on industries, companies and hiring authorities related to your field of interest; identifying people who may be in a position to offer you a job or lead you to others who can; and sharing your knowledge, resources, and support with those with whom you connect.

To advance in your career or be selected for an interview from a stack of resumes, being qualified is not always enough. Nearly 4 out of 5 jobs are filled through some form of networking. Therefore, your career success depends on having connections that can help you build bridges to your next opportunity. Networking is also the method by which you will uncover the “Hidden Job Market”, where a great many openings that will never be advertised on a public job site can be found. Here's an example of how networking can benefit you in the job search:

An Example of Networking in Action

- Anabelle shared with her supervisor that she is very interested in Urban Forestry...
- Anabelle's supervisor told her about an urban planning conference so...
- Anabelle decided to volunteer to help at the conference with registration...
- At the conference, Annabelle met 3 people who worked in urban forestry for different cities in California ...
- Anabelle followed up with these contacts after the conference and shared her resume with them along with her desire to secure a job in the San Francisco bay area working on urban forestry issues...
- One of her contacts put her in touch with a nonprofit that had just received funding for a new position...
- Anabelle reached out to the Executive Director of the nonprofit; she interviewed for the job and was hired!

Of course networking helps you with your job search, but more importantly it builds long-lasting connections, expands your knowledge, and increases your ability to get things done. Establishing and nurturing a strong professional network is THE most important fuel to power your long-term career success.

A great beginning point for networking is to revisit the people with whom you conducted informational interviews. Now that you are closer to the end of your year of service and are ready to launch your job search, you can reach back out to these contacts to provide them with an update and seek their input about possible job openings and suggestions for others to reach out to for networking. Hopefully, you have already connected to them via LinkedIn, so touching base may be easier.

In addition to this group of people who you have already established rapport with, try some of the suggestions below to expand your network, putting you in a position to meet new contacts and increasing your chances of uncovering job opportunities. While you might imagine you need to have high-powered, influential contacts for networking to be effective, the reality is that everyone you meet is connected to the world of work and can likely help you with information, suggest someone to talk to, or even share a job opening. In other words, don't pass up the opportunity to network with anyone!

In-Person Networking:

- Reach out to people you may naturally come in contact with given your AmeriCorps service including co-workers, peers, supervisors, program staff, grantees, and civic leaders.
- Connect with your local AmeriCorps Alumni Group. A list of chapters can be found at: <http://www.americorpsalums.org/?ActiveChapters>
- Engage in social activities and clubs such as a softball team, running group, or taking a weekend hike with the Sierra Club.
- Join a MeetUp Group: <https://www.meetup.com>. There's something for everyone from practicing a language to karaoke!
- Engage with those you come in contact with through daily activities such as standing in line at the coffee shop, a visit to the dentist, or your apartment complex property manager.
- Explore a hobby by taking a ceramics class, visiting an art show, attending a cooking demonstration or photography seminar.
- Attend workshops, seminars and conferences in your field. Even better than just attending these activities volunteer to help. Often volunteers will be given free attendance and if you ask to work at the registration table, you'll have the opportunity to meet lots of people!
- Serve as a volunteer with an organization that interests you or where you will find people dedicated to the same cause such as Habitat for Humanity or a Fun Run for Diabetes.
- Become active in Professional Associations. There is an association for every occupation; there's even an association for associations! A useful publication to find an association is National Trade and Professional Associations. You can also ask your networking contacts about the association(s) to which they belong.
- Participate in Affinity Groups- such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Sacramento Chamber's Metro Edge for young professionals, the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) or the National Society of Black Engineers, or a Chamber of Commerce mixer.
- Take a class to improve your skills such as a graphic design, communication, or writing course, or get involved in Toastmasters International where you can hone your public speaking skills.
- Attend a traditional "networking" event, if you must, but be aware that this may be the least effective use of your time as you find yourself surrounded only by other job seekers.

Struggle with Small Talk? Try These Conversation Starters:



What did you do today? Are you from this area?
 Have you lived in (name of town) long?
 What are you studying?
 What type of work do you do?
 What is your connection with (name of organization, event, person)?
 How do you know _____?
 What are your plans for this weekend?
 What brought you here today?
 How's your day going?

Online Networking

► **LinkedIn:** Begin with your first-degree connections to see who is in their network that you might want to connect with and see if they are willing to make an introduction or if you can use their name in reaching out to have a conversation. Also, tap into the AmeriCorps Alumni LinkedIn group, and other LinkedIn Groups such as your school's alumni group, or groups related to your field of interest. If you are applying for a job, check your LinkedIn connections to see if you have a first-degree or second-degree connection to someone at that organization who may be able to provide you with some insight into the position or perhaps even put in a good word for you.

► **Facebook:** Facebook is primarily used to project the brand you want employers to see but it can also be used to identify connections in specific companies. In the search bar type "Friends of my friends who work at 'Name of Company,'" or "Friends of my friends who live in 'Location'". This will generate a list of people that you can ask your friend to make an introduction to or follow up with directly.

When you are networking via social media remember to follow the same etiquette as networking in person. While you might tend to be less formal online because you are typically communicating with friends in this medium, remember that whenever you are communicating with a potential employer, you want to maintain your professionalism.

From the suggestions provided above, you are hopefully beginning to understand that networking is less about shaking as many hands as possible and more about making meaningful connections in a way that is authentically you. So if attending a "networking" event with a room full of strangers makes you nervous, don't worry you can still be a successful networker by engaging in your field of interest, attending events with a purpose such as a lecture or workshop, and never passing up an opportunity to connect with others whether at the gym, the line at the coffee shop, or dog obedience class.



EXERCISE Building Your Network

Take some time to think about building your professional network by completing the “My Network” worksheet in **APPENDIX 16**.

Now that you have a few ideas about the people, places and activities you can use to begin building your network, you may be wondering how to start reaching out? For some, networking comes easily. They are energized by talking with people and are comfortable reaching out to strangers. For others, the thought of networking makes them want to run and hide. If the mere mention of “networking” makes you cringe then think of it as simply connecting with like-minded people who you may want to work with now or in the future. Enlisting the help of a friend or fellow AmeriCorps member to attend events with you may ease your nervousness. Also, making a “warm” call (a mutual connection has put you in touch) to a networking contact is much easier for most people to make than a “cold” call.

For how to craft an email requesting a networking meeting or how to make a telephone call to a networking contact, you can modify the samples given in **APPENDIX 4** for requesting informational interviews or use the Networking Letter Samples in **APPENDIX 17**.

Despite your feelings about networking, people really do want to help and the more specific you can be with your request the better. Asking someone if they know of any job openings in the education field is a very broad request. On the other hand, sharing that you are interested in working with special education programs in the Ventura County school district and asking if they might have a connection there that you could talk with is a specific request to which your contact can more easily respond.

No matter what your feelings about networking, the following Do’s and Don’ts adapted from The Corporation for National and Community Service’s website will help you be successful in this critical aspect of the job search.

