

JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT:

Tools & Techniques You Need for a Successful Job Hunt

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The full text of the Job Search Toolkit is available at: ***FirstFind.org>>Look for a Job.***

Chapter

8

Training Programs, Agencies and Help from the Government

There are government and private organizations that can help you find a job or job training.

One- Stop Career Centers

One-Stop Career Centers are free job search and employment centers. They are open to the general public. One-Stop Career Centers provide information and assistance for people who are looking for a job or who need education and training in order to get a job.

One-Stop Career Centers are located in communities across the United States. These Centers used to be called Unemployment Offices and may also be called Employment Centers. You can find the locations of New York State One Stop Centers by zip code at www.labor.ny.gov/career-center-locator. To find One-Stop Career Centers outside of New York State call 1-877- US- 2JOBS (1-877-872-5627). You can also go online to www.servicelocator.org to find One-Stop Career Centers.

One-Stop Career Centers offer classes on how to write a resume, use computers and interview skills. Even if you have followed directions in this manual or attended training somewhere else, sign up for classes that fit into your schedule. You may get some new ideas.

At a One-Stop Career Center, you can also take different kinds of tests to evaluate your skills. These tests will help you figure out your skills and interests. Some tests may match your skills and interests to different types of jobs. One-Stop Career Centers will also have lists of jobs with instructions on how to apply for them.

At a One-Stop Career Center you will also have free use of telephones, computers, the Internet, printers and fax machines to help you find a job. One-Stop Career Centers will also be able to refer you to other training programs or organizations. They can also be helpful with information about benefits that you might be eligible for like bus passes or clothing allowances.

Before you visit a One-Stop Career Center you should be prepared in the same way as you would when you go to apply for a job. Bring your Personal Data Form. Bring your resume if you have one. Dress neatly. Bring a list of questions in your notebook to help you understand how you can get the most from a One-Stop Career Center. Some of the questions may be:

- What type of classes do you offer?
- What is the schedule of classes?
- When and where are job openings posted?
- What evaluation tests do you give and which ones should I take?
- Are there training programs you can refer me to?
- Are there other benefits I could be eligible for?

Sometimes employers will hold job interview sessions at One Stop Career Centers. You can find out about these from the One Stop or look for them posted online at sites including Craigslist. Check instructions to see if you have to sign up for an interview in advance or show up at the One Stop Center during specific days and hours. Make certain you meet all of the criteria for the job. For example if a bus company is interviewing for drivers, be sure you have the type of driver's license, and driving record required for the job. When you go to the One Stop for one of these interview sessions, bring at least five (5) copies of your resume and dress for an interview. For popular jobs you may have to wait. Be prepared for multiple interviews. Treat each one as important and never complain about waiting, even to other job seekers. Someone from your next employer may be listening.

Write down names. Be polite and enthusiastic

One-Stop Career Centers can provide you with a lot of help. One-Stop Career Centers also see a lot of people. When you are polite, eager and enthusiastic, you will stand out in a big group of people looking for jobs. This starts with asking for the names of people that you meet. You may meet job coaches, counselors, and employment specialists. Ask these people for their business card, and when you return to the office ask for them by their correct name. Don't walk up to a desk and say, "I was here last week and that tall lady helped me." Learn the names of the people who work with you. Use their names correctly. Say Mr. or Ms. unless you are encouraged to use first names. If you cannot pronounce a name tell the person that and ask for help. People will appreciate it if you say, "I can't pronounce your name. How do you say it?"

When someone helps you, write a short thank you note. This can be handwritten and hand delivered.

Always use your best manners. Simply saying please and thank you are very effective. Remember that the people at the One-Stop Career Center are there to *help* you get a job. They do not *get* you a job. You do that. If you demand things and are rude, they will naturally be less helpful. Always keep appointments that you make and be on time for these and any classes. Show off your organizational skills by writing down appointments in your calendar and taking notes in your notebook. Many of these people talk to the employers who are hiring. They are asked to recommend someone for a job opening. If you are polite and professional, they are more likely to recommend you.

