

INTRODUCTION

A successful job search is more than just a resume and a job application. It is a series of positive contacts with prospective employers, and it will involve work on your part. A professional job search may take six to eight months before you secure a position. Workforce and Job Readiness recommends you start your career journey in the first semester of your education.

This is some of the most important work that you will ever do, so it is vital that you not only take it seriously, but that you give yourself enough time to be successful.

- Plan to write, and review, your resume and cover letter **every time you apply for a job**. Work with your Community College of Allegheny County Workforce and Job Readiness team to review your resume, cover letter and reference sheet.
- Adapt your resume and cover letter to match the requirements of each job description.
- Research your target industry. Select companies that may have potential positions.
- Thoroughly prepare for each interview by researching the company, practicing interview questions, and understanding what the employer is looking for in a candidate.

Many people begin or return to school with a goal of career advancement. The culmination of this time spent is not just receiving a degree or certificate but securing a new career. This process may be as simple as using new skills and credentials for advancement within the same career field and company. It may also be as complex as making a radical career change, such as a school teacher becoming a systems analyst.

The average person will change jobs between 10 and 15 times and change careers three times.

Employers integrate technology into hiring practices and require specific skill sets from their employees. In order to compete for openings, job seekers need to enhance their techniques in contacting and marketing themselves to employers. These techniques involve:

- Uploading resumes and cover letters
- Completing online applications
- Interviewing
- Behavioral testing and drug screening
- Background checks and clearances
- Using social media to project a professional image
- Networking

The person hired is not always the most qualified, but rather the person who has convinced the employer that they are the best candidate and the best fit for the job.

Planning Your Time

Securing a position may take more time than you anticipate. Even if you are under no economic pressure to find a job quickly, starting your search early is a good idea. Delays may hurt your chances of finding the job you want. If you have just finished school, you are competing for similar positions with other new graduates in your field. Once you start your search, you should dedicate time each week to apply for positions.



The following suggestions will help you plan your time for an efficient job search:

- Plan and start your search several months before you want to start a new job.
- Tell all friends, family and professional acquaintances that you are looking for a job in your career field. Network with your contacts on a regular basis.
- Be prepared to provide a resume that is updated and accurately reflects your job search goals, education, skills and qualifications that you have to offer an employer each time you apply for a position.
An employer wants to know what you can do for them.
- Keep track of your contacts, including who you connected with, when it occurred, and the outcome.
- Prepare and be comfortable giving your 30-second “elevator speech.”
- Manage your online image by creating a **LinkedIn** ([linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)) account and review your social media presence to ensure you have a professional image.
- Before approaching an employer, research the company, products, services, job openings, financials and locations thoroughly.
- Respond to job leads and job postings as soon as possible.

CCAC Workforce and Job Readiness Online

ccac.edu

This site will give access to resources that will assist in your job search. Enter Workforce and Job Readiness in the search box, and you will be directed to the related information.

CCAC College Central Network for Students, Alumni & Community Members

CCAC College Central Network
(collegecentral.com/ccac)

Registering on CCAC College Central Network will enable you to view all full-time and part-time positions and internship opportunities submitted to CCAC. **You must have an email account to register.** If you are a student, your net ID is the recommended username. Enrolled students may obtain an email address through Information Technology Services (ITS). Free email accounts are available from numerous online sources. Be sure that your email address is professional.

GETTING STARTED

Identify Your Skills

Finding a job can be a complex and time-consuming process. One of the first steps is to identify the skills and abilities you have to offer an employer. There are two types of skills that you will need to identify in yourself: job specific skills—and those personal attributes that you possess that can be applied to any job. These personal attributes are called “employability skills.” Identifying the employability skills that you possess may seem overwhelming at first, but use the following guidelines and list examples of when you used these skills in the past.

On the worksheet, for each employability skill topic, list three different experiences where you developed and used your skills. Examples are provided to help you get started identifying employability skills from your experience.

Employability Skills—Preparing for your Career

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Example: Collaborated with eight team members to complete time-sensitive marketing materials for scheduled events

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Example: Transitioned to a remote working environment and continued to lead eight team members to complete assignments

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

COMMUNICATION

Example: Explained menu items, answered questions, and communicated special dietary requests to the chef

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CRITICAL THINKING

Example: Monitored stock levels of office supplies and reordered as needed while adhering to set budgetary guidelines

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

APPLIED ACADEMIC SKILLS

Example: Converted an outdated information management system to a new CRM system that resulted in a streamlined process for all staff

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Example: Identified an order processing barrier and worked with upper management to resolve the issue

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Example: Analyzed data from several vendors and created a new order processing procedure

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SYSTEMS THINKING

Example: Conducted comprehensive research for new accounting software and proposed options at the board of directors meeting

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Social Media Resources for Job Searching & Networking

Employers are using social media sites to identify, recruit and screen candidates for employment. Use these sites wisely to market your skills, build your network and apply for jobs. Be selective about who you connect with and regularly monitor comments made by others. Remember to be creative, communicate professionally and exchange recommendations.