Do’s

- ✓ Ask people questions about them. By listening you can see how your work might intersect.
- ✓ Serve as a resource for others: let others know about projects, job openings, etc.
- ✓ Call or e-mail contacts you have been referred to; they may be waiting to hear from you.
- ✓ Let people know what you need
- ✓ Look out for what others need. It’s great to help people, and if you help them first, even better.
- ✓ Ask people for help with open-ended questions, like “How can we work together?”
- ✓ Collect and distribute business cards; make notes on the ones you collect to remember the context of where you met someone.
- ✓ Follow up with meetings and phone calls by sending thank-you notes (see sample in **APPENDIX 18**).
- ✓ Use a spreadsheet to keep track of all your networking activity (see Networking Activity Log in **APPENDIX 19**).

Don’ts

- ✗ Don’t ask for a lead from somebody then never follow up.

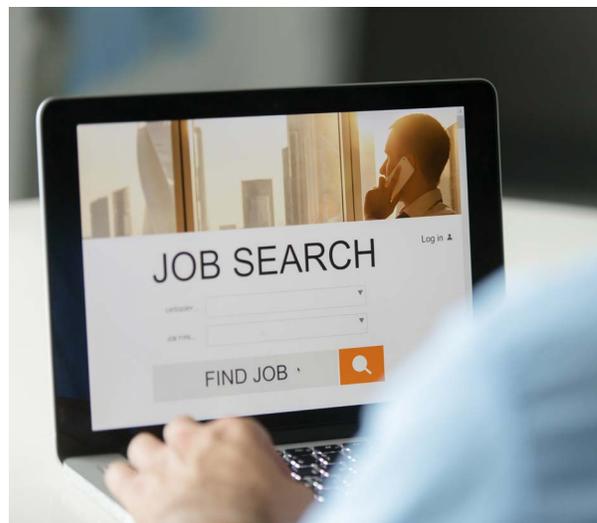
- ✗ Don't abuse the connection. When you use someone else's leads, you are not only representing yourself, but also their trust in you.
- ✗ Don't be one-sided. Share your connections when possible.
- ✗ Don't over-contact your lead. If you don't hear back within a week after a positive phone call or meeting, follow up with a polite e-mail.
- ✗ Don't over-promise, only commit to what you know you can do.

When you have a meeting with someone show up, bring a pen and a notebook, have your resume on hand should your contact ask for it, be positive and curious, ask open-ended questions, and always ask who else your contact suggests you reach out to. Networking is a two-way street. It is not just about what other's can give you, but also about connecting with people in a meaningful way and creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

Remember the people who have helped you! The professional network you build during your year of service will pay dividends throughout your career so nurture these relationships. Stay in touch, provide updates on your career progress, keep your connections in the loop when something good happens, send an article that you think your contact might find interesting, and offer to be a resource. In the future, these contacts may be people you work for, collaborate with on projects, call on to ask questions, or maybe one day they will even work for you!

note

The **AmeriCorps Alums website** offers several informative webinars on networking that are well worth your time to watch: <http://www.americorpsalums.org/?CareerWebinars>



Job Boards

Using online job boards will be an integral part of your job search. It can also be one of the most frustrating because you can become overwhelmed with the sheer number of sites and struggle to find positions that match your skills and experience. The Job Boards section of the Website and App Resources at the end of the Guide are a good place to start, but tap into your network and check relevant professional associations and publications to identify niche job boards that focus on positions specific to your occupation, career goals, and area of interest. For example, the AmeriCorps Alums Job Board: <http://americorpsalums-jobs.careerwebsite.com/jobseeker/search/results/> would be an excellent resource. Explore a variety of job boards and find the ones that are best for you. Here are some tips to help you more efficiently and effectively use job boards:

- Filter your search by job type, salary, location, keywords, and recently posted so you can spend your time looking at openings that are most relevant.
- Take advantage of job alert functions. Don't only rely on these alerts but use them to be instantly notified of new postings that match your qualifications.

- Avoid applying to every job at a particular company. Do your research to identify the positions and/or department that are most appropriate. Applying to a few closely related positions is fine but you'll lose credibility if you apply to everything.
- Research any employer listed before submitting a resume and any other personal information.
- If you see a job listed on a general job board such as Indeed, visit the company's website and apply directly through that site rather than through the general job board.
- Always submit your materials as a PDF so formatting stays in tack and if submitting via email use an appropriate subject line such as "Application for (Job Title)".
- If you've uploaded your resume to a job board, refresh it every few weeks, as many sites will direct recruiters to newly posted resumes first.

Direct Outreach to Employers

Finding open positions on job boards is standard practice in the job search but why not be proactive and reach out directly to employers to inquire about potential job openings? Expressing your strong desire to work for the organization and explaining how you would be an asset to the company might just grab the employer's attention.

Ideally, find a contact outside of human resources so you can get your resume in front of someone who might be in a position to hire you. If you send your information directly to a human resources representative, you are likely to get the standard reply, "Thank you for your interest. All of our positions are listed on our website." Search LinkedIn to see if you have a connection to anyone at the company or someone who might be able to help you make a connection to someone at the company.

Use these ideas and resources to develop a list of companies to target:

- Create an employer bucket list- where would you LOVE to work?
- Don't overlook small businesses. We all know the big name employers- Google, American Red Cross, Apple- but, according to the US Small Business Administration, small businesses currently provide 55% of all jobs and the number is growing rapidly.
- Explore the hundreds of employers who have committed to recruiting AmeriCorps Alums through the Employers of National Service initiative. For a searchable list of the over 460 participating employers throughout the US- from Accenture to Tetra Tech- visit: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service/search-network>.
- Read your local "Business Journal" and the "Book of Lists." Most major cities have a weekly Business Journal that has both online and print news. In these journals you will find a "Top 25 List". One week it will be the top 25 advertising firms, the next it will be the top 25 public sector employers. At the end of the year, the "Top 25" lists from the entire year are published in a "Book of Lists". This book is invaluable in identifying potential employers. Purchasing the book is quite expensive but most libraries and OneStop Career Centers will have a copy.

Search through some of the "Best of" lists of employers. For example,

50 Best Companies for Diversity: <http://www.blackenterprise.com/featured-stories/2016-50-best-companies-diversity/>.

100 Best Corporate Citizens: http://www.thecro.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/100best_1.pdf.

B-Corps meet high standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability, and aspire to use the power of markets to solve social and environmental problems: <https://www.bcorporation.net/community/find-a-b-corp>

Fortune Magazine's 100 Best Companies to Work For: <http://beta.fortune.com/best-companies/>

Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index for LGBT employees: Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index 2016: <http://www.hrc.org/campaigns/corporate-equality-index>

Working Mother Magazine Best Companies For Working Mothers: <http://www.workingmother.com/best-companies>

USE THE SAMPLE LETTER IN APPENDIX 20 AS A STARTING POINT FOR WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR IDEAL EMPLOYER.

