

Searching for a Job in Human Services

Objective

1. To know the steps necessary in conducting your job search
2. To organize and conduct your search
3. To avoid common job search mistakes

Before You Begin, Consider...

The job search process takes time.

This is evident in the following statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor. The job search process takes, on average,

- 14-17 weeks for ages 16 & over
- 8.1 weeks for 16 - 19 year olds
- 12.5 weeks for 20 - 24 year olds and,
- 15.6 weeks for 25 - 34 year olds.

Don't get discouraged or give up too soon.

Your job search requires you to be active, NOT passive.

Waiting for a job to come to you may not produce the results you are looking for, but an active and persistent approach may help you to have more success in the job search process.

People begin at different places.

Remember that a job search is specific to you. It is important to measure your job search progress by your own progression, and not that of others. .

And Finally, Job Searching Involves: Research, Persistence, and Rejection

Research

Before beginning your job search, be sure to do your research. Ask about specific a filed of interest:

- What does a Clinical Social Worker do?
- What are the typical salaries for Clinical Social Workers?
- What are the skills needed to be a Clinical Social Worker?
- Where do Clinical Social Workers work?

Ask about specific employer:

- What services does "Organization A" provide?
- How many staff does "Organization A" employ?
- Where (if any) are other branches of this organization?



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Persistence & Rejection

Don't give up! Be persistent in your job search. On average, a job searcher will receive 10 "NO's" for every "YES." It might be helpful to think of your "NO" responses as bringing you closer to your "YES." Do not take rejection personally—it is part of the process.

Step 1: Know the Product—You

Consider your job search as a marketing plan, and you are the product. If you think of your job search in these terms, it makes sense that you need to know yourself well. You also need to know what market (job) is best for your product (you), and to know how to sell yourself to that market.

Identify your career goals and objectives

The saying “if you aim at nothing, you’ll be sure to hit it” applies to your job searching as well. Identifying and working toward your short and long-term career goals will not only help you better focus your job search, but will also help you be more successful in your career.

Know your values (what motivates you to work), your interests, and your skills.

Review your past work experience, volunteer experience, educational experience and life experience. What are your interests? What strengths are you bringing to the job search table? What are you looking for in an ideal job? Write these things down . . . they’ll be important when refining your job search tools, considering what you want to do, networking, and interviewing for jobs.

Step 2: Refine Your Job Search Tools

Your job search tools include your resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills. Reflecting on your values, interests and skills as well as your strengths, as mentioned above, will help with each of these tools. Your cover letter is the tool used to get people to look at your resume, your resume is the tool used to help you obtain an interview, and your interviewing skills play an important part in getting you the job. If you need assistance with writing your resume, or cover letter or practicing your interviewing skills, the Career Center has many resources and services available to help you. Access job search guides through the Career Center Web site, career.fsu.edu/advising/guides, or drop by and work with a career advisor. In addition, you can review other resources available on the Internet, or at your nearby community/campus library.

Common Job Search Hang-ups

“I’ll do Anything”

If your job search is not going well, you may have a sense of desperation and think, “I’ll do anything.” Feeling like you have few options and must take whatever is offered can result in a poor career decision. Identifying and exploring multiple options can provide for a better outcome to your job search.

“Wallflower Syndrome”

As previously mentioned, a successful job search campaign requires an active approach. This means using all the resources available to you and engaging in regular job searching strategies. Don’t simply send out one or two resumes then wait for a response. Continue actively engaging in your job search. This includes networking, attending job fairs, and conducting information interviews in addition to applying for jobs.

“Lone Ranger”

Your personal job search journey does not have to be done alone. The FSU Career Center, as well as many other academic, professional, personal and community resources, are available to help you in the job search process. Don’t be afraid to find out about and use these resources (many of which are free).

“Expand your Contacts”

When looking for jobs try to think creatively. Searching in the common places (like want ads or employment agencies) will not provide access to 80% (or more) of all jobs available in the market. Networking is one of the best methods for accessing the job market.

Step 3: Organize & Conduct Your Search

What do you want to do?

