

The task of job searching can be overwhelming, but you can make it manageable by breaking up your job/internship search into simple steps. Use this checklist to get started.

You can receive assistance with these steps through Jefferson College Employment Services.

Step 1: Know yourself.

- _____ I have completed self-assessment activities.
- _____ I have identified my personal strengths, skills, interests, and values.
- _____ I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest.
- _____ I can name two or three careers/jobs/ internships I plan to pursue.

Step 2: Know where you want to work.

- _____ I have researched employers that might hire someone with my skills, interests, and background.
- _____ I have researched my potential career fields: typical entry-level jobs, salaries, best geographic location for jobs, etc. *or* I have researched internships and how they fit with my career/ educational plans.
- _____ I have identified the top three geographic areas where I'd like to live and work.
- _____ I have identified 10 potential employers for the type of work/ internship I am seeking.
- _____ I have determined that my skills match with those required by the job descriptions from my career field.

Step 3: Get ready for the search.

- _____ I prepared a resume and cover letter for my search.
- _____ I sought help from Jefferson College Employment Services or Missouri Job Center if I needed it.
- _____ I have had my job search materials (resume and cover letter) reviewed by a professional.
- _____ I have prepared work samples or a portfolio to highlight my experience, skills, and talent.
- _____ I have developed my "30-second speech" for brief encounters with employers, especially for job fairs.
- _____ I have analyzed my education/experience and developed my "story" for employers.
- _____ I have identified and asked three individuals to serve as professional references.
- _____ I have developed and practiced my interview skills.
- _____ I have prepared for interviews by doing a mock interview.
- _____ I have an interview outfit that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work.
- _____ I have a professional-sounding ring tone and answering machine/voice mail message.
- _____ I have a neutral/professional e-mail address to provide to employers.
- _____ I have reviewed my online presence, utilized my privacy settings, and addressed any concerns.
- _____ I have a strategy for using social media in my job search.

Step 4: Start Searching

- _____ I have uploaded my resume to www.collegecentral.com/jeffco.
- _____ I regularly check online job search sites and networks for career opportunities.
- _____ I read the appropriate job/internship-search resources for my field(s) of interest.
- _____ I have a system for keeping track of my contacts, job applications, interviews, and other job search activities.
- _____ I follow up on every interesting job/internship lead immediately.
- _____ I have developed and keep in contact a list of potential networking contacts.
- _____ I keep a copy of my resume with me in case I receive a call from an employer.
- _____ When needed, I follow up with a phone call or e-mail to the employer requesting a job/internship interview.
- _____ I send thank you letters or e-mails to every person who interviews me within 24 hours.

Selected Online Job Searching Resources

General Sites

- www.jeffco.edu/employmentservices
- www.collegecentral.com/jeffco
- jobs.mo.gov/
- www.indeed.com
- www.linkedin.com
- www.google.com – Job search feature
- susanireland.com
- www.onetonline.org
- www.glassdoor.com
- www.idealists.org

Local Sites

- www.myleaderpaper.com
- www.stltoday.com
- www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/jobs

Internship/ Volunteer Sites

- www.internships.com
- www.allforgood.org

Government Sites (city, county, state, federal)

- www.mo.gov/work/job-seekers/
- www.fbijobs.gov/
- www.usajobs.gov
- www.makingthedifference.org
- www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/

College Sites

- www.campuscareercenter.com
- www.aboutjobs.com

Industrial/ Job Type Sites

- www.hcareers.com
- www.allretailjobs.com
- www.computerwork.com
- www.mlnmonursing.org
- www.medzilla.com
- www.justtechjobs.com
- www.greenjobsearch.org
- www.dice.com

Other Sites

- www2.recruitmilitary.com/
- www.askearn.org

Consult the Jefferson College library for job search titles and resources.

