

Skills for Employment Series

The Job Search

Laura Connerly
Family and Consumer
Sciences Associate

Introduction

Now that you are serious about searching for a job, it is important to set up a strategy. A game plan makes your search more effective and efficient. This fact sheet will help you establish a game plan.

Taking the time to set up a job search strategy saves considerable time and frustration. Once you have your game plan, you can move ahead with confidence. Following the simple steps of determining job search limits and methods of finding a job puts you ahead of most people who are looking for work.

Job Parameters

First, think about what job parameters would best fit your needs. Job parameters are the type of work situation that you would prefer or could accept. These parameters could include the amount of pay or willingness to travel a long distance from your home. The time to think about these things is before you begin job hunting. Prior planning allows you to eliminate many positions from your job search. If you do not intend to travel more than 30 minutes to and from work, your geographic search area is greatly reduced. Of course, through the process of searching for a job, you might reconsider some of your decisions. It's generally best to start with definite ideas about the job parameters that interest you.

Understanding Your Job Parameters

Before you start looking for a job, establish job parameters to help you determine what employment situation is best for you. Remember, by job parameters we mean the kind of work situation that would best fit your needs. How far are you willing to travel to and from work? What is the minimum amount of pay you will require? Do you want to work in a "team environment," or do you prefer to work alone? The answers to these and many similar questions greatly shape the type of employment that will be best for you.

The first step in establishing a job search strategy is becoming more familiar with your job parameters. Below is a list of some job parameters. You may think of others that apply specifically to your job search.

- Job is compatible with career goals.
- Place of employment is near home.
- Work is outdoors.
- Work is indoors in a specific work area.
- Work is with people.
- Work is challenging.
- Work involves physical or manual labor.
- Work is free of deadlines.
- Work has a variety of deadlines.

*Arkansas Is
Our Campus*

Visit our web site at:
<http://www.uaex.edu>

- Work affords opportunity to learn.
- Job must have a health plan.
- Job must be secure.
- Job requires travel.
- Job has vacation and sick leave.
- Job has room for advancement.
- Job does not require shift work.
- Job involves a “team effort.”

Make your own list of job parameters. Don't feel your list is cast in stone. You may find that through the process of searching for a job some parameters will change. For example, you might start off with an expectation of at least \$10 an hour for a job within a 30-minute drive of your home. However, there may be very few opportunities at that wage within a 30-minute geographic range. As a result, you might decide to expand the geographic limit to 45 minutes or to accept a lower-paying job within your immediate area. In many cases, you will find there will be a tradeoff among your job parameters. Having your parameters established early will help you make the right decision for your situation.

Can you think of other job parameters that are important to you? If so, add them to your list. You might also write specifics about some of the parameters on your list, such as the specific minimum hourly wage you require.

Ways to Find Job Openings

Once you have your parameters listed, how are you going to find jobs for which you are interested in applying? There are many ways to find job openings. Listed are four ways to begin looking for a job.

- List persons who can communicate your job interests. Try to think of men and women who talk to people every day. Contact those people.

- List businesses or companies of interest to you. Apply to those businesses or companies.
- If you have worked before, write the names of any former employers who might help you find a job. Contact those former employers.
- Circle all job opportunities that you find in the current local newspaper. Follow up on these leads.

Phoning About a Job Lead

If you hear or read about a job opening you're interested in, contact the employer for an interview. If an ad asks you to phone or if phoning is the way you choose to reach an employer, remember these telephone tips:

- Have a pencil and paper ready before you call.
- Speak clearly. Keep your voice confident and pleasant, not too loud or too soft.
- Be sure to ask for an interview.
- Be sure to give this information:
 - Your name.
 - The job you are interested in.
 - How you found out about the job (for example, from an ad in the newspaper, from Mr. Smith, the drafting professor at college, or Mrs. Jones at XYZ Company).
- Be sure to get (and write down) this information:
 - Time and date of an interview.
 - Place to go for an interview.
 - Name of the person you are to see.
 - If mentioned, anything about the job including job requirements (such as education, training or work experience needed or equipment needed such as car or clothing).

Original manuscript by Sarah E. Drummond, assistant Extension specialist, Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University. Adapted for Arkansans by Wanda W. Shelby, former Extension specialist, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service.

Printed by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Printing Services.

LAURA CONNERLY is family and consumer sciences associate, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas. The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.