The answer to this question is key to making your job search productive and manageable. In considering what you want to do, think about:

Job Families

Example: Social Work

Work Settings

Example: Non-Profit agency

Occupational Titles

Example: Case Worker

Job Families

Aging & Health Care
Children & Family Services
Developmental Disabilities
Education
Human Services
Marriage & Family Counseling
Mental Health
Law
Politics
Public Administration
School Services

Work Settings

Adoption services
Adult day care & respite program
Area agencies on aging
Bank trust department
Chemical dependency treatment center
Children, family & school services
Child day care center
Child protection services/child welfare
Children's hospital
Children's psychiatric hospital
Community health clinic
Elder care centers
Family services
Foster care services
Geriatric case management practice
Gang prevention program
Hospice program
Hospitals or medical center
Residential treatment center
Private schools
Public school systems

Macrolevel Services

Advocacy organization
Citizen groups
Community action agency
Community centers
Employment project
Foundation/Fund-raising organization
Government department (e.g., housing)
Homeless shelter

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, & Related Direct Services

Treatment program
Clubs or programs for chronically mentally ill
Employee assistance firms
Community mental health center

Hospital units
Corrections Facilities
Manage care company
Military
Women's services
Psychiatric hospital
Private practice

Non-Profit

Social services
Disability services
Volunteer programs
Museums
Professional associations
Easter Seal

Professions

Law
Medicine
Clergy

Private Enterprise

All forms of individual and private ownership (e.g., private practice, wellness center)

Occupational Titles

Adoption Coordinator
Case Manager/Worker
Child Development Specialist
Child, Youth & Family Counselor
Clinical Director
Consumer Specialist
Corrections Officer
Domestic Violence Counselor
EAP Counselor
Executive Director
Human Resource Specialist
Human Services Counselor
Instructor
Legislator
Lobbyist
Intake Counselor
Marriage & Family Counselor
Mental Health Worker
Outreach Program Director
Program Manager
Rehabilitation Counselor
Social Worker
Substance Abuse Counselor
Therapist
Victim Advocate

Where do you want to work?

Think about your geographic preferences.

Examples:

Anywhere	Southeast
International	Florida
National	Tampa

In conducting your job search you can expand your geographic preference OR your occupational title. Expanding both may make your job search unmanageable and overwhelming. For example:

In Tampa I'll consider the following occupational titles:

- Case Worker
- Fund-raiser
- Child-life Specialist

OR

*I'm looking for a position as a **Fund-raiser** in:*

- Tampa,
- Atlanta,
- Dallas

Establish a record-keeping system

Let's face it—your job search, if done well, could involve a lot of contacts, interviews, letters, phone conversations, etc. It is important to find a good way to keep track of all of these things. Use a good record-keeping system that works for you to keep track of things such as:

- Employers contacted
- Letters sent
- Responses received
- Second interviews
- Follow-up needed

and any other things that may help your job search run more smoothly.

Step 4: Research Your Options!

Identify specific organizations

This is probably one of the most important aspects of a successful job search in the Human Services field. Researching helps you identify what organizations do what you want to do.

There are many job search resources to help you in conducting your research. Examples include:

- Directories of Employers (ex: Nat'l Directory of Children, Youth and Families Services)
- Career Center

Six Hints for Successful Information Interviews:

1. Prior to the meeting, be sure to do your research on the job you are pursuing.
2. Prepare questions prior to setting up the meeting as the interviewee may want to have you begin your interview right over the phone when you call.
3. Inform persons you want to interview that your meeting is for informational purposes only. Mentioning you do not want a job interview will help them be more open and receptive to a meeting.
4. Be courteous, behave in the same manner as you would when interviewing for a job.
5. Try to secure additional contacts in your field of interest from your interviewee to add to your professional network.
6. Send a thank you letter to your interviewee. This will reflect well on you and may help keep you in that person's mind if anything arises in the way of future job openings.

Academic Departments/Faculty/Staff

Family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances

Internet (ex: The New Social Worker - www.socialworker.com)

Telephone books

Community Resource Directories

Professional associations & journals

(ex: NASW, American Counseling Association)

Newspapers

Strozier library & public libraries

Employment agencies

State Workforce Dev. centers/Department of Labor

FSU alumni

Chamber of Commerce

The United Way

Discussion groups

Research your target organizations

Learn about the organizations you have identified through annual reports, organizational charts, current periodicals, in-house publications, their PR office, local newspapers, and their Web site or the Internet.