Research and Develop

- Your research sources: www.onetonline.org, careeronestop.org, www.bls.gov/ooh/, www.missourieconomy.org.
- Determine what work your skills, education, and experience qualify you to do.
- Know the duties, skills, and training needed to do a job.
- Know potential job titles – the same position can have many different titles.
- Find alternatives- identify other careers related to your interests.
- Areas of growth: What are the opportunities for promotion? What skills do the opportunities require? How long would promotion take? What are the benefits of moving up?
- Who are your potential employers?
 - Determine how far you are willing to commute or if you are willing to relocate.
 - Look for all the potential employers within that area.
 - Bookmark employer websites. Where are job openings posted?
- What jobs are out there now? How are they advertised? What skills do they demand?
- What is the growth outlook for your career in the next year? 5 years? 10 years?
- Tailor your resume and cover letter to the job to which you are applying. This involves directly connecting your experiences to the skills needed for the job.
- Use keywords from the job description to optimize a keyword search of your resume and cover letter.
 - *Keywords* are specific words an employer looks for when using an Applicant Tracking System to scan your resume/ cover letter. Interview decisions are made based on the degree to which your materials match with the keywords. To find potential keywords use the job description and match the language the employer uses.
- Develop a 30 second speech about yourself for introductions or job fairs. Start with your name and offer information about your educational/ work background and indicate your work interest.
- Consider using a portfolio or professional binder that displays your accomplishments.
- Use your network. Develop contacts especially within the field.
- Connect with professional organization for networking and job leads.
- Specify in both the email and cover letter the position for which you are applying.

Applying/ Online Job Applications

- Organization is key when applying for jobs.
- Develop a system to keep track of the jobs, applications, interviews and network contacts you apply for. A job tracking template or app may be helpful.
 - Keep a copy of job descriptions to which you apply.
 - Save your tailored resume and cover letters as a reference for your applications.
 - For online applications, keep track of your user name and password.
 - Keep all communication from potential employers filed together.
- Make sure you have access to a computer and ask for help if you are not confident in your PC skills. Employment Services can assist you with your job applications and has a computer available.
- Take your time on handwritten applications. Neatness counts.
- Set up a professional sounding email and ring tone/ voicemail for your phone.
- Gather all the information you will need for a job application and keep it in one location including (previous employers including (city, ST, and dates) education, skills, training, references. Pull out this application “cheat sheet” when you start applying for jobs.
- Give yourself plenty of time to fill out an application at least 1-2 hours.
- Give each application your best effort. You may have completed many applications, but it is the first time this employer is receiving it.
 - READ THE INSTRUCTIONS and follow them. Incomplete applications or improperly filled out applications may not be considered.
 - Provide all requested information as completely as possible. Do not leave blanks.
 - Use proper grammar and spelling and make sure to proof read.
 - Attach or upload your resume/ cover letter as requested. It is helpful to save your documents as a PDF file before uploading to prevent formatting changes.
- Tailor your application to fit the position by highlighting relevant qualifications, skills, computer knowledge, etc. Use keywords to enhance your application.
- Hints:
 - Save as you go, so that you do not lose information due to a technology glitch.
 - Do not use the back button on the browser it may send you to the beginning of the application and lose your progress.
- Keep in mind that online application system accounts may expire, so make sure to login to check on your accounts periodically.
- Prepare for potential red flags
 - Avoid the terms “fired” or “quit” instead “let go”, “will discuss at interview” or “resigned”.
 - Job Gaps- be prepared to discuss any gaps in your work history. If asked, use a short explanation and don’t blame your previous employer.
 - Lacking work history- use volunteer work, babysitting, lawn mowing, or clubs/ organizations.
 - Criminal Record- know your record and answer accordingly. Employers will ask about convictions (different than arrests). Misdemeanor and felony may be viewed differently, so understand type of conviction. Be honest, failure to disclose may result in lack of job offers or termination. Certain charges and/ or convictions may limit your career options.

Networking is all about relationships. It is a great way to meet new people and learn more about a career field. In fact, most job openings are filled through networks! While not always easy, networking can be just the thing that lands you that next job!

There are many places and people to include in your network:

- Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers
- Peers & Professionals
- Jefferson College clubs and organizations
- Professional clubs and organizations
- Jefferson College Alumni, faculty, staff
- Contacts from jobs or internships
- Contacts from volunteer experiences
- Contacts from information interviews
- Contacts from Job Fairs
- Missouri Job Center
- Social networking sites (LinkedIn, Twitter)

Why should you network?