LinkedIn has become a valuable tool in your job search and professional development. Companies use LinkedIn to find and preview candidates for open positions. It is suggested you develop and regularly update a LinkedIn profile. Use the following guidelines to start your LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a valuable tool and is used by many professionals in all career fields. This website is an opportunity for you to search for an internship, part-time job or full-time job; connect and strengthen professional relationships; and learn about the skills needed to be successful in your career.

It is important to have a complete LinkedIn profile, and you should update the content on a regular basis to highlight new accomplishments and skills.

Go to [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) to begin creating your profile. Follow the steps listed below to create a professional profile or improve your current profile:

LinkedIn - PHOTO

According to LinkedIn, a professional photo can get you 21 times more profile views and nine times more connection requests. A headshot photo (shoulders and above), where you are in business [professional clothing](#), is suggested (Callahan 2018).

Callahan, S. (2018, December 28). Picture Perfect: Make a Great First Impression with your LinkedIn Profile Photo. Retrieved October 15, 2020, <https://www.linkedin.com/business/sales/blog/b2b-sales/picture-perfect--make-a-great-first-impression-with-your-linkedi>

LinkedIn - CUSTOMIZED URL

You will be provided with a URL from LinkedIn when you create your profile. Modifying your URL enables you to personalize this link to reflect your career goals.

To customize and modify your link:

- Select the down arrow by the word “Me” below your thumbnail photo, top right side.
 - Select Settings & Privacy.
 - Select Visibility, then the “Visibility of your profile & network” tab.
 - Select Edit your public profile.
 - Select the blue stylus in the upper right corner to edit.
- Suggestion: linkedin.com/in/firstnamelast name

LinkedIn - CONNECTIONS

Start building connections with friends, neighbors, co-workers and alumni. When reaching out to build your connections, you are encouraged to link with recruiters and those professionals who are also in the early stages of their careers. These connections can lead to building relationships with professionals who are in your field and have influence in hiring decisions. It is not recommended that you accept all requests to connect with someone on this platform—make sure that you consider why you want to add an individual to your professional contacts.

LinkedIn - SUMMARY

This section is your opportunity to highlight your personal brand, achievements, skills and what you have to offer an employer. Connect what you have on your resume to this section, especially the relevant skills you have. Unlike a resume, you may use personal pronouns to make your summary more focused and promote your achievements and skills.

LinkedIn - WORK EXPERIENCE

Include all your employment positions within the last 10–15 years. You may include a one or two sentence “job overview” to highlight what you were accountable for or accomplished in each position. Add bullet points—that start with an action verb—to indicate to potential employers what you can do for them. When possible, include quantitative information to further promote your abilities.

LinkedIn - EDUCATION

Include the name of your educational institution and the credential you earned or are earning. Ensure you are including the correct title of your credential—this is what is listed on your diploma—or verify with the Registrar’s office of your educational institution.

LinkedIn - SKILLS

In this section, it is important to include skills that are targeted to your career goals. Select skills from the menu that are also included in your resume and relate to what employers are including in postings for your desired job. A maximum of 50 skills may be listed, and you are encouraged to include the maximum.

LinkedIn - RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended you ask contacts and others in your network to add positive support statements to advocate on your behalf. It is suggested you start with the people you have asked to be an employment reference for you and build from there.

Growing your LinkedIn Profile

Adding additional information will expand your presence and help you get noticed by employers and recruiters. After you have your basic information, build your presence.

POSTS – Be selective and keep your comments professional. This is an opportunity to increase your professional presence.

GROUPS – Link with college/university alumni as well as professional and industry association groups. There is a limit of 50 groups you may join.

FOLLOWING – Following companies in your targeted career field enables you to gather information and receive current job postings.

CERTIFICATIONS/HONORS/AWARDS – Include any professional development trainings and certifications, recognitions from employers, and academic awards and honors.

PUBLICATIONS – Professional publications or blogs that are relevant should be listed.

PROJECTS – Attach links to class projects that highlight your skills and accomplishments.

ORGANIZATIONS & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE – This will help to connect you with others who share similar interests.

Make your profile “OPEN TO WORK” and complete the “Edit Job Preferences” fields so recruiters are able to find you in a search.

Introductions/Elevator Speech

In every job search, introductions will be required, so an applicant will need to develop an “elevator speech.” The reason this is called an elevator speech is because you should be able to introduce yourself in the time it takes for a short elevator ride. This speech is used when introducing yourself to potential employers, reaching out to new networking contacts, and in interview situations. In this brief (30–60 seconds) speech, the applicant communicates the who, what and where of their job search. When drafting an elevator speech, the applicant should follow the outline below. (For a detailed example of an elevator speech, refer to the complete Job Search Manual available on the CCAC website.)

- **Who** – Who are you? Include information about your education and credentials, employment history, internships, clinical experiences and professional affiliations.
- **What** – What skills and experience do you have to offer an employer?
- **Where** – Type of position or opportunity you are seeking.