Network

The Career Center has information on networking strategies that may help you in the job searching process. In networking you want everyone to be aware of your job search. Be sure to let them know exactly what type of job you are looking for.

Examples of networking resources (people resources) you might use are:

- Family, friends, and neighbors
- Faculty, staff, and former teachers
- Professionals
- School associates and alumni
- Professional Network in SeminoleLink

Conduct information interviews

Informational interviews are another excellent way to network and are similar to “regular” interviews. The difference in an informational interview is that you are the one conducting the interview and asking most of the questions. You can contact an employer or someone who has the type of job in which you are interested and set up a meeting. See the Career Center guide on Information Interviewing at career.fsu.edu/advising/guides.

Step 5: Avoid Common Mistakes

Barriers

There are certain internal and external factors that can inhibit your ability to move forward in the job search process. These factors are considered to be barriers and can include:

- Shyness and/or lack of confidence
- Fear of rejection
- Lack of necessary skills for the job sought
- Procrastination
- Not knowing where to start
- Negative thinking

Being aware of these barriers and thinking about how to overcome them will help your search be more successful. Talk with a career advisor if you are experiencing any of the barriers listed above and need suggestions on how to overcome them.

Ten Job-Hunting Errors

Some errors often made during the job search are:

1. Having a poor resume:
The Career Center has resume writing guides, as well as career advisors who can critique your resume. If you are not located near FSU, you can use the Internet, local bookstores or area libraries to locate helpful resume guides and resources. For resume critiquing, visit a university or college career center near you. Other available resources, which typically cost money, are resume writing services or private career counselors in your area.
2. Failure to network:
As discussed above, networking is critical to finding a majority of the available jobs in the market.
3. Limiting job sources:
Don't stick with just one source for information about job vacancies, use many different ones (e.g. Career fairs/expos, classified ads, department bulletin boards, previous employers, employment agencies, school placement agencies, Internet, e-mailing resumes, and phoning).
4. Using a canned approach:
Although an employer may not have an immediate opening, be genuine and personable with every contact you make by revising your resume and cover letter as needed for a particular job target. By tailoring your job search tools and presenting yourself in a professional manner, you can make a positive impression that may help in securing an interview for a later opening.
5. Inadequate interview preparation:
As stated previously, it is important to do your research prior to the interview. The Career Center has literature on many employers as well as interview preparation guides, which are very useful. You can also access helpful resources on interview preparation by visiting your area library, bookstore, searching the Internet or contacting other career service professionals in your area.

6. **Poor interview techniques:**
In addition to interview preparation guides, the Career Center has other resources available to help you perform well in a job interview, including interviewing workshops, the mock interview program, book resources, CD-ROMS, and videos, to name a few. See a career advisor for more information. Other ways to access helpful information on interview techniques include visiting your area libraries and bookstores or searching the Internet. Colleges and universities, as well as other career service professionals in your area, might also have helpful resources available.
7. **Restricted job search:**
If you confine your geographical preferences for your job search, it may be necessary to expand the occupational titles you will consider, especially if the labor market in your chosen area is flooded (the demand for employees is far less than those seeking work). You could also consider expanding your geographic preferences to include other areas if you wish to stay with one occupational title.
8. **Too little time devoted to search:**
As mentioned in the beginning of this guide, it takes time, effort and persistence to conduct a successful job search. It requires an active approach, not a passive one.
9. **Negative attitude/thinking:**
Although the job search process can be discouraging at times, it is imperative that you not allow the discouragement to develop into a negative attitude. If this occurs, it could negatively affect the way you present yourself to potential employers, in your networking, in your interviewing, in your resume, over the phone, literally in every aspect of your search. If you have trouble with this area, you can get help from trusted friends or career services professionals to overcome or minimize your negative thoughts.
10. **Lack of attention to dress and appearance:** In general, the rule of thumb is to always dress conservatively for an interview. The Career Center has articles and resources regarding appropriate interview attire. Contact a career advisor or search libraries, bookstores, or the Internet locate these resources.