Career Fairs

So you hear a career fair is coming to town and your excitement grows that this will be your chance to make contact with a real person from the company of your dreams. But when you get to the event there are long lines, when you do get to the front of the line and shake the recruiter's hand you don't know what to say, and most of the companies attending do not have jobs that match your skillset. Having reasonable expectations about what you can gain from a career fair and being properly prepared will reduce your frustration and improve your level of success. This 5-Step process adapted from Boise State's University Career Center will ensure you make a great impression:

➤ **Step 1:** Find out what companies are going to be at the fair. Almost every career fair will post a list of companies planning to attend the event (often with a link to their website). View this list and identify companies you're interested in speaking with at the fair.

➤ **Step 2:** Do some research on the companies you're interested in by browsing their website and looking at their careers page. While you are on their website, look for information about who they are, what they do, what needs they might have, what their mission and goals are, and what projects or initiatives they are working on. You may also want to look up some of their employees on LinkedIn to get a feel for the background and experience of their staff (you might even find someone at the company that you are connected to!). All this research will give you topics of conversation when you meet the company representative. One of the best things you can do at a career fair is to ask a few thoughtful questions specific to each company. This will allow you to have a real conversation with an employer. You don't want to just ask "So what jobs do you have?" or "What does your company do?" Instead write down specific questions that show you've taken the time to research the company. And always ask, "What are the next steps if I'm interested in a position with your company?"

➤ **Step 3:** Prepare your introduction and be ready to answer the company representative's questions. You can start with your 30-Second Introduction and think about how you might modify it for each specific employer that you want to speak with at the fair. Common questions an employer might ask include: "What do you know about our company?," "Tell me about yourself," "Tell me about an accomplishment that you are proud of," "What are your career goals?" and "What are your strongest skills?"

➤ **Step 4:** Prepare resumes to bring with you to the fair. Many people think you have to bring a general resume to a career fair, but that isn't true. Because you will have identified the companies you are interested in, researched those companies, and possibly identified positions that are available, you can create customized resumes for each employer. Not every employer will accept hard-copy resumes but it's always best to be prepared.

Don't forget that a career fair is a professional setting so appearance and presentation matter. You should dress as if you were going to an interview and bring a portfolio or bag (not a backpack) with pen and paper inside as well as your resumes. Plan to arrive early when employers are fresh and eager to meet people; as the day goes on their energy and enthusiasm (and yours!) is likely to fade. Be sure to collect business cards for anyone you talk to so you can follow up with any actions they suggested, and always send a thank you note to anyone you speak with.

To find career fairs in your area visit one of these websites:

http://www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/Job_Fairs_and_Workshops.htm

<http://jobfairsin.com>

<https://www.hirelive.com/calendar>

<https://www.nationalcareerfairs.com>

Rate Your Shake

Having just the right handshake- not too weak and not too strong- is key to making a great first impression with the company representative and for other aspects of your job search such as networking and interviewing. People are much more likely to remember you when you have a good, firm handshake.

Characteristics of a memorable handshake:

- *Stand up*
- *Make eye contact*
- *Grasp the full hand*
- *Share a greeting such as "Good to see you" or "Nice to meet you"*



Working with Staffing Agencies

Companies and organizations hire staffing agencies to find qualified candidates to fill temporary, temporary-to-permanent, contract, or direct hire part-time and full-time positions. It is not uncommon for an organization to use a staffing agency to "try out" an employee with the hope of hiring that person once they are able to evaluate their skills and abilities.

You can search for agencies through the National Association of Personnel Services: <http://www.recruitinglife.com/membership/membership-directory.cfm> or do a Google search to find local staffing agencies and reviews of their services. Some staffing agencies, such as OfficeTeam, Robert Half, AppleOne, Select Staffing, and Adecco, have a national network of offices. Other staffing agencies are more regional such as Pacific Staffing in the Sacramento region.

An advantage of working with a staffing agency is that some offer free access to online training. For example, OfficeTeam and Robert Half have over 8,000 online training courses to help you continue to develop your skills. In addition, many staffing agencies provide benefits to their placements.

Here is a “**Top 10 List**” of tips for working with staffing agencies provided by Pacific Staffing:

1. Understand the staffing firm’s recruitment process. You can research information on the firm’s website or call to inquire about the process; this will help set your expectations and ease frustration.
2. Ask if the firm is a good resource for your job search/experience; i.e.; in what types of positions/industries does the firm place candidates? Will it match your experience or what you are searching for?
3. Determine if the firm charges job seekers and if so if that’s right for you or if you want a firm that does not charge job seekers.
4. Listen to the direction/recommendations from the recruiter regarding updating or reformatting your resume, preparing for interviews, typical pay expectations for positions (though you can still ask the recruiter to negotiate on your behalf).
5. Let the recruiter know if you are working with other agencies; it is fine to do so as a job seeker, but the recruiters will need to know so they do not present you to the same position.
6. Be honest and upfront about your expectations for pay, how far you are willing to commute, what is important to you in a job, and what type of environment is best. This will allow the recruiter to better match you with the right company culture and position.
7. Ask for feedback when sent out on interviews.
8. Be as flexible as possible to interview via phone, Skype, or in person – many clients have tight schedules and can only set aside certain times to interview. This can be difficult if you are already working, but the candidate is usually the one that has to be more flexible at this point to the game.
9. Recruiters understand you are not stopping your own job search but let the Recruiter know you are looking and if you accept an offer, have the courtesy of notifying them you are no longer searching.
10. Keep in touch with recruiters via social media; you never know when you may need them again or can refer someone else. Many firms have cash or other incentive referral bonuses.

Printed Job Listings

Printed newspapers, journals, industry magazines, and newsletters, while much less popular these days, do still have job listings and can be a source for finding your next job. So if you have a few minutes, over your morning coffee or tea, take a few minutes to scan these types of publications to see if they offer up any job opportunities.

Long-distance Job Searches

Perhaps you’ve always wanted to live in Austin, you have family in Chicago that you’d like to live closer to, or you’ve always wanted to work overseas. If this type of relocation is part of your career plan then take note of the following suggestions for conducting a long-distance job search.

- Research the local job market and make a list of potential organizations that align with your interests and skills (the city’s Business Journal or business section of the local newspaper are good starting points).

- Identify geographically specific job sites such as a local newspaper, which likely has an online job board.
- Check your LinkedIn profile for any connections you might have in the geographic area (AmeriCorps or college alumni can be an easy starting point).
- Join the local chapter of the professional association related to your field and make contact with the chapter leadership for suggestions on how to get connected.
- Brush up on your phone and video interviewing skills, as this will likely be how you will initially be interviewed.
- Be prepared to make at least one trip to the location of your choice (set up as many informational interviews/networking meetings as you can during your visit).
- Make note in your cover letter that you are planning to relocate and mention a specific date if possible.
- Remove your address from your resume and, if you can, list an address in the new location.

Applying and Interviewing for Positions

As you begin the last couple of months of your year of service, the time will come for you to begin identifying job openings that interest you and for which you want to apply. Luckily, because of the work you've done since the beginning of the year to prepare for this moment, you have a resume and cover letter that you can customize to the position, you have a sense of what accomplishments you will share in an interview, and you may even have a contact in the organization who can provide you with some insight or put in a good word for you.