Treat the One-Stop Career Center Office like a workplace. Do not become too casual. Don't ask counselors for dates or to go to parties. These are offices, not places for gossip.

Other government offices that can help

Many states, counties and cities also have departments set up to help people in their job search. These can range from helping people with any kind of disability to offices for youth. The One-Stop Career Center can refer you to agencies that could be helpful.

ACCES-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) is a government office set up to help individuals with disabilities find training and employment. ACCES-VR is part of the New York State Department of Education. Find out more about ACCESS-VR at www.acces.nysed.gov/vr. The site will tell you when and where information sessions are held to determine eligibility for services. If you are not in New York, you will need to find out if there is an agency like ACCESS-VR in your state. Every state has One-Stop Career Centers so that is the best place to start.

Non-profits that help with training and job search

There are also many organizations that help people gain skills for jobs or provide assistance with job searches. These can be independent organizations or they may be part of larger organizations. For example, your local YMCA may have a program that helps with a job search. Call them to find out. *America Works* is a program that helps people searching for work. *America Works* is located in a number of different cities. Look for *America Works* in a phone directory or online at www.americaworks.com. You can also ask about training programs at the library, at your nearest community center or at a house of worship.

You should not have to pay someone to help you find a job. Stay away from programs that charge you to write your resume or to provide job leads. You can get this help for free. There are education and training programs that are not free. If you are thinking of enrolling in a program like this, ask about all of the ways that you can get government grants to pay for the program. Some schools will tell you that they can help you get loans. Be aware that you will have to pay back a loan even if you do not find work after you have completed school. Make sure that people who complete the course or training are getting jobs that pay enough for them to live and to pay back the loans. Ask to speak to graduates and find out the story before you start class.

What is an internship and how do I get one?

An internship is when you work alongside a more experienced person. Internships can last from a few hours to a few months. They can also be called job shadowing.

You rarely get paid for an internship. You do get great work experience. You also get potential references and a chance to experience the job first hand. Some employers also hire people who have been good interns.

When you are an intern, you must show up on time. Treat an internship just like a paying job. Show respect to your supervisors, other interns and paid employees. Complete your work (and ask for extra work) and be enthusiastic.

Include any experience as an intern in your resume. You may use "Intern" in the job title but don't have to if the title sounds fine without it. For example if you were an intern at a non-profit you may have been a "Program Assistant." Intern experience belongs on your resume whether it is paid or unpaid, just like volunteer experience.

How to get the most out of a training program or agency

So let's say you do get referred to a training program but you start to think that the program is bogus. Maybe you think the program exists only to get funding from the government.

This is the time for you to check your attitude and remember that you are the one who is looking for a job - not the training program, not the counselor, not the job coach. Only YOU are looking for a job.

Even if you don't think the training program is great, there is a list of things that you can do to get the most out of it and getting the training and/or job you need. Whether you are working with a government agency, a training program or a non-profit or a community group, you will get more out of the experience if you follow these suggestions.

- Find out as much as you can about the program or agency. This way when you are referred for a job or internship you can speak well about the program.
- Know the correct names and titles of the people who are working with you.
- Treat everyone at the organization with respect. Remember, they can all be references and they talk to employers.
- Volunteer to help your counselor, your coach, or your trainer. This is a way to get some experience, and show that you are responsible. You can volunteer to make copies, phone calls, deliver packages, clean up a closet, anything! Your help will be appreciated.
- Always show up on time and keep appointments. Write appointments down on your calendar!
- Ask for feedback about assignments and interviews and listen! These people can give you valuable information.
- Send or hand deliver thank you notes.
- Thank people in person.
- Do not make demands.
- Ask for referrals and suggestions.
- Don't bad mouth the organization or its people.

- If a counselor or a job coach or a trainer leaves the organization, find out where they are going and if it would be appropriate to contact them at the new organization. They could continue to be a great resource for you at their new workplace.
- Don't criticize or complain about paperwork or testing. These are steps in the process and may be required so that the organization gets paid. Prepare for these and be professional.

When you add working with agencies and training programs to your job search, your calendar is getting quite full. You are doing a great job of looking for a job. You are getting closer to your goal every day.

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