Over the span of your life, you will find yourself going through the job search process several times. Most job seekers will change their careers and/or employers at least four to five times throughout their working lives. Although the details of your job search may change from time to time, the basic processes and techniques for job searching will be the same.

Learning basic and effective job search skills will help you whenever you are changing jobs or changing careers. An effective job search starts with the following:

- Know your interests, skills and abilities; this will help you decide on the types of jobs to apply for
- If you have many interests, skills and abilities and are having trouble deciding your next steps, talk to someone (professors, advisors, career counselors, friends and family)
- Keep your resume up-to-date; add significant projects, accomplishments and recognitions
- Commit to your job search; decide the number of hours per week you intend to spend looking for a job; Keep your commitment!
- Depending on the type of job you are seeking and where you plan to be living (geographically), set realistic expectations. It may take several months to land a job.
- Remember: Everyone has received a “no thank you” from employers; it is important that you stay positive when looking for a job. There are many reasons for hiring someone else (and one day that someone else will be YOU!) and try not to make judgments about yourself or your qualifications. Job rejection is a part of job searching.

What are your interests, skills and abilities?

Before the job search begins, take time to assess your interests, skills and abilities. Some questions you can ask yourself are:

- What are my interests, skills and abilities?
- In what types of jobs can I use my interests, skills and abilities?
- What have I learned from my academic, volunteer and/or job experiences?
- Do I want to live locally, nationally or internationally?
- How do I envision my lifestyle for the next five to ten years?

Allow yourself time to think through these questions. The answers to these questions can be very helpful when job searching. Also, when you know what you enjoy and what you find satisfaction in, you are more likely to be happy and satisfied with your career.

Have you prepared your resume, references, portfolio and cover letters?

Prepare and keep these job searching documents up-to-date:

- Resumes
- References and letters of recommendation
- Cover Letters. Save all your cover letters. They will be helpful for referencing.
- Create a portfolio. You do not have to be an artist or a teacher to have a portfolio. Include writing samples, examples of your best work, work evaluations and comments from supervisors, professors and peers.
- Thank You Letters. Sometimes the difference between two equally qualified candidates is that one sent a thank you note after the interview and the other did not. Thank you letters/cards may
be hand-written. They need to be brief, complimentary, and express your desire to join the company. If there were any lingering doubts from the interview, you can use the thank you note to clarify. If your handwriting is difficult to read, please use your computer. Email thank you notes are acceptable, but a handwritten note is preferable.

**MAKE AN ACTION PLAN!**

To be successful in your job search, a plan of **action** is required.

Remember: Most open positions are never advertised and this is called the “hidden job market.” To find out about the jobs that are not advertised or posted, it is important to develop networking skills. Meet as many people as possible. Join professional organizations, young professionals clubs and other gatherings where you live.

Here are some strategies to help you can expand and strengthen your search:

**Explore**
- **Make a list of the companies in your geographic area that have the type of work you want.** For example: if you are interested in human resources, there are human resource departments in all industries such as education, manufacturing, business and financial services, sports, community and social services, art, design and media, construction, healthcare, protective services, transportation and local, state and federal government.
- **Be Flexible.** Consider expanding geographic preferences and/or career interest areas. Although narrowing your search can provide focus, narrowing too much may limit possible opportunities.

**Organize**
- **Develop a job search system that works for you.** This will make the task of job searching much easier and because you are organized, it may not take as long as you think.
- **Set aside time each week for your job search.** Make an appointment with yourself to search for jobs. Try not to get distracted and do other tasks instead.
- **Create a file for your job search and bookmark employment sections from company and organization web sites.** Once this is created, you are one click away from viewing open positions.
- **Create a log to track your progress.** Track applications sent, interviews and follow-up dates.

