

THE JOB SEARCH



Your job search begins the moment you start thinking about life after Garrett College and continues until you have accepted a job offer. Even then, however, it doesn't end, as our ever-changing economy requires workers to constantly be planning for their next job. Over your life span, you are likely to go through the Job Search Process several times. In fact, on average, you can expect to change jobs 10 times and change careers 3-5 times, if not more.

Each time you change jobs, for whatever reason, you need to start at the beginning of the Job Search Process and work through it again. The specifics of your job search will change as you change, but the basic process remains the same. Change happens □ often in spite of your careful planning □ so learning the specifics of the Job Search Process NOW will empower you with a valuable lifelong skill.

How Much Time Does a Job Search Take?

In general, job finding success is directly proportional to the amount of time you are willing to spend in your search and the number of strategies you use to identify potential openings. Experts suggest that you □

1. Be prepared for a long job search, approximately 3 to 6 months.
2. Spend at least 20 hours a week (if not 40 hours) on your job search.
3. Use all job search techniques that fit your job search goal.
4. Have an alternative plan □ be on the lookout for a □bridge□position, one that can take care of basic financial and other needs while you look for a job that better matches your career plans.

Your perseverance will eventually pay off. A valuable resource is having a support system of family and friends to help you when you are feeling discouraged.

What Do I Need to Know Before I Start My Job Search?

There is no magic answer when it comes to finding a job. It is hard work, takes ample time and energy, and frequently becomes boring and frustrating. It will require all your skills in planning and follow-through, but when done faithfully, it also pays the ultimate reward □ a satisfying job! Rejection is a normal part of job hunting and may be a new experience for you. Rather than letting rejection discourage you, let each instance be an opportunity to improve your job search skills for your next interaction with an employer.

Remember, your job search is your responsibility! You are the one who has to get out there and make things happen □ no one can do it for you! The main strategy in effective job seeking is to be proactive. That is, the next step in the process (and there is always a next step!) is your responsibility. Simply being reactive when news of an opening comes to you will guarantee that you spend a lot of time just waiting for the phone to ring.
So, get out there!!

The Career & Transfer Services Office at Garrett College, located in Room 412, is available to assist you with each step of the Job Search Process.

What Are the Steps of the Job Search Process?

A list of steps follows, the order of which may vary depending on your specific needs and goals.

Self-Assessment:

The first step is self-assessment, the process of turning inward and assessing your interests, values, and abilities. Before looking for a specific job, ask yourself the following questions:

- What captures my attention and excites me (interests)?
- What is important to me and is needed in order for me to be happy and productive at work (values)?
- What can I do well and truly enjoy doing (abilities)?
- What have I learned from my academic, paid, and volunteer experiences?
- Where do I want to live?
- What kind of lifestyle do I envision for myself?

Career & Transfer Services has several on-line career assessment programs for Garrett College students. To use this program, contact Career & Transfer Services to get a user name and password.

Employment Objective:

Having a clear idea about who you are, what you want to do, what you can do, and in what environment you want to do it will enable you to develop a clear, concrete career objective. Whether or not this objective is eventually included on your résumé, you must be able to clearly articulate what kind of job you are looking for. This will enable employers to better know how to evaluate you for the best job match.

Résumé and Cover Letter:

These are the two most basic self-marketing tools for your job search. Often they are a prospective employer's first opportunity to evaluate you and are always your chance to really sell yourself. Remember, first impressions are important, so developing an effective résumé and a strong, targeted cover letter is essential. Career & Transfer Services can assist you with their development.

Job Search Plan of Action:

The successful job search requires a definite and well-developed strategy. How will you develop a list of potential employers and other contacts? How will you contact them and what will you say? What portion of your day and/or week can you commit to job search activities? How will you keep track of your interview and other commitments? How will you access the "hidden job market," those jobs that never get advertised? What are your communication strengths and how can you best use them? How will you make the best impression on employers and get the word out that you are available? These and other questions need to be answered in planning your job search strategy. Failing to do so will cost you in terms of time, money, and missed opportunities.

Interviews:

Getting an interview is the goal of all the above steps. It is common, however, for the job seeker to be so intent on getting interviews that they neglect to prepare for them. Being well prepared for an interview includes researching the organization, being prepared to communicate what you can contribute to that specific organization, and being ready with strong answers to questions that are typically asked of employers. Also, you should be ready to send a thank you note after the interview.

Job Offer:

"You've got the job!" are the four words job seekers most want to hear. But, then what? You must be prepared to evaluate the offer to see if it matches your interests, values, and abilities as well as your short-term and long-term career goals. Also, it is important to evaluate whether or not the salary offered will cover your basic monthly living expenses and allow you to begin at least a modest savings plan. If you feel that it does not, you may have to consider negotiating for additional salary, a skill in and of itself.