Some Suggestions & Final Thoughts

The following are suggestions which might be helpful to you in your job search process:

Get support from friends during your job search

Periodically reward yourself after sending out a certain number resumes, completing an interview, or making a certain number of contacts. This helps keep you motivated in your job search.

Take care of yourself physically

In doing so, you will make it easier to cope with any of the stresses that may come with your job search.

Avoid negative people:

This is especially important during your job search as rejection is often part of the process.

Keep good records

Join a job hunter's club or support group

Consider part-time or temporary work

See the Career Center's *Job Hunting in the Temporary Staffing Services Industry* guide.

Take advantage of all the Career Center's job search resources. Some of these resources are listed on the following page. Talk with a career advisor if you don't know where to begin. Remember, "The best jobs don't always go to the best qualified, but to the best job hunters."

Selected Career Center Resources

100 Best Non-profits to Work For.....	V1B H3
American Almanac of Jobs & Salaries.....	IC W7
Careers for Caring People & Other Sensitive Types.....	IIA CF-C31-Ready Reference
Careers for Good Samaritans & Other Humanitarian Types.....	IIA CF-G6-Ready Reference
Careers for Kids at Heart & Others Who Adore Children.....	IIA CF-K5-Ready Reference
Careers in Social and Rehabilitation Services.....	IIB 21-0000 G3
Careers in Social Work.....	IIB 21-1020 S5
Careers with Children & Youth.....	IIA K4-Ready Reference
Community Resource Directory.....	VI2 T4 Ready Reference
Finding a Job in the Nonprofit Sector.....	VIB W3
Good Works.....	VIB 2 C4
National Directory - Children, Youth & Families Services.....	VIB2 N31
National Directory of Private Social Agencies.....	VIB2 N3
Opportunities in Gerontology & Aging Services Careers.....	IIB 19-3041.01 W3
Opportunities in Public Health Careers.....	IIB 29-1000 P5
Professional & Occupational Licensing Directory.....	IIA B51 Ready Reference
Public and Community Services.....	Vol. II IIA CIC-11 - Ready Reference
Social Work Career Development.....	IIB 21-1020 D6
Opportunities in Social Work Careers.....	IIB 21-1020 W5
The Helping Professions.....	IIB 21-0000 B8
University/Community Referral Directory.....	Ready Reference
What Social Workers Do.....	IIB 21-1020 G5

Sample Professional Organizations

More professional organizations can be found in the National Trade & Professional Association Directory

American Public Human Services Assoc.

810 First Street, NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002-4267
202.682.0100 • www.aphsa.org

American Association for Marriage/Family Therapy

112 S. Alfred St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.838.9808 • www.aamft.org

National Association of Social Workers

750 First St., NE, Ste 700
Washington, DC 20002-4241
800.742.4089 • www.naswdc.org

Nation Job Network

www.nationjob.com/hs

State of Florida Jobs

www.myflorida.com

Social Work & Social Services Jobs Online

www.gwbweb.wustl.edu/careerdevelopment/jobsonline/Pages/Overview.aspx

Mental Health Net

www.mentalhelp.net

Social Service Job Site

www.socialservice.com

Opportunities in Public Affairs

<http://www.opajobs.com/>

Selected Web Sites

Philanthropy News Network (links to non-profits)
pnnonline.org/jobs

Human Service Careers Network

www.hscareers.com

Health Facility Jobs

www.jobseeker.com

Job Search Target Worksheet

Use this worksheet and guide to select a target for your job search.

What do you want to do? (page 2)	Where do you want to work? (page 4)
A. Job Family I wish to work in the following field(s).	1. International I wish to work in the following nation(s).
B. Work Setting I wish to work in the following organization(s).	2. National I wish to work in the following region(s)/ state(s).
C. Occupational Title I wish to be considered for these positions..	3. Municipalities I wish to work in the following town(s).
Choice Choose one letter and one number from the above elements to create your job search target (e.g., C. Occupational Title and 3. Municipalities.).	
Your Job Search Target Summarize these elements into your job search target below. (e.g., <i>I want to find a position as a Clinical Social Worker in the Atlanta area.</i>)	