The information and resources below will help you customize your resume and cover letter, prepare for interviews, and increase your chances of getting an offer for a job that launches you into the next phase of your career.

Start with the Job Description

Customizing your resume, writing a cover letter that addresses the specific job qualifications, notifying your references, and perhaps filling out an application is a time consuming process so before you decide to apply for a position, read the job description/job announcement very carefully and make sure you qualify for the job. While you don't have to match the qualifications exactly, you do need to meet the minimum qualifications. For example, if a position requires 3-5 years of event planning experience and you've done

event planning for the past 2 ½ years, go ahead and apply but if the sum total of your event planning experience is that you planned your friend's 21st birthday party and helped organize the prom in high school, don't waste your time, or the employer's. Take the time to read beyond the job title and thoroughly review the job announcement to understand the position and the education, experience, and skills required.

Whenever possible apply directly through the organization's own website. Do not upload a generic resume to a job board and then just hit "submit" when you see a job that interests you. As discussed earlier in this Guide, you should be customizing each resume and cover letter to the specifics of each position. Here's how to do just that:

Customizing Your Resume and Cover Letter

The resume and cover letter you submit are tools to get you an interview. These two or three pages of information must make it clear to the employer that you have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. By customizing each resume and cover letter to match the qualifications of the job and the organization, the employer will see you as a good fit and you'll be much more likely to be called for an interview. Follow these steps:



- As you review the job description, make note of or highlight the skills, knowledge, and abilities required. Also look for information in the description about the work environment (team, individual, fast paced). Even jobs with the same title vary in duties so read each description thoroughly.
- Research the organization, department, and/or program. What is the culture? What kind of projects do they work on?
- Now consider your skills, knowledge, education, and accomplishments as they compare to each aspect of the job and what you've learned about the organization. Ask yourself, "what in my background proves that I can do this job?" Pull items from your Job Search Data Worksheet that are most relevant to include in this customized resume. Or create new accomplishment statements to include if necessary (be sure to add any new content to your master document for future use).
- Review your resume and make any small changes so that it is focused toward the specific job. This might involve swapping out one accomplishment statement for one that is more relevant, reordering the bullet points so that the most important information is listed

first, or revising the Summary of Qualifications so it includes a skill that is relevant to the open position but that you didn't have listed.

- Follow the same process for customizing your cover letter by including what draws you to the specific job opening or organization, outlining a few accomplishments that show you can fulfill the duties of the job, and customizing the salutation.
- When you are done customizing your documents, read them very carefully for accuracy, spelling, and grammar. Cutting and pasting is a great way to save time but can also lead to mistakes like forgetting to replace "I'm excited about the possibility of working for UC Davis", when your applying for a job at Cal State Fullerton!

note

Always submit your resume, cover letter, and references in PDF format rather than a Word document.

Completing the Job Application

The information included on a job application is similar to what you would include on a resume but will also likely include listing job duties, employers' addresses, supervisors' names, titles and phone numbers, salary information, and reason for leaving positions. Use your Job Search Data Worksheet as a resource for completing an application and follow these rules:

- Read the application over before starting and carefully follow all instructions.
- Be neat! Use a blue or black pen. If the application can be filled out online, take advantage of that option.

- Fill out all areas. Use N/A if a question is not applicable to your situation.
- Emphasize experiences related to the job. Use the key words and skills the job announcement is looking for, if you possess them.
- It's acceptable to write "Open" if there is a question about your salary requirements.
- Do not falsify information!
- Ask someone to double-check your answers before submitting.

Following Up after Applying for a Position

Follow-up shows interest, initiative, and a sense of responsibility to a possible employer. Here are some guidelines for following up:

- Wait a few days, but no longer than one week after applying (or after the final filing deadline if there is one) before emailing the employer to check in. If emailing doesn't get you a response, you can try leaving a phone message.
- Identify yourself and the position for which you've applied.
- Confirm that they have received your materials and ask if there is any other information they need.
- Ask if they can provide you with an update on the next steps.
- Express your continued interest in the position.
- Thank them for their time.



"The key to job search (and maybe life!) is follow up, follow up, follow up."

Constance Stevens,
Owner, Career Crossroads

Interviews

Interviews are inherently anxiety producing and probably rank right up there with public speaking as one of the most dreaded activities. While you probably won't eliminate all your anxiety, with proper preparation you can increase your confidence, understand your strengths, discuss your experience in a focused manner, establish a few talking points, and ace your interview!

Types of Interviews

Screening

Often conducted by someone from the organization's human resources department, these interviews are intended to determine if a candidate meets the minimum job requirements. These are usually short interviews used to screen for specific experience, skills and/or education.

Phone

Phone interviews are often conducted as part of the initial screening process to check for basic qualifications. However, phone interviews may also be done if you are applying for positions outside of your current location or if the human resources department or company headquarters is located far away. A phone interview can happen unexpectedly or be planned- another reason to screen your calls during a job search. It is also acceptable to ask if you can call back at a more convenient time but make it within a couple of hours if at all possible. To put your best foot forward in a phone interview follow these tips:

- One advantage of a phone interview is that you can have your resume, the job description, and notes to remind you of key points you want to make right in front of you during the call. However, do not simply read your responses, as it will be obvious to the interviewer that you are reading a script.
- Take the call in a quiet place with no distractions.

- If you are using a cell phone make sure the connection is clear and that the interviewer can hear you.
- Do not use a speaker phone unless you know it is of high quality and will not pick up background noise.
- Some find that dressing for the interview, even though no one can see you, helps them feel more professional and confident.
- Similarly, taking the call in front of a mirror helps you feel like you are making eye contact with someone, encouraging you to smile, which will come across in your voice.
- Because there won't be any visual communication cues, bring a little extra enthusiasm to the interview so that your interest comes through.
- Be patient with silence as interviewers may be writing notes or determining what to ask next.
- Speak clearly and with professionalism.
- Adjust the height of your webcam and/or chair so that you are looking directly into the camera and that your head and shoulders are visible. Consider doing a practice run with a friend.
- Look into the camera not at the screen in order to make proper eye contact.
- Close all other programs so you don't have alerts popping up during your interview and so that you are making the most of your computer's capabilities to run the interview program.
- Get completely dressed. Tempting as it might be to only dress professionally on the visible top half, if for any reason you have to stand up you'll be embarrassed!
- Keep pets far away and have a babysitter for any children. Both have a tendency to show up at the most unexpected and inopportune times!
- While it is fine to have a glass of water near by should you need it, do not eat or drink anything else during the interview.
- Have a pad of paper and pen handy should you need to take any notes.
- Be prepared to handle brief delays in transmission and if your screen does freeze up, call right back.

Video

Increasingly common, video interviews are often done via Skype or some other video conferencing platform even if you live in the same community as the interviewer. Most of the tips for a successful phone interview also apply to video interviews but there are also some specific recommendations for video interviews:

- In advance of the interview, register for whatever platform the interview will be conducted on (use an appropriately professional user name) and be familiar with how it works.
- Be aware of what will be in view for the interviewers. Have a clean, simple backdrop for your interview.
- Check the lighting to be sure you are easily visible and that there aren't any shadows covering your face.