And back to the beginning! The cycle starts all over again as soon as you accept a position.

Which Job Search Techniques Should I Consider?

Your job search plan of action needs to include a variety of techniques in order to be effective. Again, a key is to be as proactive as possible and to rely less on the reactive methods. Consider these:

Garrett College Career & Transfer Services:

Assistance is available through Career & Transfer Services for Career Planning and Changing, Exploring Careers and Majors, Developing Job Hunting Strategies, and Connecting with Employers. Get to know the Career & Transfer Services staff in order to be connected with employers who are specifically recruiting Garrett College students. Ask about Job Listings, Job Fairs and other services.

- Tips:**
1. Do not expect that Career & Transfer Services will place you in a job.
 2. Take advantage of all the services offered by Career & Transfer Services, but do not rely on this one source alone; your job search must incorporate a large variety of different techniques.

Networking:

This is the MOST effective job search strategy. Networking is essentially letting as many people as possible know that you are looking for a job. Everyone includes family, friends, faculty, your health care providers, church members, high school teachers, owners of businesses that you frequent, neighbors – basically anyone with whom you come in contact!

- Tips:**
1. Develop a 30-second script that highlights what you are looking for and your strengths.
 2. Ask people for referrals to other people who might be helpful in your job search.
 3. Attend group gatherings to make additional contacts.

Cold Calls/Walk-Ins:

Sometimes, knocking on the door works well. This is where you make unsolicited telephone calls to companies or go in person to inquire about possible openings. With this technique, you can demonstrate your enthusiasm and make a favorable impression on a decision maker. However, in order for it to work, you must thoroughly prepare in advance.

- Tips:**
1. Carefully research the company by reviewing its website and other promotional material.
 2. Have a solid self-marketing pitch that emphasizes your strengths and qualifications.
 3. Be prepared to present yourself in the most professional manner possible by dressing professionally and/or having a confident tone to your voice.

Field Specific Listings:

These are job announcements found in professional journals, newsletters, and websites. The benefit of these kinds of listings is, of course, that they are targeted to the field you are seeking to enter and can be particularly valuable if relocation is not an issue.

- Tips:**
1. Consider joining a professional association related to your field; they typically offer a reduced student membership fee and publish job listings for their members.
 2. Bookmark field specific websites and refer to these sites often and regularly.
 3. Develop a résumé and cover letter specific to jobs found in these sources of leads.

Direct Mailing:

Sending out a large number of résumés and cover letters, without any prior contact with the company or knowledge of a specific job opening, is a common but passive and ineffective strategy. It is important that you know the odds: for every 100 résumés you send out, you can expect 11 replies, and not all of these replies will be interview offers. Please consider how much time, money, energy and hope you want to invest for this kind of return.

- Tips:**
1. Avoid using "To Whom It May Concern" on cover letters; instead research the company to find the appropriate contact name and title.
 2. Always follow-up by phone to determine appropriate next steps with the organization.

Newspaper Want Ads:

This is probably still the most widely used job search technique, even though it is a reactive one and only accesses about 10-20% of the available openings. Like direct mailing, want ads do not always yield a high positive return, although some fields and organizations use them more regularly than others. A better use of newspapers may be for the information you can gain about a specific geographic area and about growth and activities at specific companies.

- Tips:**
1. Subscribe to a paper in a city or state where you hope to relocate; often you can view these papers online.
 2. Use listings to identify required skills and their related action verbs to help target your résumé.
 3. Use as a tool to research salary and hiring trends.

Employer Websites:

Many times, companies will list their available job openings on their website. You can often get to these listings by looking for the Career, Employment, and/or Job icon on the company homepage. You may also be able to apply directly to the company online through these sites.

- Tips:**
1. Use a search engine such as Google to locate employer websites.
 2. Bookmark employer websites and refer to them often and on a regular basis.
 3. Use the website to research a targeted company; a good place to look is on the company's investor relations page.

Web Surfing:

Using the Internet allows you to locate a wide variety of resources that may not be readily available elsewhere. With patience and perseverance, you may come across sites and information that will help you unearth wonderful job leads and people to contact.

- Tips:**
1. Use a search engine to find helpful sites by searching on terms specific to your targeted field.
 2. Read carefully and always check "last updated" dates.
 3. Periodically eliminate temp files from your computer to minimize advertisements.
 4. Beware sites that market products and require sign-up fees.

Public Employment Agencies:

Service is free to residents, and access to job listings is easy through the Internet. Many times, specific job search preparation and support activities are provided. In Garrett County, the One-Stop Career Center is located at 221 South Third Street in Oakland (301-334-3972). Every state has a public employment agency.

- Tips:**
1. Remember, it is your responsibility to stay in touch with the One-Stop, not the other way around.
 2. Many jobs may not be targeted to college students, so be specific with your objective.
 3. Job listings for any state can be found at www.ajb.org.