**Prepare**
- **Research companies.** Learn as much as you can about the companies and their products and services. When you understand more about the company, you can adjust your resume, cover letter and interviewing skills to match that of the specific company. Know the qualities employers are seeking when hiring. You may want to speak with employees from the organization who can tell you about the culture of the company.
- **Highlight Relevant Skills and Experiences.** Adjust your resume and cover letter to speak to each employer’s needs.
- **Use Multiple Search Resources.** Don’t put all your eggs in one basket by using only the mega search sites such as Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com. Some additional resources include
  - Job postings through the Career Services Office and College Central accessed through the Career Services web site
  - Web sites of potential employers
  - Online classifieds
  - Internship/volunteer opportunities
  - Staffing agencies
  - Newspapers

**MAKE AN ACTION PLAN!**
Connect/Network
- Network with professionals working in your field(s) of interest. This is one of the most effective tools in any job search.
- Tap your personal network (friends, family, neighbors, friend’s parents, past supervisors, professors, co-workers). Even if they are not in your field, everyone knows someone.
- Informational interviews. Consider requesting an informational interview to learn more about your occupation and to find out the insiders view of the most effective methods of obtaining a position. An informational interview is a request to meet with a professional in your area of career interest and to ask questions about the profession and the person you are interviewing about their experiences with job searching and getting established. **The purpose is not to ask for a job but to get information.** This is a great networking tool.
- Join professional organizations.
- Make contacts through the Alumni Office.
- Attend job fairs, trade shows, business expos and chamber of commerce events to make employer contacts and to meet people.

Persist
- **Is your job search plan working?** If you are not being contacted by employers after sending out resumes, consider adjusting your resume.
  - **Remember:** You know your resume works when you get called for interviews. You know your interviewing skills are good when you get job offers.
- If one or both of these are not working for you, consider changing your job search strategy.
- After informational interviews or employment interviews, be sure to follow-up as soon as possible by sending thank you notes/letters.
- Always show enthusiasm, initiative and motivation.

Final Thoughts
The amount of time and effort you put into your job search is crucial in determining the outcome and effectiveness of your job search. Expect to spend between 3-6 months concentrating on your job search before receiving and accepting job offers from employers. Be consistent with the amount of time you spend each week on your job search. Depending on outside commitments and priorities, you should expect to spend 20+ hours per week. While the Career Services Office is here to assist in your job search, it is ultimately your responsibility to find a job. Your individual efforts will pay off if you are determined.

It is important for you to set realistic and obtainable goals that will lead to success and boost your confidence during the job search process. Accomplishing small successes along the way will help you keep a positive outlook on the bigger picture of getting a job offer.

Rejection is a natural part of the job search process. You will not obtain a 100% success rate with employers after each resume you submit or interview you have. It is easy to become discouraged by the idea that a job rejection equates to a personal rejection. **It does not.** Although a rejection can be disappointing, it could save you time in the long run if you get a job that is unfulfilling and unsatisfying. It is normal and okay to feel hurt and frustrated, but focus your energy on your job search. It is very important to keep a positive mental attitude while job searching. Be sure to balance your job search with activities and people you enjoy.
## Sources of Job Leads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Contact/Name</th>
<th>Address/E-mail Address/Telephone/Web Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield of Central New York</td>
<td>Careers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job Search Checklist

Step 1: Know yourself.

___ 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 I plan to pursue.

Step 2: Know where you want to work.

___ I have researched organizations or companies that might hire someone with my skills, interests, and background.
___ I have researched potential career fields: typical entry-level jobs, typical salaries, best geographic location for jobs, etc.
___ I have identified the top three geographic areas I'd like to live and work.
___ I have identified 10 potential employers for the type of work I'm seeking.

Step 3: Get ready for the search.

___ I have met with the Cazenovia College Career Services Office.
___ I have my resume and cover letter(s) reviewed by a professional in the field or a staff member at the Career Services Office.
___ I have prepared a portfolio of work samples to highlight my experience, skills and talent.
___ I have developed my “30-second speech” for short encounters with employers.
___ I have identified three individuals who will serve as references.
___ I have developed my interview skills.
___ I have prepared for interviews by practicing my responses to typical questions and/or doing a mock interview.
___ I have an interview suit that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work.
___ I have a professional-sounding answering machine/voice mail message in case an employer calls.
___ I have a neutral/professional e-mail address to give to employers.

Step 4: Start searching.

___ I have uploaded my resume(s) to the appropriate web sites and company web sites.
___ I regularly check the Cazenovia College web site for career opportunities.
___ I read appropriate job-search resources for my field(s) of interest.
___ I have a system for keeping track of my contacts, interviews, and other job-search activities.
___ I follow up on every interesting job lead immediately.
___ I have developed a list of potential networking contacts and keep in touch with them.
___ I keep a copy of my resume next to my phone in case I receive a call from an employer.
___ I follow-up each cover letter with a phone call or e-mail to the employer requesting a job interview.
___ I send thank you letters or e-mails to every person who interviews me.