Panel

Panel interviews are very common and can consist of two to as many as a dozen people representing various levels and roles within an organization. Typically, the panel has a list of prepared questions and each panel member takes turns asking these questions. It is important to make eye contact with each panel member as you answer questions. Panel interviews typically last 45 minutes to an hour.

Group

In a group interview, you, and the other candidates are interviewed simultaneously, by either one interviewer or a panel of interviewers.

The interviewer asks a question and then gives each person a chance to provide an answer. This format allows an organization to screen many applicants at once and also provides the interviewer an opportunity to observe group interactions. Pay close attention to what others say during the interview and try not to repeat their responses.

Multiple Level

This format involves being interviewed by a variety of people, often representing increasing levels of responsibility, in a series of interviews over the course of a day. You may be passed from one department panel or individual manager to another. This may even involve an interview over a meal. In preparation for this type of interview, ask the scheduler to explain whom you will be meeting with for each interview so you can prepare questions that would be appropriate for each person or group.

Assessments and Tests

According to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 13% of US employers use personality assessments in their hiring so don't be surprised if you are asked to take some type of personality assessment during the process. Be as open and honest as possible when completing these assessments and don't overthink your answers; these assessments have no "right" or "wrong" answers so there is nothing you can do to prepare. Just like the employer wants to find a "good fit" employee, you want to find a "good fit" job and company so provide authentic answers.

Depending on the organization and type of position you are applying to, you may be asked to complete a drug test or a criminal background check prior to being hired. These tests and background checks are common if the position requires driving, operating heavy equipment, handling money, or working with minors.

Before the Interview

What you do before the interview is nearly as important as what you do during the interview. You wouldn't expect an Olympic gymnast to win a gold medal without ever having practiced their routine, so don't expect to perform well in an interview if you haven't put in the work to prepare. Take these important steps to ensure you will ace your interview:

1. As soon as you're invited for an interview, get the details by asking:

- What type of interview it will be- panel, phone, video, etc. - and whether you will be asked to complete any assessments.
- The expected duration of the interview so you know how much time to allow.
- The address and if there are any specific directions to the interview site or details on parking.
- Each interviewer's name and title.
- Whether you should bring a writing sample or portfolio of your work.
- Who you can contact if you have any other questions.

2. Know yourself

Most of us feel uncomfortable talking about or "selling" ourselves to other people. Try to reframe the concept of "selling how great you are" to telling the interviewer(s) what you know and what you can do. So instead of saying you are the best, you can state that you have 5 years of experience in program development or supervising teams. This is not embellishment or "bragging", it is fact. Shift from "bragging" about yourself to sharing information. After all, the interviewer wants, and needs, to hire someone but they must have the necessary information on each candidate to make a sound decision about who is the best fit. Your job therefore is to provide them with that information. This

reframing may help you feel more comfortable about the interview process and make it easier for you to discuss your qualifications.

Fully understanding how your skills, knowledge, personal characteristics, education, volunteer service, and other assets relate to the job description is top priority in preparing for your interview. Consider how each of these areas relates to the employer's needs. For each job requirement, think of an example you can share that proves you can meet that requirement. You can draw from these examples throughout your interview to make the case for why you are a strong candidate. Be sure to review your resume just prior to the interview so information about job titles, dates of employment, and other details of your experience are fresh in your memory.

While the interviewer will ask most of the questions, it is helpful to have an outline of the 4-5 key points you want to cover so that you can weave these into your answers.

3. Research the department, organization and industry

Visit the organization's website, do a Google search, tap into your network, and check to see if the organization has a LinkedIn or Facebook page. Gather as much information as possible about the organization's products, services, programs, mission, and organizational structure. Don't forget to also use LinkedIn to do some research on the background and experience of the people with whom you will interview.

4. Analyze the job description and anticipate questions

Take time to carefully read through the job description making an inventory of the education, training, certifications, skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics required. Given the responsibilities of the job, think about what the interviewer will

want to know. Put yourself in the place of the interviewer and write questions that relate to each of the job duties creating a question bank that you can pull from as you practice. Also make note of areas where you may not be as strong and develop a strategy for addressing those weaknesses.

5. Practice, Practice, Practice!

Use the list of **COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN APPENDIX 21** along with the list of questions you developed from analyzing the job description and begin honing your answers to this wide range of potential questions. Practice answering both behavioral and situational interview questions, which are described below.

Practicing out loud will help you work out phrasing, eliminate filler words like "um", "like", and "you know", and ensure that your answers are concise and to the point. If you are speaking for more than about 90 seconds, you are probably going on too long. Practicing in front of a mirror will allow you to be aware of your facial expressions and mannerisms. Video taping yourself can be very valuable in helping you identify blind spots and polish your presentation.

Let's review the different types of Interview Questions you are likely to encounter:

Behavioral Questions

One of the most reliable ways for an interviewer to predict how you will perform in the future is to hear how you have performed in the past. Therefore, many employers prepare behavioral interview questions that ask you to describe how you have handled a specific situation. You may also be asked technical questions such as how you have performed certain procedures or processes that are common in your field of work. In responding to these types of questions, use the S.T.A.R. method to shine:

Use “S.T.A.R.” stories to prove you can perform each aspect of the job. Your STAR stories will be the foundation of your answers and provide the details and depth to your interview that will make you stand out as a top candidate.

S.T.A.R

S= Situation

Describe the setting: *“As the Fundraising Chair for Los Angeles Crisis Nursery’s summer picnic...”*

T= Task

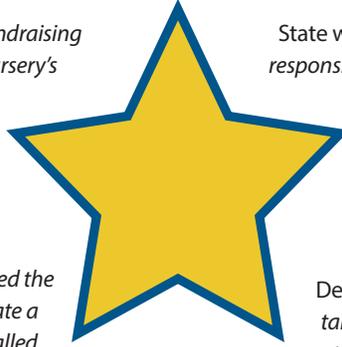
State what needed to be done: *“I was responsible for getting food for 100 people donated from local businesses.”*

A= Action

Explain the action(s) you took: *“So I used the Chamber of Commerce website to create a contact list of local restaurants that I called, emailed, or visited in person to tell them about the event and how the money raised would be used to help parents in the community.”*

R= Result

Describe the outcome: *“After 2 weeks of talking to businesses I was able to get all the food donated and also got a \$100 donation to purchase flowers to decorate the tables.”*



EXERCISE S.T.A.R. Stories

Use the S.T.A.R. Worksheet in **APPENDIX 22** to create your own S.T.A.R. stories.

Situational Questions

This form of questioning presents “What If” scenarios that relate to the types of situations and challenges that might arise in a particular position. They often begin with “What would you do if” or “How would you handle”. To anticipate situational questions that might arise in an interview think of the challenging situations you might be asked to handle in the position. When responding to these types of questions, remember to answer with **C.A.R.E.**

- C-** Considerations: what do you need to consider in deciding how to approach the issue?
- A-** Action: what action would you take?
- R-** Result: what result would you anticipate?
- E-** Evaluation: how would you evaluate the actual result?



