

OFFICE OF CAREER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Job Search Process

As you consider your career plans and begin the job search process, it is important to understand yourself, conduct career related research and explore various career options so that you can make informed, appropriate career decisions. There are 5 steps to the job search process. Following these steps will help you plan and conduct an efficient and successful job search.

Step 1	Self Assessment
Step 2	Research
Step 3	Develop Marketing Strategy
Step 4	Network
Step 5	Prepare for Interview

Step 1 - Self Assessment: The first step is to view yourself from a professional perspective and clarify your VIPS.

- **Values & Lifestyle:** these are a set of standards that determine attitudes and choices and can help lay important groundwork for making good work/life decisions.
 - Do you value: wealth? time with family? creativity?
 - What kind of work culture or environment do you want?
 - Where do you want to live?
- **Interests:** these are things that appeal and excite you. Think about your Method of Concentration and Field of Practice.
 - What populations are you interested in: homeless, veterans, refugees, immigrants, women, children, etc.
 - What issues are you passionate about: domestic violence, mental health, HIV/AIDS, aging, etc.
 - What function(s) do you want to carry out: assessment, counseling, analysis, evaluation, programming, management, advocacy, etc.
 - What kind of organization or institution do you want to work in: Hospital, school, community center, mental health clinic, foundation, think tank government agency, international welfare organization, etc.

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- **Personality:** each individual has distinctive qualities and character traits. Defining who you are can help project where you want your career to take you.
- **Skills:** these include your abilities, talents, aptitudes and strengths. It is important to define your skills and to ascertain which ones you would like to use in a job and ones that you would not.

Once you have determined your VIPs then polish up your resume. American resumes are marketing tools so highlight your achievements! Be clear and specific about your education, skills and experiences. Make sure to include all of your experiences including both paid and unpaid, volunteer, leadership, internship, international, presentations, etc.

Step 2 – Research: Schedule time each week (1-2 hours) solely for career research and networking. Conduct research on your professional area(s) of interest and figure out where you fit in best. Gather information on social work field(s), targeted organizations and available opportunities.

- Look at organizational websites
- Search CUSSW experience and other online job sites
- Make direct contact with employers
- Conduct informational interviews with alumni and employers
- Create a general cover letter that is ready to be tailored for different jobs

Step 3 – Develop Marketing Strategy: Summarize your career experiences, skills and goals into an enthusiastic 1-2 minute introduction that includes who you are, what you do at CSSW and your career goals. Think about what you want people to know about you, the specifics about the kind of job you are looking for, your desired position, ideal job responsibilities and preferred geographic location. The ability to verbalize your background and career goals is essential to networking and landing a job. Once you have your speech ready, practice!

Step 4 – Network: To begin networking you must first overcome your negative perceptions and/or fears. Networking is simply relationship building or making connections. Networking with colleagues in your field provides “honest” information not found anywhere else. Best of all – networking can be learned! Just spread the word that you’re looking for a job and ask if anyone has a contact that might be able to offer advice. Take advantage of CUSSW events and career fairs. Your network can include:

- Personal Contacts: family and friends
- Professional Contacts: classmates, colleagues, alumni, faculty, field placement supervisors, former employers, etc.
- Organizational Contacts: social clubs, religious affiliations, gym, NASW, etc.

Once you begin networking make sure to maintain the contacts you have worked hard to make. Keep track of all your contacts with a contact list, inform contacts of your job search progress and express your appreciation by sending thank you notes.

Step 5 – Prepare for Interview: There is no fool proof strategy to a successful interview. However, the more prepared you are going into an interview the better your chances are for getting a second interview or job offer. First, find out what type of interview you will be having (in-person, phone, group, panel). Develop 3-4 questions that you want to ask the employer. Practice by scheduling a mock interview with the Office of Career Development. Finally, wear a suit or professional attire, bring 4-5 copies of your resume and a list of references to the interview. Don’t forget to send the employer a thank you email the day after the interview.