Private Employment Agencies/Recruiters:

Using a private employment agency or other third party recruiter may present options unavailable under other circumstances, although it should never replace other more proactive strategies. Using these agencies can be especially helpful for temporary and contractual positions

- Tips:**
1. Always ask about fees and read all contracts carefully. Avoid recruiters that charge you a fee.
 2. Be aware of pressure to accept jobs that are not a match to your objective or expertise.

Luck and Chance:

Don't underestimate the power of fortuitous circumstances! Luck, however, is most often not something that just happens. Lucky people are those who work to make their job search goals known to others, pay attention to their environment and the possibilities present in it, and actively take advantage of every possibility. Being lucky takes hard work!

Should I Keep A Record of My Search?

Absolutely! Develop a file system in order to keep track of résumés, cover letters, job leads and other job search materials. Keep track of the names, mailing addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of your contacts and prospects. Use a calendar to record every contact you make and every follow-up deadline that you set. A combination of systems can be used to record your job search progress, including a three-ring career binder, other notebooks with pockets, computer files, palm pilots, and paper calendars.

The key is to stay organized so that information is readily available to you and no deadline is missed!

What Internet Sites May Be Helpful in an Effective Job Search?

Try these for starters:

www.collegecentral.com/garrettcollege

Garrett College's online job posting system. Employers who list jobs on this system are interested specifically in Garrett College students and alumni. Through College Central's national jobs database, you can also search through more than 500,000 jobs available across the country. To make the most of the system, make sure to post your résumé so it can be searched by employers.

www.careernet.state.md.us/

CareerNet is Maryland's one-stop on the Internet for information and services if you are a job seeker looking for a job or developing a career plan. Information about the labor market, training providers, and education programs is also part of CareerNet's universe of employment resources.

www.ajb.org/md or www.ajb.org/wv

America's Job Bank (AJB) is an easily accessible nationwide job and résumé bank that helps job seekers and employers find each other. With millions of job openings and résumés posted online, AJB is the largest job banks on the web.

www.monster.com

Search over 800,000 jobs, build and post your résumé and access thousands of pages of career info and advice.

www.careerbuilder.com

CareerBuilder.com is the nation's leading online job network with more than 15 million unique visitors and over 600,000 jobs. CareerBuilder.com powers the online career centers for more than 450 partners that reach national, local, industry, diversity and niche audiences, including more than 130 newspapers. Millions of job seekers visit the site every month to search for opportunities. More than 30,000 of the nation's top employers, sign up for automatic email job alerts, and get advice on job hunting and career management.

www.usajobs.opm.gov

USAJOBS is the official job site of the United States Federal Government. It is provided at no cost and offers information on more than 14,000 U.S. government job opportunities worldwide.

www.rileyguide.com

One of the most comprehensive listings of employment opportunities and job resources on the Internet. Contents include links to sites with information on Preparing to Search, Executing a Campaign, Targeting and Researching, Job Listings, Résumés and Cover Letters, Networking, Interviewing, Negotiating, and Salary Guides.

Sample Daily Job Search Schedule:

8:00 a.m.

Get Ready!

Needed equipment includes

1. A clean, quiet area to work from without interruptions
2. A telephone
3. Newspaper Want-Ads, Yellow Pages, and Network Contact List
4. List of companies and Jobs researched on the Internet
5. Paper and Pen
6. Calendar
7. Telephone Script

9:00 a.m.

Gather New Leads!

Aim for 10-15 new job leads gathered from the Internet, Newspaper Ads, Yellow Pages, and/or your Networking Contact List.

9:15 a.m.

Check on Old Leads!

Follow-up on calls previously placed, résumés sent, and interviews completed.

9:45 a.m.

Take a Quick Break!

10:00 a.m.

Take Action!

Start making phone calls, and plan appointments in your calendar. Document, document, document! Write down all actions taken, all appointments scheduled, and all dates on which follow-up calls need to be placed.

11:00 a.m.

Send Résumés!

Mail out résumés in response to ads and as promised during your phone calls with employers. Don't forget the cover letter.

12:00 p.m.

Lunch!

Use this time to get ready to make your best in-person impression.

1:00 p.m.

Continue Job Search, Inside or Out!

1. Go to any interview appointments and/or drop off your résumé and cover letters at the post office.
2. Apply in person and fill out at least 3 applications.
3. Set-up informational interviewing appointments.
4. Explore volunteer possibilities.
5. Check-in with Career & Transfer Services and the Maryland Job Service Office.

4:00 p.m.

Write Thank You Notes!

Write and send thank you notes to employers with whom you have interviewed, contacts with whom you have informational interviewed, and people from your networking list with whom you have spoken today.

5:00 p.m.

Good Job! You Are Done for the Day!

Pat yourself on the back for a productive job search day! Don't worry it **WILL** pay off!