Unusual or Puzzle Questions

Some interviewers pride themselves on asking unexpected or tricky questions to try to assess your ability to think on your feet, solve problems under stress, or deal with the unexpected. They view these questions as a way to uncover the real you as opposed to the answers you've rehearsed. In responding to these types of questions, it's less about your exact answer and more about how you perform under pressure. Here are some tips to help you succeed:

- Take your time to think the question through and organize your thoughts: It's okay to say, "That's a tough question!" or "Let me give that some thought."
- Ask clarifying questions to get as much information as you can.
- Show you have a sense of humor. Don't be put off by an oddball question, show that you can have some fun.
- Respond professionally. Even though the question may have surprised you or seem silly, maintain your composure and give an answer that highlights an aspect of your skills, knowledge, or personality that relates to the job.

Test your skill by answering the Top 10 Oddball Interview Questions of 2015 compiled by Glassdoor:

"What would you do if you were the one survivor in a plane crash?" Asked at Airbnb.

"What's your favorite 90s jam?" Asked at Squarespace.

"If you woke up and had 2,000 unread emails and could only answer 300 of them how would you choose which ones to answer?" Asked at Dropbox.

"Who would win in a fight between Spiderman and Batman?" Asked at Stanford University.

"If you had a machine that produced \$100/day for life what would you be willing to pay for it today?" Asked at Aksia.

"What did you have for breakfast?" Asked at Banana Republic.

"Describe the color yellow to somebody who's blind." Asked at Spirit Airlines.

"If you were asked to unload a jumbo jet full of jelly beans, what would you do?" Asked at Bose.

"How many people flew out of Chicago last year?" Asked at Redbox.

"What's your favorite Disney Princess?" Asked at Cold Stone Creamery.

OTHER UNUSUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX 23.

Salary Questions

These types of questions can often catch you off guard but you should be prepared to answer questions about salary. If asked about salary requirements or desired salary, provide a range based on your research of what is typical for the position, industry, and organization for someone with your level of experience. It is also good to mention that something within that range, depending on the benefits offered, would be acceptable. A high salary might sound attractive at first until you learn the details of any benefits that might be included. Any job offer is a combination of salary and benefits—from medical coverage, vacation, sick leave, flexible work schedules, mileage reimbursement, tuition assistance, even job title—so be sure to consider what aspects of the total compensation package are most important to you not just salary (this is discussed further in the section about salary negotiation). Another option is to sidestep the question by stating that you are very interested in the position and that as long as the salary is in line with the responsibilities of the position and comparable to similar positions, you are sure that if offered the job you could come to an agreement on the salary.

In some instances, either in an interview or on a job application, you may be asked for your salary history. This is fairly straightforward in most instances- state past salaries/hourly rates along with any benefits that were included. For example, *"I was paid \$10.50/hour plus vacation, medical benefits, and mileage reimbursement for work-related travel."*

As an AmeriCorps member the answer to the salary question may seem more complicated but it really isn't. To start with, when discussing salary history always think of your entire compensation package- stipend, housing, health insurance, educational award (it is taxed as income!). Don't shy away from your income level during your year of service; embrace it! No one is expecting that you are getting rich as an AmeriCorps member but they do recognize your sacrifice and desire to better yourself and your community. For example, you could say something like, *"I decided to give a year of service to help better my community and fulfill my desire to be engaged in positive civic change. While AmeriCorps does provide a small stipend and an educational award, my compensation from this position is not a useful point of reference, but I'm excited to work here and the salary I would be looking for is..."* Also, see the section below on Salary Negotiation for further information.

Inappropriate Questions

Most employers will be well trained on what questions are inappropriate or illegal to ask in an interview. However, should you be asked one of these inappropriate questions here are some suggestions on how to respond:

How old are you?: *"If you're asking me how many years I've worked in this field, I've been working for 3 years"*

Do you have children?: *"If you're wondering if I can work evenings, then the answer is yes, I am available to work evenings when necessary"*

Do you have a car?: *"If your wondering if I have reliable transportation so that I will be at work on time, then the answer is yes"*

As you practice interview questions, be sure you can answer the questions that you most fear- gaps in employment, job-hopping, being fired, your biggest weakness, a conflict you've had with a co-worker. Whatever questions make you most uncomfortable, preparing a well-thought out answer in advance will not only allow you to provide an effective answer but also reduce your overall interview anxiety as well.

6. Prepare questions to ask the interviewer(s).

Asking pertinent questions shows your interest in the position and demonstrates that you have done your research. Plan ahead and prepare 2-3 questions to ask the interviewer. Here are some possible questions you might ask:

- What other departments do you interface with most frequently?
- What are the key factors to be successful in this position?
- What are the current top priorities for the position/department/organization?
- What projects would you like to have completed within the next three months?
- What would you expect a top performer to accomplish in the first 30, 60 or 90 days?
- What are the biggest challenges facing someone in this position?
- You asked me a lot of questions about _____. Tell me more about the specific expectations you have for this area.
- What is the most important quality I need to succeed in this position?
- What are the common attributes of your top performers?
- What are some things that drive results for your company?
- Where do you see the organization in 5 years?
- Can you tell me a little about the team I'd be working with?

- What do you enjoy most about working for this organization/department?
- How would you describe the department's/company's culture?
- What was the last big achievement that was celebrated?
- What are some of your favorite office traditions?
- What are the next steps in the process?
- When might I expect to hear from you about next steps?

7. Prepare materials to bring to the interview.

This would include a copy of your resume, cover letter, and application as well as a list of references that you can leave behind if you haven't already submitted them. All of these items should be put neatly in a folder or portfolio. You might also have a letter of recommendation, a few relevant work samples, and depending on the type of position, a professional portfolio of your work. Whatever you bring, other than your professional portfolio, you should be comfortable leaving behind and not having it returned. You do not want to put the burden on the employer of asking them to send back any of your items.