- Learn about your career field, including important ideas and people.
- Learn about possible job openings or receive references and recommendations for job openings.
- Professionals can teach you what the career field will be like, while peers will be your colleagues.
- Possible mentor opportunities or colleague relationships or even business partnerships.
- Stay current in the field and be aware of changes or new trends.

Tips

- Set networking goals for yourself and follow up regularly.
- Keep track of everyone you speak with including their contact information and your conversations.
- Don't be shy. People are often very willing to talk about their experiences if they are asked.
- Start small, possibly with a group associated with your hobbies or interests.
- Ask a lot of questions and listen even more.
- Determine how you can help others and take genuine interest in them.
- Think positively and don't fear rejection. What is the worst that can happen?
- Don't doubt the power of connections. You never know who someone knows!

Networking is not:

- A onetime thing- once you start it is important to keep up your networks.
- Only when you need a job - nothing is more frustrating than the person that only contacts you when they need something, so maintain your professional relationships regularly.
- A one way street. Networking should be beneficial for each person involved.

Networking and Social Media

Social Media is a networking tool that allows communication including sharing messages, pictures, videos, and other types of media. Most people are connected to social media in at least one form, so it is important to know how this connection can both help and harm your job search. Nearly half of employers report checking the online presence of job seekers and many use that information to make employment decisions.

Common sites include:

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr/ Tumbler, Snapchat

LinkedIn is a professional networking site where you can showcase your work history, skills, and experience. You can connect with other professionals, search for jobs, and share current career news.

Advantages of social media

- Networking and connecting with people in your field. Grow and engage your network.
- Research
 - About potential employers
 - Preparing for an interview - news about company and interviewers
 - Job leads
- Create a positive personal brand for potential employers. Branding or creating your professional image allows you to showcase your skills and influence how you are perceived. Your brand is the message you want to send out and includes what you say, where you say it, and how you say it. Remember that a first impression leaves a lasting impact that is hard to change if it is negative.

Creating a Brand/ Image

- Consider your key attributes, what sets you apart, and the potential you bring to an employer.
- Review your current activities and see if they support that message and adjust if necessary.
- Maintain a consistent presence and share information/ new developments in your field.
- Promote your own work/ innovations and share new technology and trends.

Managing a negative social presence

A negative social presence may include inappropriate comments, photos, or controversial messages. While there is no taking it back, here are some things you can do now:

- Decide what and where to share your content.
- Explore your privacy setting options, set them to friends only.
- Remove or un-tag yourself from pictures that may have questionable content.
- Consider the information before you share: What does this say about me? Does that match my brand or the image I want to portray?
- Maintain good grammar and spelling.
- Consider joining a professional networking site.
- View and edit your page frequently.

Expectations and Emotions

Job searching can be a time intensive and emotional process. The average job search takes 6-18 months and there are a range of emotions that often accompany the process.

- A range of emotions are common including:
 - Fear
 - Happiness
 - Anger
 - Stress
 - Desperation
 - Denial
 - Excitement
 - Anticipation
 - Anxiety
 - Hope
 - Frustration
 - Self-doubt
- These are a common range of emotions, but if you find yourself struggling with your reaction to your job search consider...
 - Identify your emotions. How are you feeling? What is the source of that emotion?
 - Empower yourself by identifying how you feel and why.
 - It is ok to feel however you are feeling, but seek support. Talk to someone to process your feelings.
 - Change your frame of mind. Instead of questioning yourself, recognize the skills and abilities you have to assist a potential employer.
 - Realize that an average job search takes 6-18 months. Job searching is a process, so don't get too impatient.
 - If what you are doing isn't working – change your approach. Seek help from Jefferson College Employment Services or the Missouri Job Center.
 - Set up your support system to see you through the process.
 - Make a plan. Decide how you will handle these feelings moving forward and prepare for the next stage of your job search.
 - Stay positive!
 - Don't take rejection personally. Take the opportunity to reflect and learn and don't worry yourself about things that are out of your control.
 - Review your strengths and successes.
 - Think about how you handled these emotions in the past. What helped? what could you do different?
 - Review your job search strategy. Consider opening your search options or obtaining additional training, education, or experience.
 - Take action! Practice or seek additional help.
 - If your reaction is preventing you from moving forward speak to a counselor. Jefferson College has counseling resources on the R U OK? tab on MyJeffco.