



**COLORADO
COLLEGE**

Career Center



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Job Search Strategies



Planning for the Search

Developing a plan is an important key to a successful job search. A plan requires that you set goals and determine if they are **realistic**. A plan also helps you determine where you are in the search process, if you are using your time efficiently, and what your next strategies might be. Finally, a plan keeps you **organized** and **motivated** throughout the job search.

The essential components of most job searches include:

- **Self-assessment: who am I, what do I want to do, what can I do**
- **Creating a resume and cover letter**
- **Locating Opportunities**
- Networking
- Applying for specific positions
- Interviewing
- Negotiating an offer

This pamphlet covers the **first three components**; separate handouts and Career Center programming address the other topics.

Note that Networking is not covered in this guide; it's so crucial that it has its own packet. Find it in the Career Center office or on our website.

Self-Assessment

The first phase of a job search is to examine your **values, strengths, skills, and accomplishments**. This is a process that can take considerable time. We know that CC students can have many vast and different interests; the good news is that many classes at CC incorporate self-assessment into their curriculum. In addition, the Career Center offers resources and counseling which can assist you in your self-assessment and help you express these qualities and interests in an articulate and comfortable manner.

It is important to collect information for your self-assessment from a variety of experiences and sources. This might include **part-time jobs, summer jobs, internships, and volunteer activities** you found particularly satisfying and rewarding. Observations and feedback from professors, advisers, and friends may also assist in your self-assessment. Some individuals find it beneficial to compile a list of concise statements about interests and goals. Likewise, speaking with the Career Center staff is always encouraged!

Resume and Cover Letters

Resumes and cover letters are two powerful tools in the job search process. They provide an employer with the first impression of you as an individual and provide an opportunity for you to 'promote' yourself as a candidate. Resumes and cover letters are professional documents that demonstrate your ability to articulate yourself in a concise manner. They are not intended to get you a job; their purpose is to get you an interview.

A resume is a formal summary of your education, experiences, and skills. It should be simple, logical, and brief. A personalized cover letter introducing you to the potential employer, identifying the position you are applying for, and indicating how you learned of the opening should accompany every resume. This letter should briefly provide one or two examples of your experience relevant to the position, and should convey the interest and enthusiasm that is prompting your application.

The Career Center offers workshops and guides on writing resumes and cover letters. In addition, the staff is available to critique documents you have prepared. The significant amount of time you spend on developing and perfecting your resume and cover letters is well worth the effort.

Locating Opportunities

Networking, though important, is not the only means of locating opportunities. The following resources should also be used to maximize your search effectiveness.

■ On-Campus Recruitment

The Career Center invites recruiters from across the country to screen, interview, and select candidates for positions. Employers find this a cost-effective way of interviewing because they can meet with a large number of candidates in one day. The types of organizations who recruit vary from large companies, such as DaVita, to nonprofit organizations, such as Teach for America and the Peace Corps. Contact the Career Center for more information about the on-campus recruiting process.

■ Recruitment Job Fairs

Some companies and organizations participate in local, regional, or statewide job fairs. These fairs are typically large and impersonal; however, they provide an opportunity for you to meet with many employers in a short amount of time. Interviews that occur are usually short and used for screening purposes.

■ Chambers of Commerce

Most cities have a Chamber of Commerce, which is a community-based business alliance. Their directories are available for minimal or no charge. Many Chambers publish a periodic business magazine (e.g., Colorado Springs Business Journal), and some publish their magazines online. These publications have information on new businesses, regional growth industries, and hiring opportunities. You can gain numerous contacts by reading these publications regularly and attending networking events commonly sponsored by the Chamber. Chambers of Commerce also provide useful information on housing and living costs, educational institutions, cultural and recreational opportunities – factors to consider in deciding where you might want to work.

■ Newspapers

Subscribe to the Sunday edition of the local newspaper(s) if you are considering employment in a specific location. Don't just scan the classified ads; review the local, regional, and business sections to learn what companies and organizations are doing, and who might be a potential contact in your search. Many newspapers are also available online.

■ **National Publications/Journals**

There are a number of published resources that list national and international career opportunities, such as The Business Weekly, The Chronicle of Higher Education, ACCESS: Opportunities in Nonprofit Organizations, Art Search, and Environmental Job Opportunities. Most of these can be found online.

■ **Job Vacancy Listings**

In order to supplement (or bypass) the want ad route, employers often post job openings internally and recruit applicants from within the organization. Many employers send vacancy listings directly to college and university Career Centers and faculty members. The Internet is also popular source for job listings. In addition, organizations' websites typically link to career opportunities and outline the procedures for applying. Check with the Career Center and your academic department for job search websites in your career field.

■ **Professional Associations**

Once you choose a general career field, it is helpful to know its professional organizations. By belonging to these organizations you will be informed of major conferences (which may have job fairs) and other networking opportunities. Check the National Trade and Professional Association Directory or search online to obtain a list of professional organizations that provide services useful in a job search.

These services usually include:

- **Publications:** Professional newsletters or journals may contain job vacancies and current information about a particular career field. Many professional associations offer student membership rates and a member directory that can provide prospective contacts for your job search. The Career Center can suggest specific websites for professional publications in your field(s) of interest.
- **Annual Conferences:** Associations often hold conferences in various regions of the country that allow you to network with professionals in your field of interest and often offer a placement service. Interviews that occur are usually short, screening interviews; be prepared to make a positive first impression quickly.
- **Meetings:** Most national professional associations have local and regional affiliations that conduct monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings. Check with the national association office for information on its local and regional groups. These meetings are often held over lunch or dinner and provide an excellent opportunity for you to meet professionals in your field of interest.

■ **Yellow Pages**

The Internet and most public libraries have telephone books for major cities. Use the yellow pages and business sections to identify companies or organizations that might be seeking individuals with your skills. The yellow pages are a good way to find smaller companies or businesses that may not be listed in employer directories published by the Chamber of Commerce.

■ **Temporary/Employment Agencies**

Recent changes in the economy and corporate management philosophies have increased the respectability and importance of temping. Some companies only hire individuals who have 'temped' for them because it is an effective means of screening. However, if you choose to register with a placement agency, carefully read the fine print on the contract you sign. We recommend you work with an agency only if the employer pays the fee.

■ **LinkedIn**

Check out LinkedIn's Job tab at the top of your homepage. The tool will show you jobs you may be interested in based on criteria you select—like location, company size, and industry—and experience you have listed on your profile. Each posting will also show you if you have any connections working at the company, which is an excellent way to start reaching out to your network to get your foot in the door.