8. Consider Your Appearance

Like it or not your outward appearance including what you wear to an interview make a lasting impression. During the interview you want the focus to be on the information you share about how well qualified you are for the position and not on a distracting aspect of your appearance. If you are uncertain about what to wear to an interview, here are some quick tips:

- Clean clothes free of wrinkles.
- Clean, professional shoes (no tennis shoes, sandals or flip flops).
- Minimal jewelry and remove distracting piercings.
- Cover tattoos if interviewing at a conservative company or if you're unsure of how a tattoo will be perceived by the employer. You can simply wear clothing that covers your tattoos or use a cover up sleeve or tattoo concealer makeup.
- No sleeveless clothing, spaghetti straps, bare midriffs or low-cut tops.
- No hats or sunglasses and if you wear prescription glasses make sure they are clean and in good repair.
- Skirts should be just above the knee when seated and not too tight.
- Invest in clothes that fit your body and budget. You can save money by shopping at a local thrift store or connecting with a program, such as Dress for Success (<https://www.dressforsuccess.org>), that provides interview clothes. You may also want to check with your local OneStop Career Center for help in locating a resource for donated interview attire.
- Go light on the cologne/perfume or do not use fragrance at all since some people have sensitivities to these products.
- Simple classically professional outfits win over fashion statements; dressing nice for an interview is different than dressing nice for a cocktail party.
- Pay attention to personal hygiene, shower and use deodorant. If you tend to sweat in stressful situations (like interviews!), place a tissue or handkerchief in your pocket so you can wipe your palm discreetly before shaking hands.
- Keep your hair brushed away from your face.
- If you carry a purse, portfolio, briefcase or messenger bag, make sure it is in good condition and professional; no backpacks.
- If using nail polish use a clear or neutral tone.
- Keep facial hair relatively short and neat and make sure you are freshly shaved.
- Have a couple of interview outfits so you have options if asked back for a second interview.



If you look in the mirror and question whether what you are wearing is professional enough, then it probably isn't. Seek input from others and remember, even if the dress code is casual on a day-to-day basis at an organization, give the interview the respect that it deserves and dress professionally. It is always better to be dressed a bit more conservatively than it is to be too casual. If you present yourself as a serious professional, the interviewer will see you in that light as well!

9. Practice Self Care

Leading up to your interview be sure to take care of yourself so you will be at your best the day of the interview. This includes getting plenty of sleep, eating well the night before and prior to your interview, avoiding alcohol, drugs and too much caffeine, and doing something to relax you whether that be yoga, taking a run, deep breathing exercises, throwing a Frisbee with your dog, or going to a movie with friends.



EXERCISE Mock Interviews

Participate in at least two mock interviews and have the interviewers complete the Mock Interview Evaluation in **APPENDIX 24** to evaluate your performance.

During the Interview

With all the work you've done, you will certainly walk into the interview feeling well prepared and confident. Make the most of your time during the interview by following these guidelines:

- Arrive about 10 minutes prior to your scheduled interview time and present a professional attitude and appearance from the moment you arrive at the building (you never know who might be watching!). Those interviewing you, and other staff, will begin to evaluate you as soon as they see you. Go by yourself. If a friend or relative drives you, have them wait in the car. Be sure your phone is in silent mode and put away.
- First impressions count so start by making eye contact, smiling, and offering a firm handshake to everyone you meet. Bring a positive attitude and enthusiasm for the organization and the position.
- Remember the importance of nonverbal communication including facial expressions, body language, mannerisms, and other habits you might be inclined to fall into when you are nervous such as cracking your knuckles, fiddling with your hair, or talking fast. Try to

minimize any of these distracting behaviors and use a professional posture that communicates interest and engagement. When the interviewer offers you a seat, sit upright but not too stiffly in your chair. Relax and lean slightly forward towards your interviewer. Rest your hands, loosely clasped in your lap or on the table or desk in front of you. Keep your feet flat on the floor or cross your legs at the ankles.

- If offered a bottle or glass of water, accept! You may not be thirsty at the start of your interview but after talking for 20 minutes a drink of water may be welcome.
- Be very careful with humor that you think is funny, someone else may find it offensive.
- Listen carefully. It's okay to pause for a moment when asked a question to quickly think about how you want to answer or what is the best example to use. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification or for it to be repeated.
- Be sincere, concise, and honest. Limit your responses to just a couple of minutes and only include details that are relevant to the position. Being prepared with your S.T.A.R. stories should make this easy to manage. You can always ask if they would like you to elaborate, share another example, or provide additional information.
- When answering questions provide the most relevant information for the position you are applying for. Just as you customize your resume and cover letter for each specific job, you will want to customize your answers to interview questions. What you share as your key strengths for one position may be a bit different than the strengths you share for another position. And your answer to "what is your greatest accomplishment?" might be different for a camp counselor job than it is for a grant writing assistant position.

- If offered the opportunity at the end of the interview, ask a couple of the questions you've prepared. This will show that you've done your research and indicate your interest in the organization. Remember do not ask about salary or benefits.
- Interviewers will typically ask if you have anything to add. This is the time to share any information you feel is relevant but hasn't yet been discussed (recall the 4-5 key points you outlined when preparing for the interview). Also, take the opportunity to present a few sentences that remind them of your qualifications, reiterate your interest in the position, communicate your enthusiasm for the organization, and let them know you want the job.
- Shake everyone's hand when you leave and express your thanks for their time and consideration.



What NOT to do in an Interview

Below are some behaviors that can result in an unsuccessful interview.

- ✗ Being late
- ✗ Lying or being misleading
- ✗ Lack of preparation
- ✗ Not providing specific examples
- ✗ Not having a career goal
- ✗ Not knowing about the organization or department

- ✗ Trouble communicating or maintaining a conversation
 - ✗ Speaking poorly of past employers
 - ✗ Sharing personal information
 - ✗ Using humor inappropriately
 - ✗ Lack of eye contact
 - ✗ Weak handshake
 - ✗ Dressing unprofessionally
 - ✗ Having your cell phone buzz or ring or worse yet, answering a call during your interview!
 - ✗ Overemphasis on compensation/benefits or what the company can do for you
 - ✗ Not asking questions when given the opportunity
 - ✗ Neglecting to recognize and thank the interviewer for their time
 - ✗ Lack of interest and enthusiasm for the position
- Thank the interviewer(s) for their time.
 - Reiterate your interest in the position and why you feel you are qualified.
 - Provide any information you forgot to mention in the interview.
 - Highlight something specific from the interview discussion- perhaps something you learned about the organization that surprised you, or a personal connection or experience you shared with a panelist (such as both having served in AmeriCorps), or something that resonated with your own values or interests.
 - Follow up on anything they asked you to send such as a writing sample or list of references.

After the Interview

You're done, you made it through! Your work is over, right? Think again. There are a few very important steps to complete.

1. Evaluate

As soon as possible after the interview, write down all the questions you remember and evaluate your performance. This will give you areas for improvement and additional questions to practice for your next interview.

2. Offer Your Thanks

Surprisingly very few candidates take the time to show the courtesy of sending a thank you letter/email but, when well done and error free, it can make you stand out as a top-notch candidate. Your note doesn't have to be long- a couple of short paragraphs will suffice- but you **MUST** send one. In your note you can:

If you are communicating via email, you can send one email to everyone on the panel or send personalized emails to each person. Hopefully, you collected everyone's names and contact information way back when you were initially contacted for the interview but if not, either do some online research to gather people's contact information or reach out to the person who scheduled the interview to ask for the names and contact information of the panel members.

If you are sending a hard-copy thank you, either print it on nice paper like you would use for submitting a hard-copy resume or use a professional thank you card. This is not the occasion to send a cute thank you note with a kitten in a basket of flowers on the front! (unless you've applied for a position at the SPCA!). If you choose to write your letter by hand, have a friend verify that your handwriting is legible.

A SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX 25.

3. Follow Up Appropriately

If you don't hear back from an employer you may automatically think you didn't get the job, but that's not always the case. The employer may have had every intention of making a decision within the timeframe they shared at the interview but other priorities came up and filling the position was pushed aside. For example, you interview on a Monday morning and the employer tells you they will be back in touch by the end of the week but now it's the following Wednesday and you haven't heard a thing. In cases like this it is perfectly fine to check on the status of the position. Think about following up as a way to continue the conversation not as a way to push for a decision. Use the method of communication you've used throughout the interview process (phone, email, LinkedIn) to make contact with the organization's representative and follow these steps:

- If you weren't given a timeframe for when they expected to make a decision, wait at least a week to ten days after your interview before emailing; if emailing doesn't work you can try leaving a phone message.
- Identify yourself and the position you've applied for, indicating that you had an interview last week.
- Ask if they can provide you with an update on the status of the position.
- If they tell you they are still deciding, express your continued interest, ask if they need anything else from you, and tell them you look forward to hearing from them.
- If they tell you that the position has been filled, thank them for considering you, ask if they might have any other similar positions opening up soon, and thank them for their time.

4. Handle Rejection

If you didn't get the job offer, re-evaluate the interview and respond to the phone call or email notifying you that you weren't selected. Always be polite, thank the organization for the opportunity to be considered, and let them know that you would be pleased to be considered for future opportunities. While this position may not have worked out for you, you want to continue to project a professional image as in the future you may want to apply to another position with the same organization or someone from that organization may share your name with a colleague who is looking to fill a position.

You can also ask for feedback, but know that employers are often hesitant to provide any more detail than "we selected someone who was more qualified".

Handling Job Offers and Salary Negotiations

Congratulations, you've been offered the job! First and foremost, thank the employer and communicate your enthusiasm. Before you jump at the offer, listen to the details. It's perfectly fine to hear their offer and ask for 24-48 hours to consider, check in with other job applications that you may have pending, and think about whether or not you want to negotiate any aspects of the offer such as start date, vacation, or salary. While you do not want to bring up any of these topics during an interview, now that you have an offer you can ask questions about these.

Before starting any salary negotiation, it is important to do your research and know your value. The following websites are helpful resources for gathering salary information so you know what is realistic:

- Glassdoor, <http://www.glassdoor.com>
- Salary.com, <http://www.salary.com>
- California Career Zone, <http://www.careerzone.org>

- CareerOne Stop: <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/wages/find-salary.aspx?frd=true>

To determine where you might fall in the salary range provided, consider your skill set, years of experience, and level of education. Salaries can vary widely depending on geographic area and industry, so be as specific as possible in reviewing salary data.

If you feel the salary offered is low, let the employer know that given the research you've done and the skills and experience you would bring to the job you are looking for something in the range of \$X-\$X. Once you state your desired amount, it is very important to stay quiet and let the employer speak next. Although it is tempting to jump in to fill the silence, state your desired salary with confidence knowing it's based on research and then stop talking! Keep in mind that the employer may not have the ability to offer you more money so be respectful, know what you're willing to accept (how low can you go?), and consider asking for non-monetary benefits (see below), which the employer may more easily be able to offer.

Salary is certainly a major aspect of any job offer but what other aspects of compensation such as health benefits, vacation time, sick leave, flexible work schedules, a laptop, training opportunities, or other perks may you want? How can these play a role in your negotiation strategy? Prioritize your needs, and then evaluate a job offer. Perhaps you are willing to forego a higher salary for an extra week's vacation or the organization paying for you to acquire an important industry certification. You may want to review your work values from the self-assessment phase to refresh your memory about what is most important to you.

Staying Organized During Your Job Search

As you begin your job search there will be many details to manage from remembering which resume you submitted to a specific job, to who

referred you to a particular contact, to when you should follow up about an opening, to the date of an upcoming career fair. Creating a system to organize yourself will allow you to take full advantage of the opportunities that come your way and present a professional image at each stage. Follow these tips to help:

- Use a calendar or reminder app to track appointments, deadlines, schedule networking meetings, interviews, and make note of when to follow-up on positions to which you've applied. Create a daily and/or weekly "To Do" list.
- For each job you apply to, make a file (electronic or hard copy) that has the customized resume and cover letter you submitted for the position. You can add your research on the company and the position, and any other information related to the job.
- Create a Job Application Tracker (**SEE SAMPLE IN APPENDIX 26**) that includes each job you applied to, important dates, follow-up steps, contacts, and notes.
- Check your phone and email messages at least twice a day. If an employer contacts you a speedy response is critical. Consider letting phone calls go to voice mail so you can prepare for and be professional (not in a loud setting or rushed) when you call back.
- Complete a weekly Job Search Activity Plan (**SEE SAMPLE IN APPENDIX 27**) to set goals for yourself, keep the process moving forward, and evaluate your efforts.

Evaluate Your Job Search Effectiveness and Make Adjustments

If your job search isn't progressing as you had hoped, maybe it's time to try a different strategy. Evaluate what is going well and what has been a struggle. Revisit sections in this Guide that address the areas you are struggling with to see if you can learn more about the best approach.

Perhaps you are applying for positions that aren't a good match for your skills, or your resume could be revised so that it is more focused or includes more relevant accomplishment statements. Maybe another mock interview would help you hone your interview skills, or you need to expand your networking efforts.

Don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor, program director, or others in your network to seek their input and ideas. Discussing your successes and challenges with other job seekers also can be tremendously helpful as you learn from each other. Sometimes an outside perspective is just what you may need to provide that new idea, resource, or contact that will reinvigorate your search. Often just a slight correction in your approach can open up much greater opportunity so don't shy away from making adjustments throughout the job search process.



BEFORE YOU MOVE ON...

Attitude

The job search process is an emotional roller coaster. In the span of 24 hours you might learn you didn't get a job you thought you were perfectly qualified for, realize you submitted the wrong cover letter for another job, get a personal referral to a recruiter who works for your dream organization, and get a call back for a second interview at another organization. These normal ups and downs of the job search can play havoc on your emotions so follow these tips to keep a positive attitude and maintain your well-being:

- Have a strong support system of friends, family, other job seekers, mentors, supervisors, and your program manager.
- Surround yourself with positive, encouraging people and limit your time with those who tend to be negative.
- Manage your job search stress levels by getting plenty of rest, eating well, and exercising regularly.
- Start a job search support group- good for your emotional well-being and for networking!
- Visualize yourself being successful in your job search.
- Keep your sense of humor (read the comics daily, watch a funny movie).
- Build in rewards for your hard work.

Rejection is an inevitable aspect of the job search- networking meetings that go no where, job applications that you never hear back about, unreturned emails and phone calls- but keep at it. Successful job hunters will tell you to put your trust in the job search process and know that if you are following the techniques outlined in this Guide you are on your way to hearing an employer say, "You're hired!" Remember that every "no" puts you one step closer to "yes". Regroup, evaluate what's working and what's not; enlist the help of others to inject new ideas into your approach. If you're feeling down, do something you know you enjoy.

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN