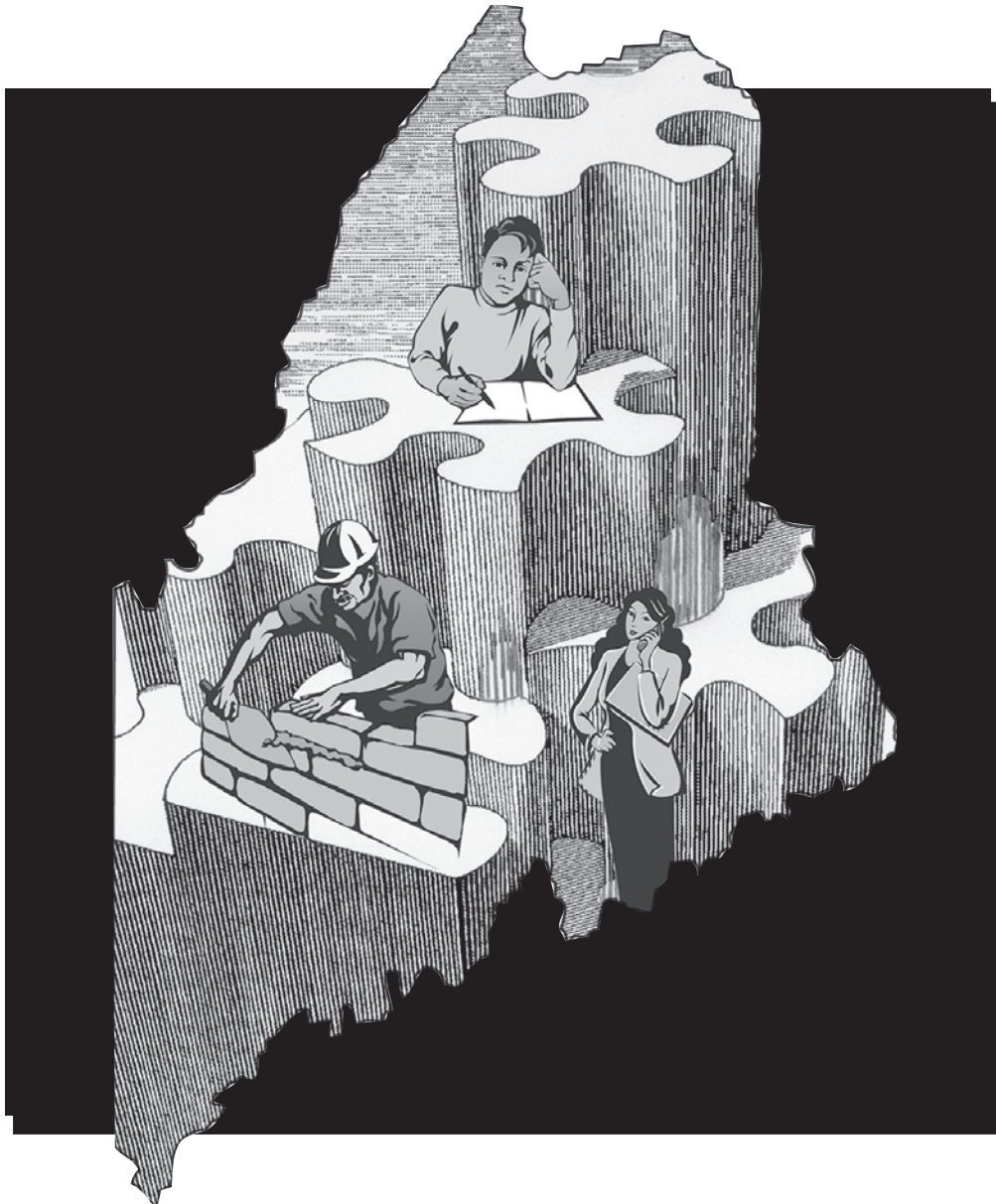


Job Hunting in Maine

Putting the Pieces Together



CareerCenter

The Maine Employment Resource

www.mainecareercenter.com

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Introduction

Welcome to *Job Hunting in Maine: Putting the Pieces Together*. Job hunting is never easy whether you are looking for your first job, trying to find another job or striving for a promotion. This book is filled with tips and techniques to make your search go faster and be more successful.

We have two goals for *Job Hunting in Maine*.

- 1. We want to introduce you to the CareerCenters throughout the State and all the information and services available to you through “The Maine Employment Resource.”**
- 2. We want to give you the latest tips and techniques to enhance your job search.**

You will find tips on career/life decision making, informational interviewing and finding where the job openings are. You will also find a list of the State of Maine Essential Work Competencies so you can describe your skills effectively to employers.

The CareerCenter

The CareerCenter is the place to start your job search or career exploration.

CareerCenters are a collaboration between the Maine Department of Labor and employment, education and training providers. CareerCenters are a part of a nationwide network of one-stop service centers helping to bring job-seekers and employers together.

It's the place to find out about education and training opportunities so you can continue to be competitive in the workplace. We have people in each location who can help job seekers look for work and connect them with employers. (See back cover for CareerCenter locations.)



CareerCenter Partners

Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Services has two divisions that help people get or keep a job. One division helps people who are blind or visually impaired. This is the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Children with disabilities are also eligible for Rehabilitation Services. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is also known as VR. VR helps people who have all other disabilities get and keep a job. A person may have an emotional, physical or mental disability.

Here's how to find out if Rehabilitation Services can help you. You must apply for services. You must meet these two requirements:

1. You must have a disability that keeps you from getting or keeping a job.
2. You must need VR services to find or keep a job.

You will find out if you are eligible for VR services within 60 days. Most people find out if they are eligible much sooner. Check with your local CareerCenter to see how we can help you.

Maine's Job Bank

Maine's Job Bank connects job seekers with current job openings. You can register for Maine's Job Bank at the CareerCenter location that is most convenient for you or at www.mainecareercenter.com. You will need your social security number to do this. If you come to the CareerCenter, a friendly staff person will be available to assist you.

After you are registered, you may view job openings for Maine employers. After you are registered, you may also receive referrals to jobs for which you qualify.

Priority of Service for Veterans

The CareerCenter offers specialized employment and training services for Veterans. If you served in the U.S. Armed Forces, a CareerCenter Veterans' Representative can help you find a job, get new skills, or access other state or federal resources available to you. Veterans and eligible spouses are given priority of service for the receipt of employment, training and placement services provided under all Maine Department of Labor-funded programs. For more information about Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses, or to determine if you are eligible, visit www.mainecareercenter.com/veterans.

Workforce Development

Workforce development helps people return to work. There is retraining assistance for people who have lost their job because of layoffs, closings or other dislocations. People who are receiving assistance such as food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) also may be eligible for retraining. Some programs help people who are or have been seasonal farm workers. There is a program to help fishermen who want to change careers. Check with your local CareerCenter to find out if you may be eligible for retraining services.

The CareerCenter Information Center

The Information Center in each CareerCenter location is open to everyone at no cost.

The Information Center has a library of the latest and best job seeking guides in a variety of formats. There are books, videos and computer applications. The Information Center has adaptive equipment for your use.

You can use Information Center computers, software and office support in your job search.

You can write a new résumé, brush up an old one or write cover letters. By browsing the Internet, you will find job listing boards and tips that can help you in your job search. A great place to start is **www.mainecareercenter.com**. There you can connect to job postings in Maine's Job Bank and also find information specific to Maine jobseekers.

You can get your complimentary copy of *Hot Jobs in Maine* or *Careers in Maine for College Graduates*. These brochures give the latest information on which jobs are growing in Maine.

All Information Center services are available at no cost and there is no paperwork or "red tape" involved in using the Information Center.



In addition to assisting you through Career/Life decision making, the Information Center offers information on the following services to the public at no charge.

What's in the Information Center?

Education and Training Opportunities

The Information Center has the latest catalogs and computer searches to find just the right education or training opportunity to meet your needs.

Community Resources and Assistance

The Information Center keeps current listings of community, state and national resources if you are seeking help or need further information on issues such as child care, housing opportunities or other non-work-related issues.

Job Search and Placement Opportunities

The Information Center has services for all job seekers. You may use the Center for résumé preparation and for writing cover letters.

You may even mail, fax or copy your resumes and cover letters at no charge to you.

You can also use Information Center computers for Internet access. By browsing the Internet, you will find job listing boards and tips that can help you in your job search. A great place to start is **www.mainecareercenter.com**. There you can connect to job postings

in Maine's Job Bank and also find information specific to Maine jobseekers.

Business and Employer Assistance

In this section you can find Labor Market Information, workforce skills development and other assistance to help people who have a business or who are interested in starting one.



The Information Center has organized materials into these nine categories:

Career/Life Planning

This topic may help you learn more about yourself through individual and group activities. You can find information about specific careers, occupations and industries. We have information on topics such as planning for retirement, credit management and budgeting. Choices® is a computer activity. You can explore jobs and identify training institutions that offer training for that job. You can customize Choices® to use your interests, past work history and skills. A person with little or no computer experience will find Choices® easy to use with direction from an Information Center staff person.

Self-employment

This section helps people who are thinking about starting their own business. You can learn how to write a business plan and seek start-up funding.

Job Search

The Job Search section includes information and products to help you with activities such as job applications, résumés, cover letters, interviewing skills and networking techniques. You will also be able to use Maine's Job Bank through the CareerCenter's Web site at **www.mainecareercenter.com**. This site also offers links to other local and national job boards.

Job Survival

Resources in this area include jobkeeping skills. You can learn more about essential work competencies such as communicating with people on the job, time management and getting along with others at work. You will also find information on worker's rights and workplace safety.

Community Resources

The materials and information in this topic area can help you look for resources throughout the community. You can find resources to help you with housing, credit counseling and other emergency needs. In addition, this topic provides self-help resources for personal development.

Employer Services

This category provides information and materials to assist employers or business owners. The topics in the employer services section of the Information Center include:

- Apprenticeship
- Business Visitation
- Rapid Employment Training Initiative (RETI)
- Maine DOL SafetyWorks! Program
- Licensing and work permits
- Labor laws
- OSHA regulations
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) guides
- Job-Task analysis
- Hiring and interviewing procedures
- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)
- Labor Market Information



References

This section includes reference and informational materials. Resources include dictionaries, thesauruses, atlases, road maps, study guides, manuals, typing tutors, computer and technology guides.

Education/Training

This topic includes names and locations of training institutions. You will also find school catalogs and lists of skills training programs. People who need to upgrade their skills can find out which place is most convenient for them. You can find out where to get a high school diploma or general education diploma (GED). There is also information on financial resources to help you pay for education or training.

Labor Market Information

Knowledge is power! Labor market information gives you the power to make career decisions based on knowledge of the labor market. You can find out about jobs that are growing as well as ones that are not growing. You can learn about wages and benefits. You can get a list of potential employers, and find information on occupational licenses and certification. If you are considering a career change, you can get detailed information about hundreds of jobs performed by workers in Maine and elsewhere.

Maine's Job Bank

www.mainecareercenter.com

- Browse thousands of jobs listed by Maine employers – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Create a personal profile that includes education, experience, and employment preferences
- Get matched instantly to jobs currently listed in the system
- Receive e-mail notifications about new job listings that match your qualifications and preferences
- Post your résumé and allow the system to send it to interested employers
- Complete generic applications and store them online for positions that require them
- Feel confident that your personal information is secure and confidential

Maine's
Job Bank
CareerCenter

*For more information, call the CareerCenter
at 1-888-457-8883 or TTY: 1-800 794-1110*

Let's Get Started

We invite you to use *Job Hunting in Maine* as a first step in your job search. Don't feel as if you have to read *Job Hunting* from cover to cover. Use those parts that are most important to you right now. Then come back to the book when you want to get more information or move on to a next step.

And remember you are not alone. The people at CareerCenter are waiting to assist you. Let us know how we can help your job hunting in Maine.

The Career/Life Planning Process

Making decisions about what we do for work is a very important step. What we do for work has an impact on every part of our lives. Our work may determine where we live, how much time we have to spend with our families and whether or not we can enjoy our favorite leisure activities as much as we would like.

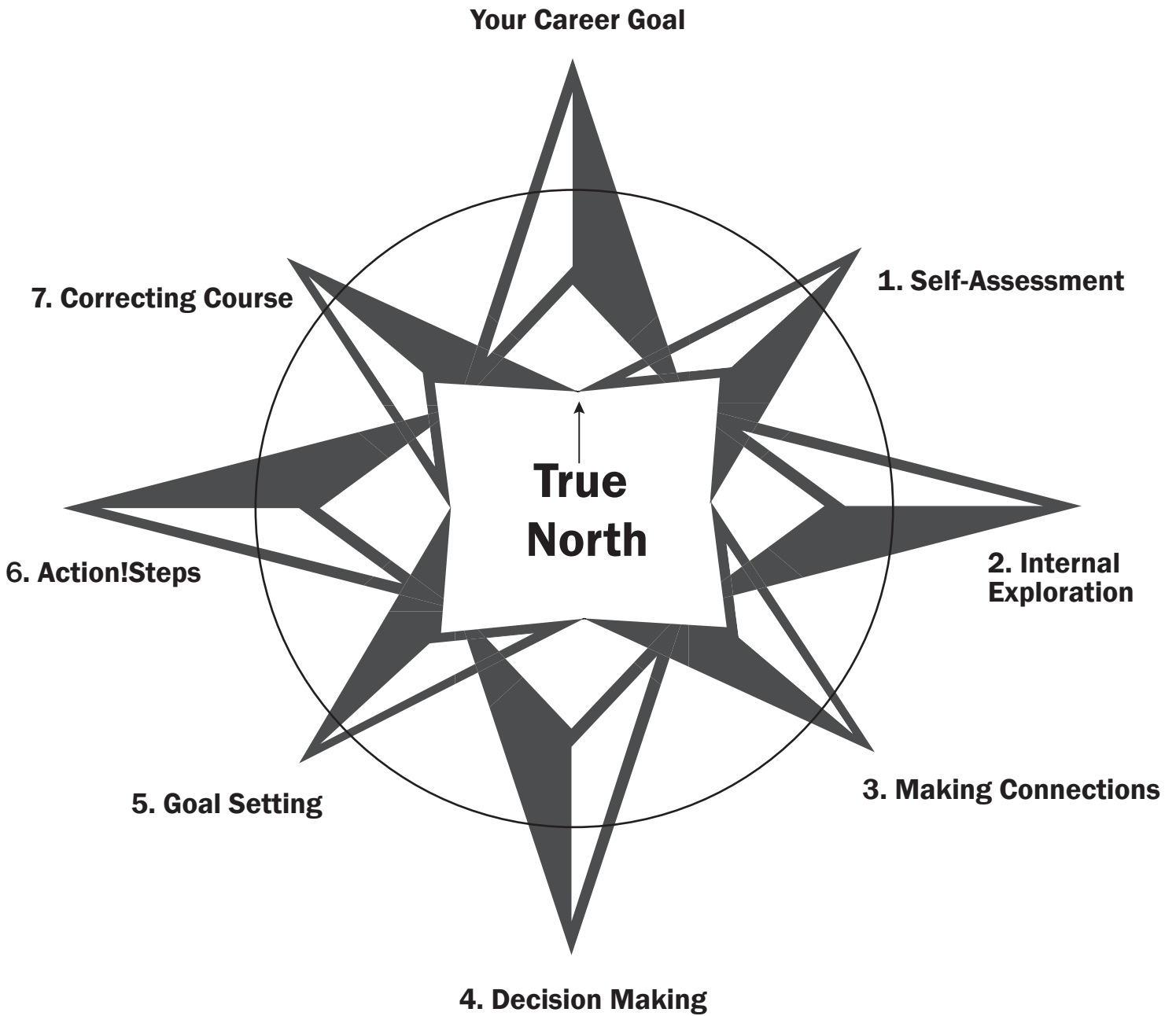
We want to give you a process for making career/life decisions a little easier. We also want to inform you how CareerCenter can provide tools and support for your decision making.

Making a good career/life decision has several steps. We will take a look at each step of the career/life decision process and make recommendations as to which CareerCenter resources might be most helpful to you.



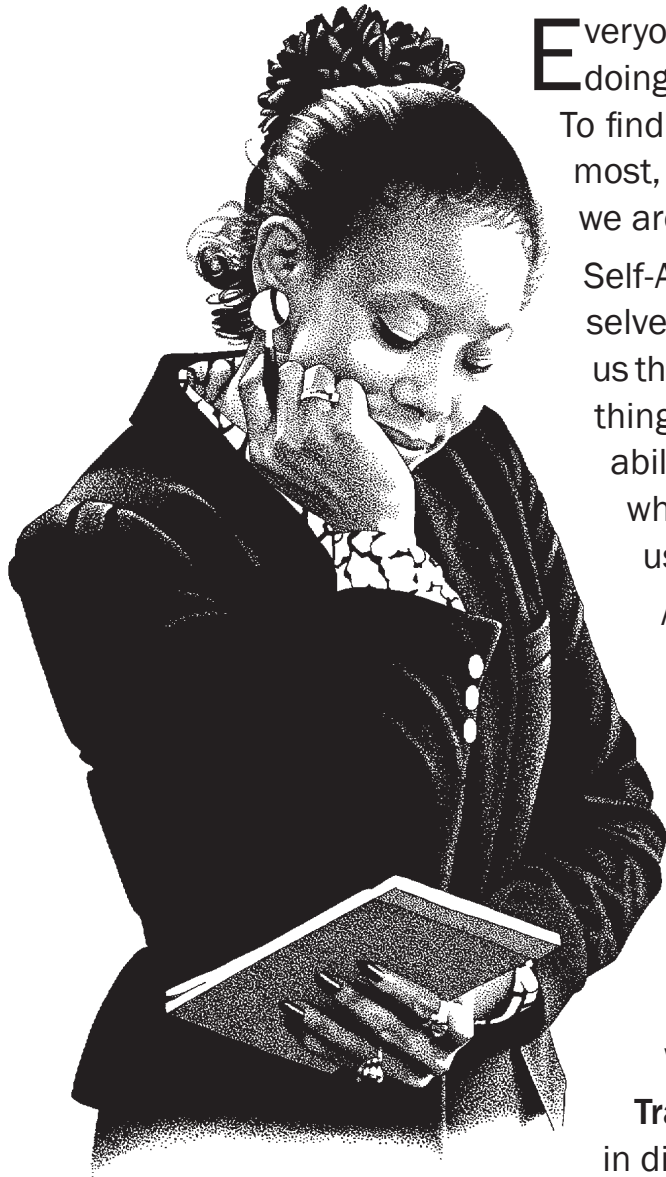
On the next page is a model of the Career/Life Decision Making Process. The compass used to illustrate the model helped sailors and woodsmen find their way home by pointing to true north. You can use the career/life decision compass to find your way to the job you really want.

The Career/Life Decision Making Compass



Now let's take a closer look at each part of the career/life decision making process.

Part I: Self-Assessment



Everyone is capable of doing many jobs well. We like doing some of these jobs better than we like others. To find those jobs that we would do best and enjoy most, it is helpful to do some self-assessment when we are making a career choice.

Self-Assessment means that we take a look at ourselves. We may discover or confirm which jobs give us the most satisfaction. We may also explore those things that we seem to have a natural talent for or ability to do. This might give us some clues about what areas of the job market might be best for us to explore as we are job hunting in Maine.

A part of Self-Assessment is discovering our knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). We should be able to identify those key skills that we want to use in our next job. Skills may be classified into three categories:

Job Skills: The technical knowledge and skills required of a successful candidate for a job.

Adaptive or Self-Management Skills: Those worker traits that make us valuable workers.

Transferable Skills: Those skills that we can use in different jobs.

We should think about how much we enjoy using our skills with data, people or things. These are worker preferences. Worker preferences describe those things we most enjoy doing at work. Of course, no job is exclusively working with data, people or things, but some jobs have more of one than another does.

It is also important to remember that each work site may have a different job description for the same job title. For example, an insurance

clerk may have a data job in one work site. This person would spend a lot of time processing insurance claims and forms. Another insurance clerk may spend most of the workday dealing with customers, answering questions about payments due or claims that have been filed. This clerk would have a job that requires dealing with people.

Read the descriptions of the three worker preferences. Think about how you prefer to use your skills. Do you prefer to use your skills working with data, people or things?

Information, Data, Ideas

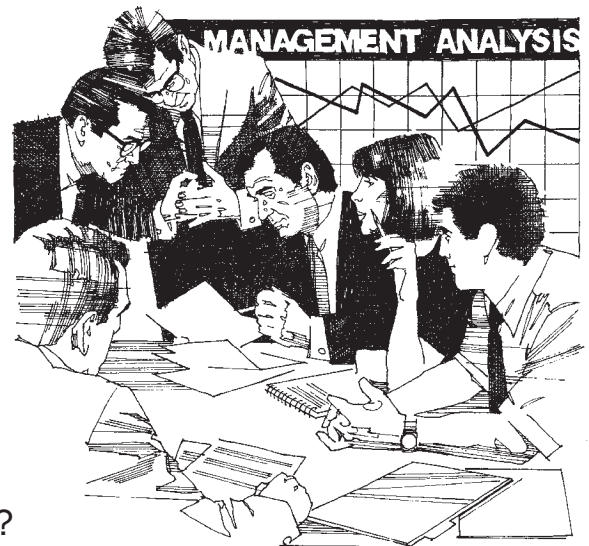
You are using data skills when you work with any kind of information. Data may be facts, numbers, ideas, impressions or feelings.

When you work with data, you may be sending or receiving information. You may be analyzing or interpreting. You may be creating. You may be managing information or putting it to work.

Do You Like to Work with Data?

Are you good at:

- Gathering or creating information, data or ideas?
- Storing or retrieving information, data or ideas?
- Putting information, data or ideas to use?
- Managing information, data or ideas
 - ✓ Step-by-step?
 - ✓ Holistically (by seeing the big picture)?



People

People skills include all interactions with people on the job.

People skills include how we communicate verbally or non-verbally with other people.

Some examples of people skills include teaching, leading, coaching, managing others, customer service, selling and persuading.

Do You Like to Work with People?

Do you have:

- Skills with individuals one-on-one?
- Skills with groups, organizations or the public?
- Skills caring for people or animals?



Things

When we work with things, we work with our hands or use our physical skills at work.

Working with things includes making, repairing, loading or unloading products.

Working with things can also mean using equipment such as computers or driving trucks.

Working with things can also include being a dancer or participating on a sports team.

Working with things can also mean being able to visualize and accurately draw or record space, dimensions, rooms or buildings.

Working with things can also mean growing plants or animals as a product.

Do You Like to Work with Things?

Are you good at:

- Physical performances?
- Handling materials or objects?
- Making things?
- Operating or repairing equipment, machinery or vehicles?
- Visualizing or drawing spaces, buildings or rooms?
- Growing plants or animals?



Here is an activity that will help you discover some of your knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) and how you prefer to use these at work. Make a list and write them down.

What Do You Enjoy?

Answer these questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. Whatever you answer will give you a clue about your KSAs and worker preferences.

1. **What did you enjoy about the last work you did?** Even if you disliked most of it, think about one thing that you did like. If you have no paid work experience, think about a volunteer experience or other activity.
2. **What do you enjoy learning about?** This does not have to be formal training. We learn from others, from television, or from reading as well as from going to school.
3. **What do you do that receives compliments from other people (friends, family, co-workers)?**
4. **What work (paid or volunteer) experience are you most proud of?**
5. **When you need to recharge your energy level, do (a) you want to be with others for companionship and support or (b) need to be alone to relax and think things over?**
6. **If you could do anything in the world for work, what would it be?** (Don't worry about time, money or other details here!)

Now that you have had some time to think about your answers, let's explore how your answers can help your job hunting.

Here's what your answers to each question may tell you.

- 1. Do you find a pattern if you explore your work history?** Perhaps you have enjoyed jobs where you gave good customer service. Maybe you enjoyed solving problems or working as a part of a fast-paced team. Maybe you enjoyed working at places that had a clear chain-of-command. Maybe you enjoyed places that were informal and relaxed in their work culture. This kind of self-exploration can lead you to work that you will enjoy in the future.
- 2. If we are interested enough to continue lifelong learning about something, then perhaps we have enough knowledge or skill to be a successful job candidate in that area.** Even if we cannot find work using the skills that we have developed in an area of interest, we may be able to find a pattern of skills and abilities that will lead us to a career area that is right for us. For example, an interest in stamp collecting might help us realize that we enjoy research and attention to detail. On the other hand, an interest in local theater might help us realize that we enjoy activities that are creative, that involve working with others and that have tight deadlines. Although most of us enjoy interests that “help us get away from it all,” our underlying personalities don't change that much from work to leisure time.
- 3. If you do something that consistently receives compliments, then you have a skill in that area.** Sometimes we are good at something and don't even realize that we make a special contribution. Those who work with us and those who know us well can often see skills we can't. Sometimes we think that everyone can design an artistic advertising layout, tune an engine or cook a great meal for 50 people just because it is so easy for us to do. We are often most aware of those skills we know we lack or of those skills we have just learned. We often overlook those things that come very easily to us. Sometimes those are the things we do best.
- 4. Things that we have done well and are proud of give us a hint about our worker preferences.** Things that we are proud to have been associated with give us clues about our work values.

5. If we need to be with others to recharge, then we may be an extrovert. Extroverts need to be with people to be at their best. If this describes you, then you would do best at a job where there is a lot of contact with other people.

Those people who need to be alone with their own thoughts to recharge are probably introverts. Introverts do their best work when they can have time to themselves to create, to deal with facts, figures or ideas.

Think about how much you like to work alone or with other people. Then you can use this information to identify positions that are most satisfying for you.

6. What would you most like to do if you have the time, the training, and the money to do anything you want? Even if that job isn't readily available to you, it is important to think about your "dream job." What could you contribute to that job?

Maybe your "dream job" is readily available to you. Even if it is not, try to find jobs that are available to you which could give you some of the same enjoyment and where you could make a contribution.

When we are selecting which job opportunities might be more attractive to us, we also should explore our core values or beliefs. If we know what things are important to us, then we make better choices about what kinds of work we would be good at and enjoy doing.

People who choose work that does not agree with their values and beliefs often are indifferent workers. They can become angry and cynical on the job. Sometimes workers even become ill if they are doing work that is not right for them.

In fact, one career theory called Worker Trait Theory states that all people who are high performing, satisfied workers in a job share certain characteristics and values. If you are interested in finding out which jobs match your interests, values and characteristics, come to the Information Center and ask for the "Self-Directed Search" or other tools to help you with self-exploration.

Think about what you would enjoy about that job.



The Big Question

At this point you may be asking yourself “Why do I have to go through all this career/life decision making to find a job now?”

In fact, some of us may need to find a “survival” job as quickly as possible. If you need to find work immediately, please turn to the section “I Need a Job NOW!” on page 56.

But for most readers, let’s continue to talk about how to find employment that will be satisfying to you for the long-term and where you can find success and grow in the job.

The main reason why people prefer to put more thought into what they will be doing for work is that work has changed for most people. When many of us began working or when we observed what our parents and grandparents did for work, most jobs were based on an industrial model of working.

In other words, most of us made something for a living. We made shoes or textiles or paper for example.

If we did not make a product, we produced the raw materials for that product or delivered the finished product to market.

In the past, most workers did not have to make decisions at work. They did not have to work as part of a team or be creative at work.

In the past, most workers were skilled at doing just one thing. Most workers did not perform a variety of tasks on the job. Now the world of work has changed.

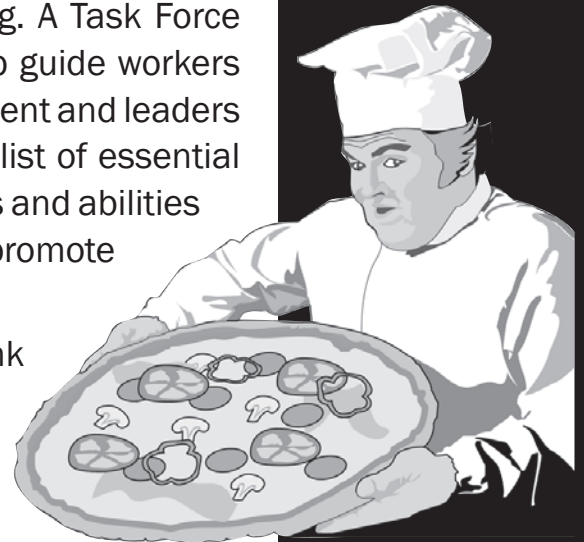
How Has the World of Work Changed?

Even if our job requires us to make a product, we now perform a variety of tasks at work. We work as team members. We are responsible for the quality of the product we make. We are responsible for giving good customer service. We need a variety of skills to be successful on the job. Many jobs today consist of work in the service industry or in retail trade rather than in manufacturing industries.



The State of Maine recognizes how work is changing. A Task Force on Essential Work Competencies was formed to help guide workers through these changes. People in workforce development and leaders of Maine businesses worked together to establish a list of essential work competencies (see page 15). These are the skills and abilities that employers seek when they hire new employees or promote successful workers.

As you are job hunting in Maine, it will be helpful to think about how you have demonstrated these competencies in prior work experience and in volunteer or civic work.



Today's Work Competencies in the State of Maine

1. Self-Esteem

Belief in one's own self-worth and abilities.

2. Motivation to Achieve

The desire to improve performance by competing against increasingly higher standards of excellence.

3. Basic Skills

Reading, writing, computation, listening, speaking and computer literacy essential for successful performance as lifelong learners in the workplace.

4. Technical Knowledge and Skills for Specific Occupation

Knowledge, skills & abilities necessary to perform a job.

5. Thinking Skills:

Problem-Posing — Choosing how to view a problem

Problem-Solving — Ability to resolve known problems

Decision-Making — Ability to choose a best response

Analytical Thinking — Analysis and logical reasoning

Creative Thinking — Ability to create novel ideas or products

6. Learning Skills

Assessing one's own learning needs, understanding one's own learning styles, using appropriate techniques for learning.

7. Interpersonal Skills:

Interpersonal Understanding — Hearing and understanding others' spoken, unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings or concerns.

Teamwork — Working cooperatively with others to achieve a common goal.

Negotiating — Overcoming disagreements by compromising with, accommodating or collaborating with others.

8. Organizational Awareness Skills:

Assessment of Organizational Cultures — Recognizing and assessing the characteristics of an organization's culture, including formal and informal power structures.

Presentation of Appropriate Self — Developing and presenting an image of one's self which is consistent with the organization's requirements for success, including personal appearance and use of appropriate language for the corporate culture.

Networking — Developing and maintaining a network of contacts with people who may be able to provide information, assistance, or support for work-related goals.

Let's look at each of Today's Work Competencies to see why they are so important.

1. **Self-Esteem** is important because workers with low self-esteem are not willing to change on the job. If we do not have appropriate self-esteem, we are not willing to try new things. We are afraid we will fail. We are afraid we can't learn new things as quickly or as well as others can. This is especially true of learning new computer skills. Therefore, we stick to the "tried and true" old ways of doing things. The world of work is changing too fast for reluctant employees to block progress. Employers who do not keep up with the changing times often go out of business. They seek employees who will help them keep ahead of the field.

2. **Motivation to Achieve** means working hard every day. Employers are seeking employees who will "give a good day's work for a good day's pay." It means being punctual to work and to meetings. It means asking for additional duties if your time at work is not filled. Workers who are motivated to achieve stay late when necessary. They are good team players. Even if your current position is not your dream job, doing your best every day lets others see what a motivated worker you are.

3. **Basic Skills** (including reading, computation, writing, speaking, listening and computer skills) are essential to get a job and keep a job. As you look at your basic skills, do you find skills gaps that need to be closed? There are many opportunities to continue lifelong learning. Visit the Information Center and check out the Education and Training section.



4. **Technical Knowledge & Skills** necessary to perform the duties of the job are certainly important. We have to document that we have the knowledge, skills and abilities to compete successfully for a job.

Most of us feel confident using the technical knowledge and skills we have mastered in previous jobs. We know how to do those things very well. Sometimes when we change jobs, these skills are still in demand. However, sometimes we find ourselves in a position where our skills are no longer competitive or we need additional technical knowledge and skills. There are

many employers who will train someone in the technical knowledge and skills for their occupation if they find a job candidate who has appropriate self-esteem, motivation to achieve and good basic skills. Some people can gain new technical knowledge and skills through on-the-job training or apprenticeship opportunities. Visit the Information Center to learn more about training programs and other opportunities to increase your technical knowledge and skills.

5. Thinking Skills are very important in today's workplace. We need to be able to figure out what a problem is (problem posing) and to know how to solve problems right the first time. We also need

to learn from our mistakes and from what doesn't work. Skilled workers make good decisions using a variety of decision-making styles. They also are creative on the job. Creative thinking includes how to do something faster, make something better or save the company money without compromising quality.

6. Learning Skills are important because the world of work is changing very rapidly. Many of us are in jobs that did not exist when we began working. We are using equipment and techniques that did not exist a few years ago. If we do not know how we learn best, then we are not as efficient at work as we could be. We have to be *Lifelong Learners* to be successful at work today.

7. Interpersonal Skills include understanding and getting along with others at work. We need to work well with co-workers, supervisors and customers. We have to know how to negotiate and compromise on the job so that the customer and the work come first.

8. Organizational Awareness means fitting into the corporate culture at work. That means understanding and following the written and unwritten policies of a workplace. It means that our work clothes, appearance and language are appropriate to the position we are seeking. It is also staying in touch with others to keep learning about your field of employment. Staying in touch with colleagues is called networking.

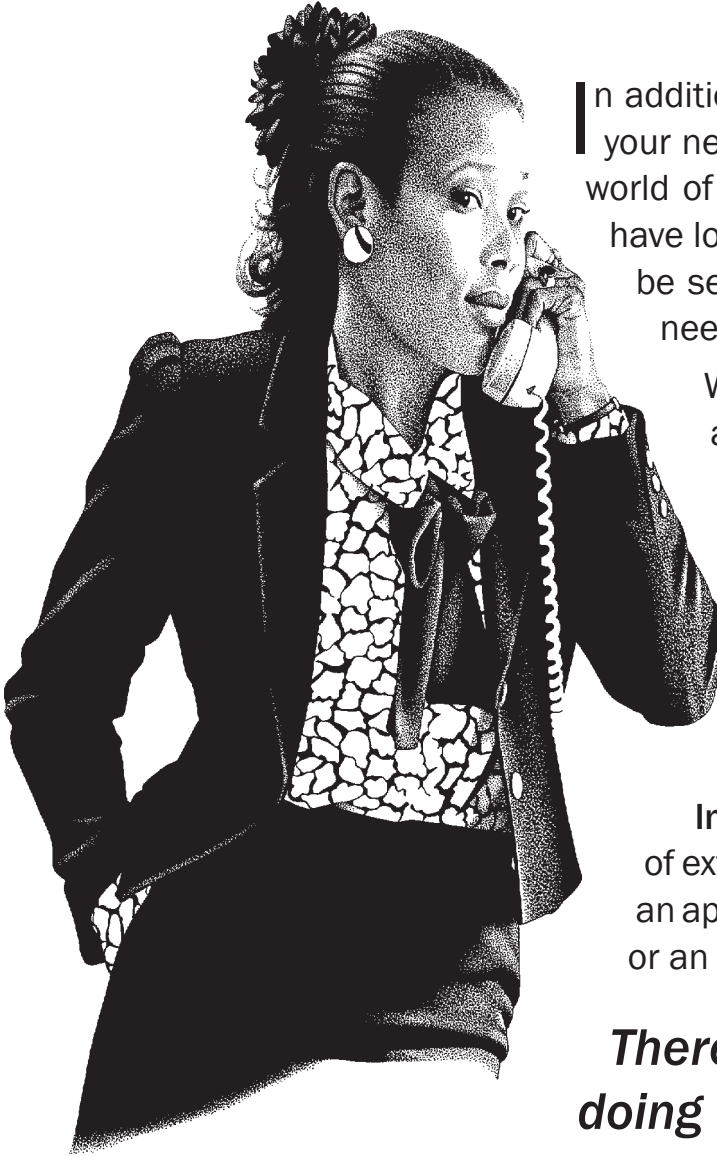


How do I measure up?

Rate yourself from 1 (low) to 10 (high) on each of these competency statements. While you are job hunting in Maine, you may want to put these competencies on your résumé or use them at interviews.

- I am honest in discussions about myself and my career plans.
- I am able to cope with people and problems on the job.
- I am dependable and punctual.
- I have demonstrated self-confidence by showing initiative and using problem-solving skills.
- I am a highly motivated self-starter.
- I cooperate well in a work situation.
- I take direction from supervisors well.
- I ask questions when I don't understand something at work.
- I try to be a valuable employee by learning all I can about my job.
- I try to learn more about the company I work for so I can contribute more at work.
- I have a plan to accomplish my career goals and ambitions.
- When I start a task at work I usually complete it.
- I know how to handle several things at work at the same time and can set priorities.
- I have good time management skills.
- I am organized at work.
- My organizational skills at home allow me to be at work on time every day.
- I work well in groups.
- I work well alone.
- I am creative at work by thinking of ways to save time or money or make other improvements on my work performance.
- I do my job well without direct supervision.
- I can explain what I think at work.
- I can teach others what I know at work.
- I know several ways to make good decisions and use the most appropriate way for each situation at work.
- I can negotiate and work out compromises on the job.
- I am a good listener at work.
- I communicate well with people verbally.
- I communicate well in writing.
- I have the academic and technical skills I need to be successful on the job.
- I have the computer skills necessary to get and keep a job.
- I know how to "fit in" with others at work.
- I know how to represent my place of work well when dealing with customers or the public.
- I always give excellent customer service.

Part II: External Exploration



In addition to discovering what you need and desire in your next job, most people need to discover what the world of work has to offer today. Some of us may not have looked for work in many years. Others of us may be seeking our first full-time job. In either case we need to know what to expect.

We need to know **Labor Market Information** about which jobs are stable and growing and which ones are declining. It's nice to know what to expect for salary ranges in different occupations. In addition, would you also like to know which employers hire people for the job you are seeking? The Information Center has all that information and more available to you in many different formats.

Informational Interviewing is an important part of external exploration. An informational interview is an appointment to learn more about a job, a company or an industry.

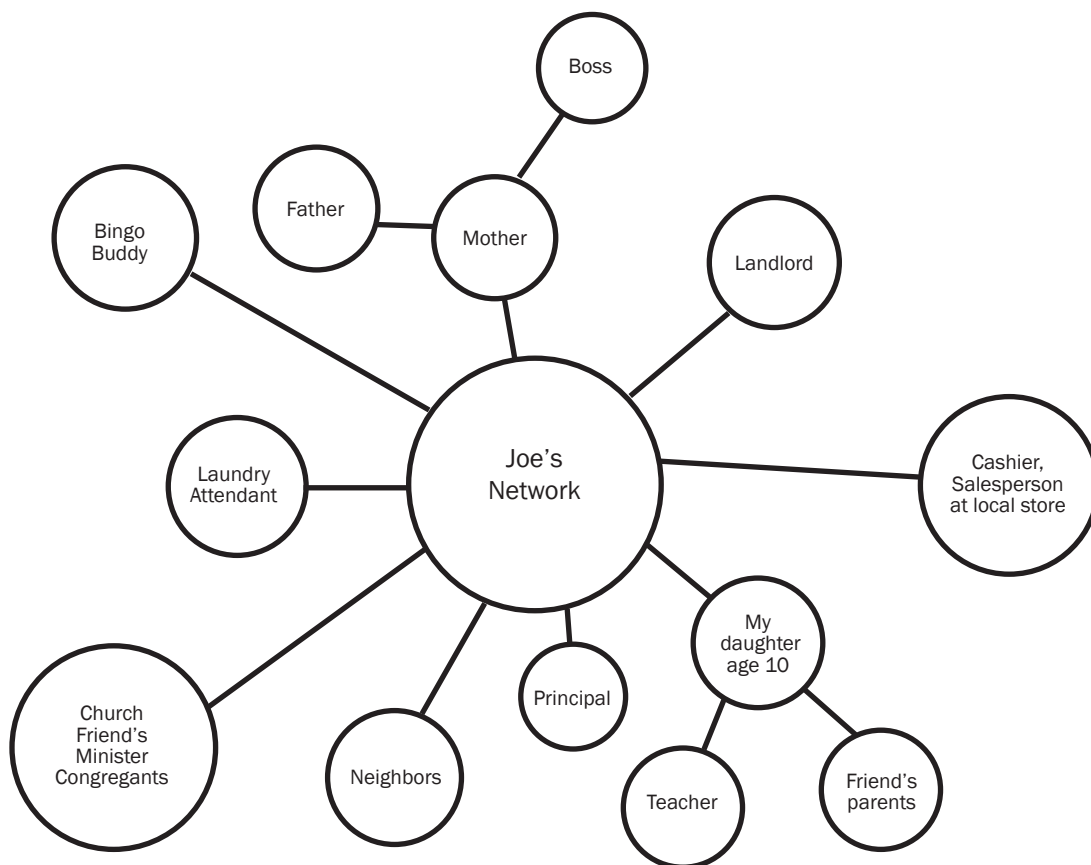
There are many good reasons for doing informational interviewing:

- It helps you become more focused in your job searching.
- You will become better at describing what you want and need in a job.
- You will get valuable feedback about your job goals and how you come across to others.
- You will learn where your knowledge, skills and abilities are needed and valued.
- You'll learn the names of people who can form a network for you.
- You can find out whether a position in that company matches your worker preferences or not.
- You may discover unadvertised opportunities.

Whether you are preparing for your first job or making a career change, informational interviews should be a part of your information gathering process.

You can conduct an informational interview with a worker who is doing a job you are considering. You can also interview someone in management to find out more about a business or industry. You can interview someone in human resources to find out if an industry is stable or growing in your area. You can also find out what is on the horizon for a particular business. These interviews allow you to “hear it straight from the horse’s mouth” from people who actually work in a job or industry of interest. Informational interviews can help you to become more confident in the choice you make. It will also reduce the risk of making a decision that you are unhappy with later.

Informational interviewing helps you to prepare for a job interview. You will be experienced in talking to people about your knowledge, skills and abilities. You will have a better idea of what is expected of a candidate for a job. Finally, these interviews can increase your contacts and get you into a network that can assist your job searching.



Example of Job-Seeking Network

Here are some tips on doing effective informational interviews:



- **To identify employers and workers to interview, contact your personal network.** Relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates and other acquaintances can provide names of people who work in your field of interest. Other people use sources such as the yellow pages and make “cold calls” to places of interest. “Cold Calling” is a term that describes talking to people you don’t have a personal contact with.
- **It is a good idea to interview several people so you get different viewpoints.** Remember that an individual will talk about his or her own experience. One worker’s experience may not be typical of other workers.
- **A good way to get started is to interview friends or family members.** You can practice asking questions in a relaxed setting. You can also get valuable feedback about how you come across to others.
- **Interviews with employers and workers can be arranged by mail, by phone or in person.** Your request should be presented clearly. This means making sure your contact knows you are seeking information, not a job interview. People are usually busy at work, so ask for only 20 to 30 minutes of their time. Times that are usually convenient include at the start of the business day, right before or after lunch or at the end of the day. Suggest one of these times. Unless the person is a close friend or family member, always meet at a place of business or other public place such as your local CareerCenter or public library.
- **Prepare a list of questions in advance to take to the interview with you.** The questions on the next page can be used as a guide.



1. At what job would I start to obtain a position like yours?
2. What is a typical day like on this job? What tasks do you do routinely? What tasks do you do only once in a while?
3. What does the job mainly involve? Do you work with things? People? Data? Ideas?
4. What are the requirements for entry into this job? Experience? Education? Skills? Licenses or credentials? Physical demands? Personal characteristics?
5. What are the working conditions like at your job (in your company)? Work alone or as a team member? Indoors or outside? Type of supervision?
6. What are the advantages of this job? What are the disadvantages?
7. How do people earn promotions in this job (with your company)?
8. What are the future prospects with this company? In this industry?

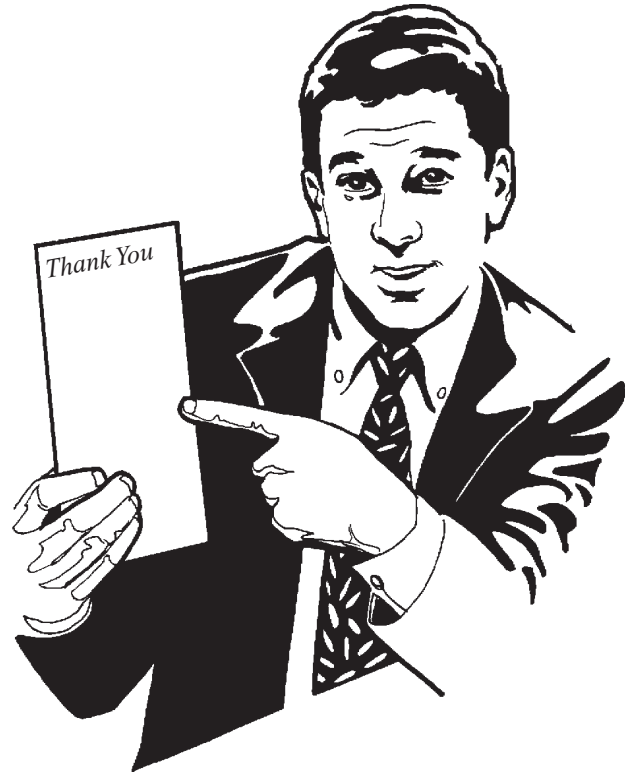
What Do I Do at an Informational Interview?

- Be on time for your appointment.
- Be businesslike.
- Dress as you would for any business appointment.
- Remember that the person you are seeing is doing you a favor. Be prepared for the informational interview.
- Be courteous, stay on the subject, and listen carefully.
- If you take notes, keep them brief.
- If you wish to tape the interview, ask permission first. If the person does not seem comfortable with the idea, don't tape. Listening carefully is much more important.
- Do not hesitate to ask the person if he or she knows other people who could provide more information. These may also be good job leads when you begin looking for work.
- When the interview is completed, thank the person for his or her time.



What Do I Do After the Informational Interview?

- Be sure to mail a “thank you” note. (See next page.)
- While everything is still fresh in your mind, review the interview. You might want to write or tape your impressions of the interview at this time. You can also add this information to other facts you already know about the job or industry.
- Consider the following questions:
 1. Is this job (or industry) right for me?
 2. What do I see as advantages? What do I see as disadvantages?
 3. Do I qualify for this type of position right now? If not, what am I lacking? How can I close this skills gap?
 4. If I need more education or training, where can I get it? Can I afford it? Am I willing to do it?



Even though you have made it clear that you are seeking only information at the interview, you may receive a job offer or a referral to a job opening.

Always have copies of your résumé and calling or business cards to leave if the person asks for them.

You may ask at the end of the interview if you may leave a calling card and a résumé. However, never ask for a job interview or a job during an informational interview. If you do this, people might think you are a sneaky or dishonest person. You will probably not be offered a job if one becomes available.

In some cases, companies do not provide time for informational interviews. Some Maine firms offer opportunities for people to learn more about working for their companies through local career days or job fairs. The Information Center will usually have listings of these activities. Also check your local newspaper for these events. Reading the business section of your newspaper is a wonderful way to keep up with local business.

*Sample
Thank You
Note*

August 30, 2008

I.M. Looking
123 Your Street
Yourtown, ME 04444

Betty Bosse
President
Yourtown Kitchen and Design
Yourtown ME 04444

Dear Ms. Bosse:

Thank you for spending time with me on Monday to help me with my career decision-making. From our conversation, it seems to me that CAD operator is certainly a rewarding career choice. Your estimates on how much the field will grow in the next ten years give me confidence that there will be stable employment for the right job candidates.

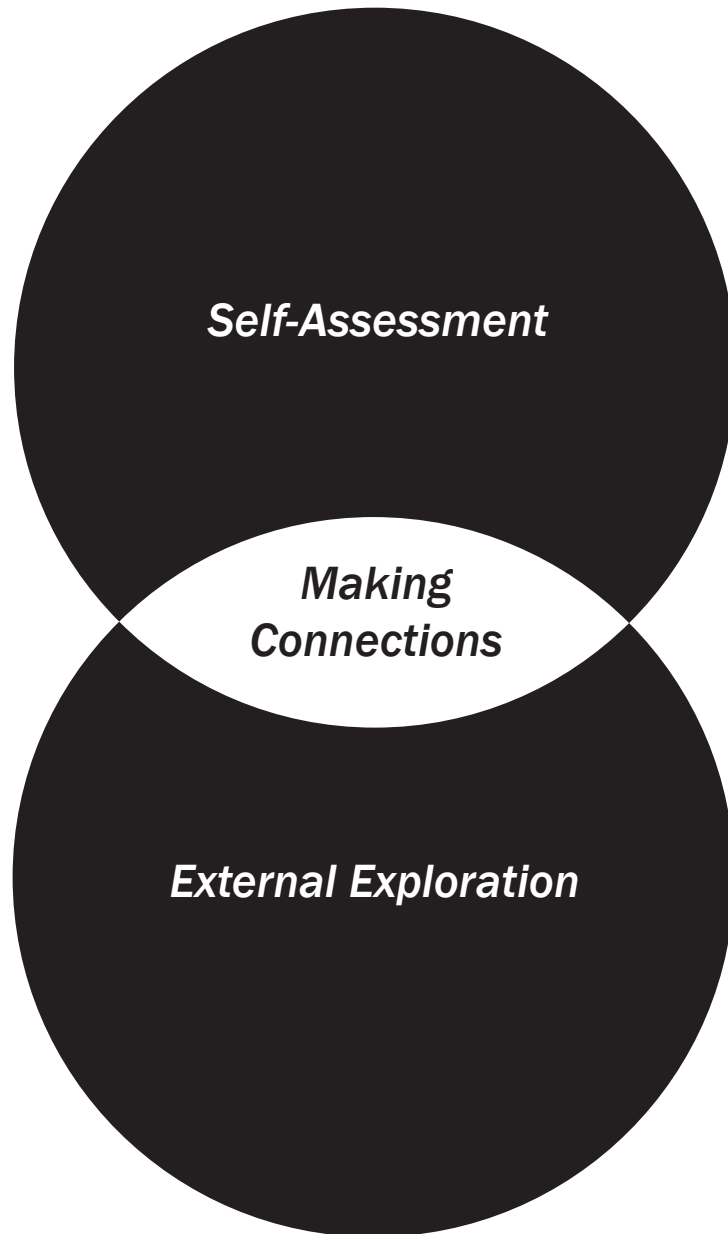
I have not yet made a final decision on my career choice, but if I do choose CAD operator, then Yourtown Kitchen & Design is certainly the kind of work environment that I would like to be in.

Again, thank you for your time and information. I will let you know what my final decision is.

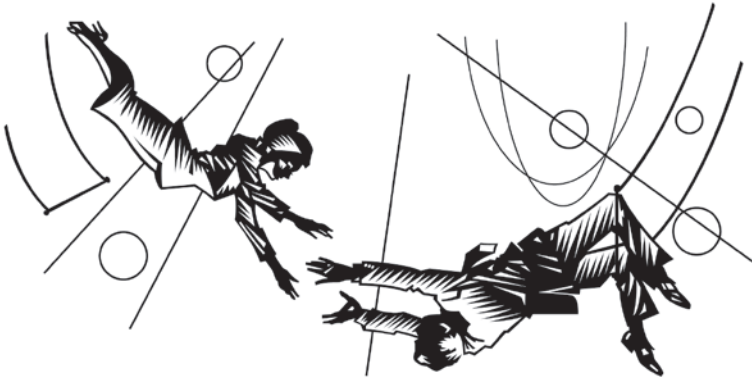
Sincerely,

I.M. Looking

Part III: Making Connections



After we find a pattern in our self-exploration and find a pattern in our external exploration, then we begin to make connections between the two. Many people find that this is the best area to explore to find satisfaction in their work life and in their personal life as well. When your career/life planning has reached this stage, you may be surprised to find out that your dearest wishes are not so unrealistic after all.



Others may discover that some difficult decisions must be made if they want to balance their work life and their personal life. The Information Center has many resources to help you make these connections.

Here is an example of how making connections works. During self-assessment you may have decided that you would love to be a trapeze artist. As you continue with external exploration, you discover that jobs as trapeze artists are very rare in our part of Maine. You use Labor Market Information and discover that, much to your dismay, there are no job openings for trapeze artists anywhere in Maine.

Now you are faced with three options

- **You can give up your hopes and dreams** and take the first available job you can compete for successfully. Often people who make this choice are unhappy in their work. They do not always give their best at work because they don't like the job.
- **You decide to move to another part of the country** (or the world) where jobs for beginning trapeze artists are available. You and your family may be very unhappy when you are so far away from your family home, friends and relatives.
- **You decide to stay in Maine** but analyze what job satisfaction you would get from being a trapeze artist and match that list against other jobs.

Let's look at the third option

The list of what you like about the job of trapeze artist might look something like this:

- There's a lot of variety in the job.
- I would get to travel around.
- The job is not boring.
- I would get to take risks by climbing up high.
- I like circus music.
- I like the costumes.
- It pays the salary I want or need.

The next step would be to find other jobs that have some of the same characteristics.

First, you have to decide what would be an acceptable number of matches for you to be satisfied with this work. Maybe you decide that you could be very happy with a job that has four of the seven items on the list if you do not have to move from your hometown.

You research jobs and find one that has the following characteristics:

- I would get to travel around.
- The job is not boring.
- I would get to take risks by climbing up high.
- I could wear a costume if I choose.
- I could do this work and stay in my hometown.
- It pays the salary I want or need.

This sounds pretty good. Now there is an area where you can focus your job searching. You decide to look for work as a chimney sweep.

The Information Center provides many ways to research jobs. Be sure to check out the tools available to you there.

Part IV: Decision-Making

The next step in the Career/Life Planning process is decision-making. Now that you have the information you need to move forward, you must decide what to do next. Many of us face hard decisions when we seek new employment.

Do we move to where there are jobs we are interested in or do we stay in our hometown? Maybe we can find other jobs that match most of our interests, skills and values through making connections. We may have to decide to retrain for new employment or upgrade our Essential Work Competencies.

It is not easy to make these decisions. In addition to your personal network, you can find excellent resources in the Information Center to support your decision making.

Part V: Goal Setting

Goal setting is the next stage of career/life planning. People are not likely to reach their goals if they do not have a good plan. Each goal should be a concrete, measurable and time-limited plan to get to where you want to go. There are materials of all types in the Information Center that will help you with goal setting.

Part VI: *Action!*Steps

Now you have to take the first steps toward reaching your new goal. Do you need to explore opportunities for retraining? Do you need to write a new résumé and cover letter or brush up on an old one? Do you need to strengthen your interviewing skills? Use the Information Center as your *Action!*Center whether you are looking for a first job, another job or a better job.

Part VII: Correcting Course

Is your résumé getting the interviews you thought it would? Have you had several interviews but no job offers? Do you know which employers are hiring people with skills like yours? Do you want to explore upgrading your skills? Whatever you need to do to correct your course so you are heading True North toward your career goal, the Information Center has many resources that will help you keep your job search on track.

Here's how to use the Information Center to correct your plan of action and brush up on your job seeking and job getting skills.

Getting It All Together

How Do I Find the Right Job for Me?



If you want your job search to bring the right opportunities to you quickly, you need the right job hunting tools.

First of all, you need to know what kind of job you are looking for. You will have completed the career/life decision cycle and the *Action!Step* stage. You have a clear job goal in mind. You know that you have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do the job. You can document your Essential Work Competencies.

Think of your job search as making a commercial for yourself. You need to find those things that would encourage a customer (an employer) to buy a product (your work skills). Then you need to frame this product in an attractive package (your résumé and cover letter). Next you need to market your product (doing good interviews).

CareerCenter has many tools that will make your job searching easier.

Fewer than 20% of possible job openings are ever advertised in newspapers.

The Hidden Job Market

One of the best ways to find the job you really want is to discover the “hidden” job market. You can discover interesting positions before they are advertised. You can also create a position by showing an employer how your knowledge, skills and abilities can fill a gap in the current workforce. You can use your network of family members, friends, former co-workers or classmates and community members to find out about places that might be interested in a worker like you.

If you want to find the job that best uses your knowledge, skills and abilities in a job you will enjoy, then you need to use the “hidden” job market.



Networking

One of the best ways to use this “hidden” market is through an effective network. Family members, friends, former co-workers, classmates and community members are usually part of your network. Here are some tips to use your network effectively. Tell everyone in your network the type of job you are looking for. It is often better to describe which skills you want to use rather than giving a job title. This will give your network more options to search. Give them copies of your résumé and ask them where you might go looking for jobs. You will also want to follow-up with your network on a regular basis. Let them know how your job search is going. Tell them how much you appreciate their help. Always write thank-you notes. Remember, when you network, you have many people helping you with your job search.

Writing a Résumé

Although some job openings do not require a résumé, it is good to have one. Here are two ways to organize the information in a résumé.

You need to be able to market your skills effectively to someone who wants to hire you. This means choosing the right kind of résumé style to highlight your skills effectively. We will talk about two types of résumés. Most people find that one of these résumé styles will help them be effective when job hunting in Maine.

Whichever résumé style we choose, we should not make a potential employer guess the answer to the most important question of all. This question is “Why should I hire you?”



Naming Your Skills

Here are some action words that you can use to describe your skills. Use these action words in your skills statements in your résumé or on applications.

Managing

Plan
Organize
Execute
Supervise
Schedule
Assign
Direct
Coordinate
Analyze
Prioritize
Delegate
Hire
Fire
Recommend
Evaluate
Administer
Contract
Produce
Control
Review
Troubleshoot
Recognize problems

Financial

Keep books
Account
Audit
Appraise
Research
Analyze
Record
Allocate
Administer
Develop
Calculate
Compute

Communicating

Persuade
Direct
Lead
Reason
Sell
Develop
Recruit
Create
Negotiate
Arbitrate
Arrange
Mediate
Merge
Obtain
Write
Interpret
Enlist
Motivate
Manipulate
Read
Speak
Influence

Physical

Setup
Feed
Cut
Bind
Drive
Move
Lift
Bend
Pull
Ship
Operate
Tend

Researching

Clarify
Survey
Interview
Investigate
Inspect
Gather
Synthesize
Examine
Diagnose
Review
Organize
Evaluate
Critique
Collect
Write
Interpret
Extrapolate
Isolate
Decide
Analyze
Define
Develop

Helping

Refer
Render
Attend
Care
Empathize
Listen
Speak
Direct
Perceive
Understand
Relate
Guide

Creating

Create
Imagine
Design
Plan
Conceptualize
Synthesize
Integrate
Abstract
Generate
Perceive
Memorize
Discriminate
Visualize
Empathize
Fashion
Shape
Write
Direct
Imagine
Paint
Perform
Act
Play

Teaching

Brief
Inform
Encourage
Communicate
Advise
Guide
Coach
Instruct
Explain
Enlighten
Stimulate
Invent
Adapt
Facilitate
Coordinate
Develop
Enable
Clarify
Value
Set Goals
Decide
Initiate

Using Details

Reconcile
Execute
Dispatch
Respond
Enforce
Meet deadlines
Arrange
Schedule
Memorize
Collect
Compile
Systemize
Tabulate
Compare
Inspect
Organize
Classify
Collate
Copy
Retrieve
Process
File

Remember to make skills statements. These action words can help you organize and describe what you can do for an employer.

Here is the formula for a Skills Statement:

- 1. Name your skill** and relate that skill to your worker preference with data, people or things.
- 2. Give an example** of how you have demonstrated that skill.
- 3. Give the outcome** or result you achieved.



Here are some sample skills statements from résumés:

- **Organized** work team to get Widget Project done on time and under budget
- **Diagnosed and corrected** problems with small engines
- **Operated** widget attachment machine
- **Cared** for 10 acute care patients
- **Maintained and balanced** daily accounts receivable

The Functional (Skills-Based) Résumé

The Information Center has many tools to assist you in writing a functional résumé. Functional résumés are also called skills-based résumés. Functional résumés are helpful for people who want to change fields. They also work well for those who may have academic or technical training but little or no work history. Functional résumés work well for people who have had many different jobs in their work history.

Some people think a functional résumé will “hide” a spotty or inconsistent work history. This probably is not true. The best way to repair a less than excellent work history is to reestablish your credibility as a worker. You can do this by taking a job that is readily available to you and doing your best at that job every day for some time. Work hard to get several outstanding performance reviews or raises in that job. Then you will have demonstrated that you are ready for advancement.

Here is a format which will help you organize your work history so that you can write a skills-based résumé.

Fill out this information about each job that you have held. Start with your most recent job and work backwards.

Job Title: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Major Duties: _____

Teamwork: _____

Customer Service: _____

Using Technology: _____

Communication Skills: _____

Supervisory/Managing Responsibilities: _____

Training Others: _____

Learning on the Job: _____

Other Skills: _____

Work History

*Essential
Work Skills (with
data, people,
things):
(See Essential
Work Competen-
cies on page 15
for a review.)*

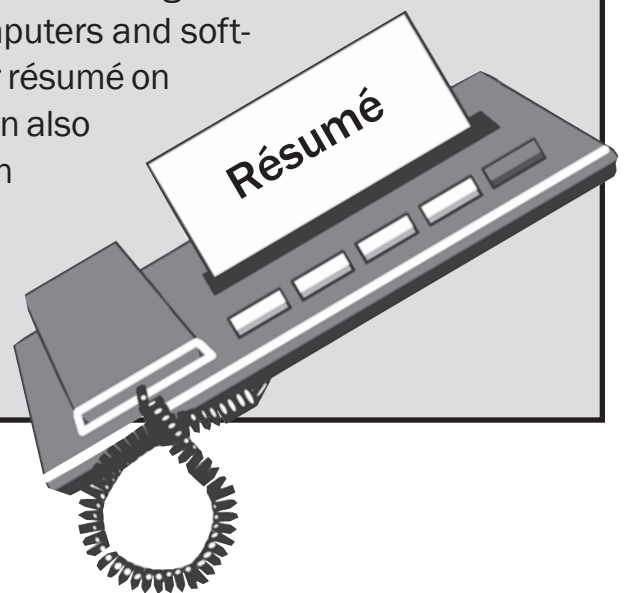
The Chronological (Work History) Résumé

Some people may want to write a chronological résumé. This is a résumé that lists your work history from your current or most recent job back to your first job. This style of résumé works well for folks who are seeking work in their current field. Chronological resumes also are effective for people seeking a promotion or a position with more responsibility. It gives an at-a-glance snapshot of continued growth in a particular field. Even if you are doing a chronological résumé, it is helpful to document your skills and competencies in your work history.

Guidelines for Writing a Résumé

- Your résumé should be 1 or 2 pages long.
- Work on a computer. The computer will set margins and spacing for you. Use 10-12 point font size.
- Your résumé should be free of errors.
- Use white, beige or gray bonded paper.
- Your envelope and cover letter paper should match your résumé paper.
- Use skills statements with examples to show you are qualified for the job.
- Describe your skills accurately.
- Use work experience, volunteer experience, commendations and awards, formal training, education, internships, licenses or certifications to document your skills.
- Have a separate reference sheet.

The Information Center has the latest “how to” on résumé writing. We have this information in a variety of formats. We have computers and software to make résumé writing easier. You can post your résumé on the Internet. You can fax or e-mail your résumé. You can also mail your résumé free of charge from the Information Center. We have paper, envelopes and stamps for your use. Remember, the Information Center is open to the public. There is never a charge for using Information Center services.



Sample Functional (Skills-Based) Résumé

This person is seeking to change fields.

Bea A. Success

123 High Street
Yourtown, ME 04444
(207) 555-1212

Objective:

Customer Service Representative

Office Skills:

- Two years experience with all aspects of office work
- Keyboarding 50 wpm
- Experienced with Microsoft Office including Word and Excel
- Scheduling using Lotus Notes
- Filing by numerical and alphabetical systems

Customer Service Skills:

- Five years experience working with customers in fast-paced environment
- Ability to address customer needs rapidly
- Skilled at resolving customer complaints
- Remain cheerful and helpful in stressful environment

Work History:

- William N. Fuller, Accountant
File Clerk
Yourtown, ME
2004-present
- Yourtown Family Restaurant
Food Server/Host
Yourtown, ME
1997-2004

Education:

Yourtown High School
High school diploma
Yourtown, ME
1997

References Available Upon Request

Cover Letters

Your cover letter is the first thing a prospective employer will notice about you if they have not already met you. If the cover letter does not attract attention, your résumé might not get the attention you hope it will. Your cover letter should match your resume. You should use the same heading, font, and paper for both.

In the first paragraph, explain the purpose of your letter.

The first paragraph should include the position for which you are applying, where you read or heard about the position and when you read or heard about the position. If there is not an advertised opening, explain why you are asking for an interview at that company.

The **second paragraph should be skills statements** which will create an interest in talking to you and offering you a position. Include documentation of your skills by describing years of experience, training, commendations and successes.

The **third paragraph should say that you want an interview** and state a time when you will call to arrange a meeting. Thank the person for their time and attention.

If you want to see samples of cover letters that would be useful in a variety of situations, come to the Information Center. We have books and computer applications containing the latest information on state-of-the-art cover letters.

Here are some hints for writing a good cover letter.

Application Forms

Even though you have a résumé, you may have to fill out an application as well.

Always be very accurate when you fill out applications. Even the smallest error might make you ineligible for a job. Incorrect information on an application might mean you could be fired if you get a job and a background check is performed to verify your information. Be sure you have the right dates, names and job titles for all your work history. Some employers will not consider an applicant if the application they submit is not neat, complete and accurate.

Never lie about having been fired or anything else on your application. If you don't want to spell out certain details on the application, write "will discuss in interview" on the application.

Never leave blanks on an application. Write N/A for not applicable if you have no response for a question.

Read the directions carefully before you begin to fill out an application. Put information in the correct spaces.

Use a black erasable pen so you can make changes if necessary.

Print neatly.

Sign and date the application.

Read the application completely before beginning to fill it out.

On the next page you will find a sample application form that you may want to complete and use as a guide. This is the application form that employers who have registered with Maine's Job Bank use most often.

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

COMPANY NAME:

P E R S O N A L	Last Name First Name Middle			Date:
	Street Address			Home Telephone: ()
	City	State	Zip Code	Cell Phone:
				Social Security No:
	POSITION DESIRED:			
Are you 18 years of age or older? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
PRESENT OR LAST EMPLOYER:				
E M P L O Y M E N T	1.	Company Name:		Telephone: ()
		Address:		Employed - (State month and year) From: To:
		Name of Supervisor:		Weekly Pay: Start: Last:
		Job Title:		Reason for Leaving:
		Describe work:		
	2.	Company Name:		Telephone: ()
		Address:		Employed - (State month and year) From: To:
		Name of Supervisor:		Weekly Pay: Start: Last:
		Job Title:		Reason for Leaving:
		Describe work:		
	3.	Company Name:		Telephone: ()
		Address:		Employed - (State month and year) From: To:
		Name of Supervisor:		Weekly Pay: Start: Last:
		Job Title:		Reason for Leaving:
		Describe work:		
S K I L L S	Describe any specialized skills relating to position applied for, i.e., typing, wordprocessing, type of driver's license, etc.			

E D U C A T I O N	Name and location of school		No. of grades completed	Did you Graduate	Describe course of study	
	HIGH SCHOOL					
	COLLEGE					
	TRADE, BUSINESS OR CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL					
R E F E R E N C E S	Give the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three persons not related to you, whom you have known at least one year.					
		NAME	ADDRESS	BUSINESS	YEARS ACQUAINTED	TELEPHONE NUMBER
	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
G E N E R A L	Describe any extracurricular activities or volunteer work you feel may be helpful to use in considering your application.					
	Have you ever had job-related training in the U.S. Military?			YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If yes, please describe: _____					
C O M M E N T S						

I certify that the facts contained in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I understand that, if employed, falsified statements on this application may result in discharge.

I authorize the investigation of all information contained in this application for employment as may be necessary in determining an employment decision.

I understand that I am to abide by all rules and regulations of the company.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

References

References are usually contacted only when you are a finalist for a position. However, there are exceptions to this, so make certain that you are in contact with your references each time you are selected for an interview.

Always ask if you can use a person as a reference. Do not assume that because the person worked with you that they will be willing or able to give you a reference if you have not asked them first.

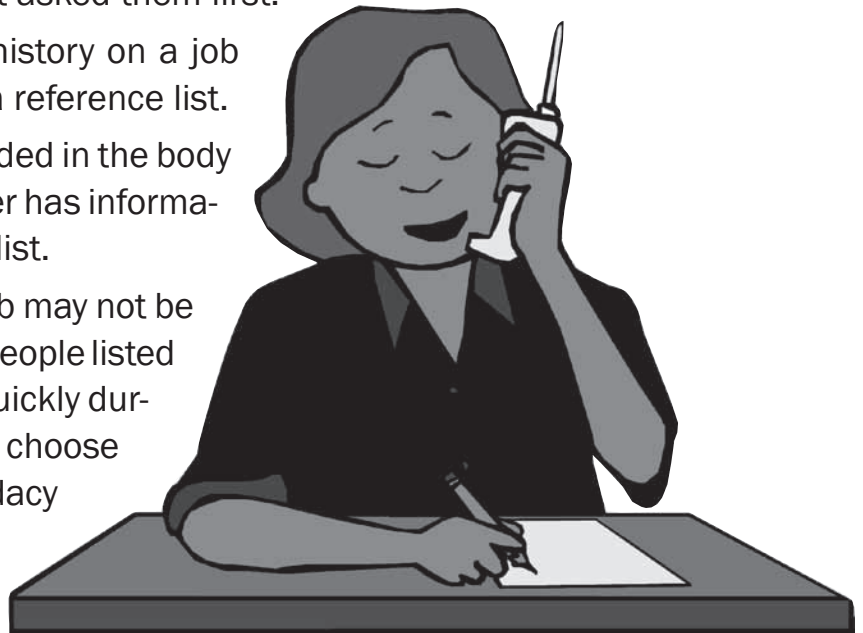
The list of supervisors in your work history on a job application is not the same thing as a reference list.

Your reference list should not be included in the body of your resume. The Information Center has information on how to format your reference list.

A person who is a front-runner for a job may not be selected for that position if one of the people listed as a reference cannot be contacted quickly during business hours. Some people you choose for references may not help your candidacy if they do not have time to do justice to your qualifications for the position.

The people you ask to be your references should be able to speak from firsthand knowledge about the skills, abilities and personal qualities that would make you successful in the job for which you are applying. They should be able to be reached easily during regular business hours. If you are job seeking, you should get at least three open letters of reference from people in positions of responsibility who know and like you. These should be people who have worked with you in paid or volunteer work experiences.

If you are just starting out, you may have no work references. In that case, a landlord, a friend who has participated in some activity with you, a fellow club member, a former or current teacher, principal, guidance counselor or member of the clergy can be used as a reference. These people should be able to talk about how you have demonstrated your Essential Work Competencies in school, clubs, civic or volunteer activities.



Never ever under any circumstances write letters for yourself and sign another person's name to it or have a friend pretend to be a former coworker or supervisor.

You should not use a parent or other close relative, a close personal friend, girlfriend, boyfriend or spouse as a reference. Most employers will not consider them objective enough to give reliable information about you even if you have worked together.

If you request an open letter of reference by telephone, then you should follow up with a written request that contains the points listed in the section “What an Open Letter of Reference Should Contain.”

Always be completely honest and ethical in your job search.

What an Open Letter of Reference Should Contain

In order to make it easier for a reference to write an open letter of recommendation, the job seeker should request the following information:

The letter should be addressed “To Whom It May Concern” or to a particular person “Dear Ms. Bosse:”

The reference should be written on company letterhead if company policy allows this.

The reference should use their job title if company policy allows this.

The letter should indicate how long and under what circumstances the reference has known the job seeker.

The reference should describe what has been personally observed about the job seeker’s work skills. (Use Today’s Work Competencies on page 15. You may want to send the competency list with your written request.)

Always tell your reference which skills and abilities you want to be stressed. Use the job description of the position you are seeking as a guide. These suggestions also work for personal references. They will use examples from academic, civic or volunteer experiences they have shared with you.

Always follow up with a written thank you note to all the people who served as your references.

Keep in contact with everyone on your reference list every couple of weeks and let them know how your job search is going.

Call them immediately when you have an interview. Let them know when someone might be calling.

Don’t just drop contact with your references after you get a job. You may want to use them again when you are seeking a promotion or a better job.

Job Search Tools

In order to have a successful job search, you must have the right stuff...Tools that assist you find work fast and project a professional image to prospective employers.

The Answering Machine/Voice Mail

The answering machine/voice mail is critical to your job search. No matter how dedicated other family members may be, important messages may be missed, forgotten or recorded incorrectly. The perfect job for you may be lost. Using answering machines/voice mail is a part of doing business and people will leave a message for you. A businesslike but friendly message tells the employer something about you.

If your machine/voice mail does not automatically give time and date of call, ask for that information as well.

During your job search, do not list the names of all family members.

You can always change the message after you have found that job you are looking for.

Do not have “cute,” “insulting” or commercial messages (with Elvis or Tim Sample doing the message, for example) on your machine/voice mail during your job search.

Do not have music on your answering machine/voice mail.

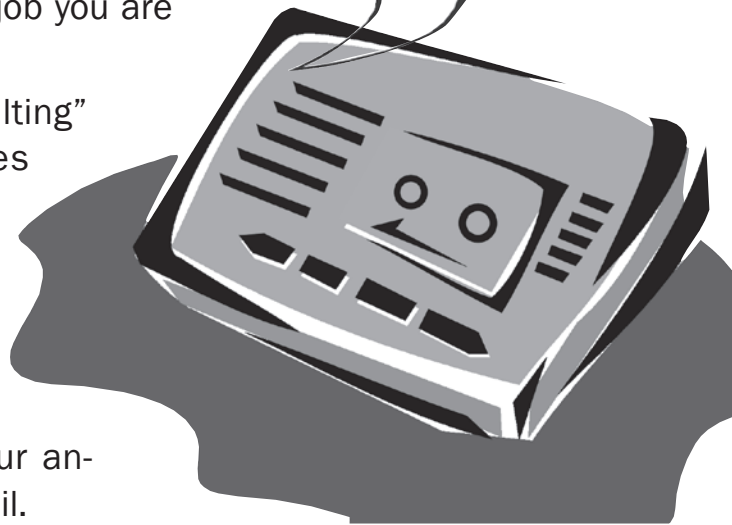
Be certain that the room is quiet when you are recording your message. That means no TV, no kids crying, no dogs barking in the background.

Practice before you record the message.

Listen to your tone of voice. Be sure you are pleasant and professional.

A Sample Message might be like this one.

“Hello. You have reached 667-7543 (or your name). After the tone, please leave your name, a brief message and a number where your call may be returned. Your call is very important. Thank you for calling.”



Appointment Book/Calendar

You should have an appointment book/calendar for your job seeking activities.

Most professional appointment book/calendars are brown or black. Other business colors would include navy blue, hunter green or maroon.

Save the calendars with cute pictures or pastel colors for your personal use.

Avoid having loose papers or sticky notes falling out of your appointment book.

Having a section that allows for note taking is convenient.

Having a telephone/address section is also helpful.

Use the appointment book/calender to keep track of appointments, telephone calls and plans for follow-up.

Use the appointment book to keep track of when you mailed letters, résumés, and thank-you notes.

It is helpful to keep your appointment book in erasable black pen or in pencil.

Your telephone/address section can be in nonerasable ink.

You can also use this book for writing out questions you'd like to ask in an interview and also record answers of information you receive in interviews.

Calling and Business Cards

Calling cards or business cards are essential in an effective job search. You want to make it easy for an employer to hire you. Having a calling card (or business card if you are employed) will make it easier for a prospective employer to remember you and reach you when a vacancy has occurred.

Calling cards also make a professional impression.

A calling card should contain your name and address and telephone number.

If you have a fax number or e-mail address, include them as well.

Calling cards should look professional. Use black, dark blue, or the subdued business color for the print on your card. The cards should be white, off-white, beige, ecru, or pale blue.

Quality business card paper can be purchased at any business supply store or large stores like Wal-Mart or K-Mart.

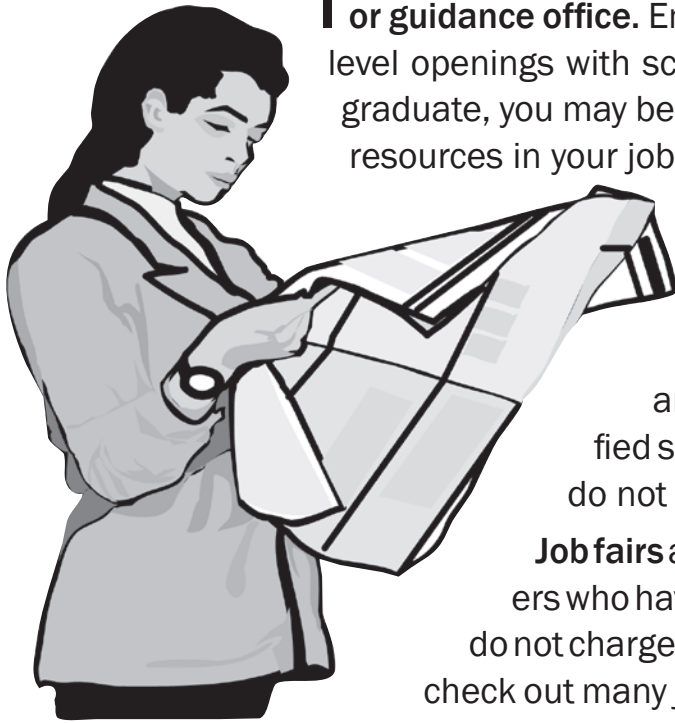
Most computer programs have a template for business cards. See the person in the Information Center if you want to print your own cards.

Cards can also be ordered by mail. Many companies sell quality cards at reasonable prices.

<p><i>Ima G. Jobseeker</i> <i>123 Pleasant Street</i> <i>Anytown, USA 12345</i></p> <p><i>Tel. 555-1234 FAX: 555-2345</i> <i>e-mail: jdoe@anytown.com</i></p>

Where to Look for Work

If you are a student, first **talk to your placement or guidance office**. Employers often list entry-level openings with schools. Even if you are a graduate, you may be able to use the school's resources in your job search.



Local newspapers are another source of job leads. Although fewer than 20 percent of jobs are ever listed in the classified section of the newspaper, do not overlook them.

Job fairs are a way to meet employers who have job openings. Job fairs do not charge an entrance fee. You can check out many job openings at job fairs.

Some job fairs focus on one industry. There may be a job fair for the computer industry or for telemarketing, for example. Other job fairs may focus on many different jobs at once. A college job fair would be an example where many different kinds of employers might attend.

The Internet is another way to find a job. There are many sites that list job openings. Sit down at a computer and you will soon discover a virtual gold mine of information. Log onto the Internet and visit the tools offered through America's Career One-Stop. This is the largest online employment resource in the country. The Career One-Stop is made up of several modules, including updated information on training, education, counseling and employment of workers.

America's Career One-Stop, www.careeronestop.org, is a good place to start if you are researching a job. Labor market information such as trends, wages and training requirements are available here. Information for Maine, the nation or each of the 50 states is available. Here you can also build and post a résumé and cover letter. Employers with job openings visit this site to search for qualified applicants. The Career



One-Stop also serves as the gateway to America's Career InfoNet and America's Service Locator. These combined resources make up what is collectively known as America's Career Kit.

Maine's CareerCenter Web site, www.mainecareercenter.com can be used as a springboard to Maine's Job Bank and other local and national job boards.

Most **major newspapers** also post their classified section on the Internet. Check the Web site for the area that interests you. Your Information Center Specialist will be able to assist you in finding Web sites. You can get your complimentary copy of *Hot Jobs in Maine* and *Careers in Maine for College Graduates*. These brochures give the latest information on which jobs are growing in Maine.

O*NET, the Occupational Information Network, is a computer database which explores the world of work. It provides detailed information regarding all aspects of hundreds of jobs performed by America's workers. O*NET is particularly useful for those considering a career change.

Another search method is to **go directly to employers**. Talk to people who can hire you even if they do not have a current job opening. Most people find that this is the best way to get the job they really want. You can be an effective job seeker if you use your local CareerCenter. CareerCenter lets you use all these methods at one place. Remember, CareerCenter gives you access to the Internet. We also have current Labor Market Information. You can use newspapers and employment directories.

There are two directories in the CareerCenter that are very useful to job seekers. Both are on the computer.

The *Maine Employment Info Guide* will give you information on the Maine labor market. You can find out about wage rates and expected job growth. After you choose a job, the *Employment Info Guide* will give you a list of Maine employers who might hire you if they have an opening. This guide will give you a name, address, and even a map to the company's location. The *Maine Employment Info Guide* is available through the Center for Workforce Research and Information Internet site **www.maine.gov/labor/lmis**.

Another directory is the *ALMIS Employer Database*. ALMIS stands for America's Labor Market Information System. This directory of employers will give you the address,



telephone number and a brief description of businesses nationwide. You can also get the name of a person to contact and a map to the business.

Looking for Government Jobs

Federal Government Jobs

USAJOBS lists federal job openings worldwide. This information comes from the Office of Personnel Management.

Government agencies employ many people in Maine. This section will help you look for jobs in federal, state and local government.

Here's how you can use USAJOBS to help you find federal job openings:

- You can check out the Internet site. You can find job descriptions and job application forms there. This information can be printed. Veterans can find out about veterans' preferences there. This site is updated every day. The Internet address is: www.usajobs.gov.
- You can also use an automated telephone system. Here are the numbers to call: 1-703-724-1850 or TTY 1-978-461-8404. You will be greeted by a recorded message. The message will tell you what numbers to press to get the information you want. This is not a toll-free call. You will pay a charge for using these numbers. There are phones in the CareerCenter if you prefer not to pay for a long distance call.

Some agencies fill their own job openings. These agencies have their own personnel offices. These jobs will not be listed at USAJOBS. You must apply directly to the U.S. Postal Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency and Secret Service if you wish to work for one of these agencies.

Agencies also fill senior-level positions and other specialized jobs by the direct-hire system. If you are seeking one of these jobs, then you should contact the agency directly even if they list some jobs with USAJOBS. Of course, with any job search you will want an informational interview and network.

Maine State Government Jobs

State Application Forms

Maine State Government is a major employment source.

State employees work in many different jobs. Some state workers are mechanics, laborers or corrections officers, mental health workers, scientists, and engineers. Computer professionals, clerical workers, accountants and many others also work for the state.

Your first step in getting a job in state government is to find out what jobs are open. You can find out about job openings at your local CareerCenter, Maine's Job Bank, in the newspaper, and on the State of Maine Web site: www.maine.gov.

You can apply for some state jobs even if there are no openings. You must wait until there is an opening for other jobs. The job listing will tell you whether or not there is an actual job opening. Jobs that may not have current openings are listed as "Open Continuously for Recruitment."

Your application form is very important. You must send a completed application for each state job you are interested in.

You should be very accurate when you complete the application form. You should have no mistakes. Ask for an extra copy or make a copy so that you can review your work and make any necessary changes before you mail your application. Pay careful attention to how you describe your job duties. Use the job description to match your skills with those that are needed for the job. Always send in the application by the close date listed in the job description.

The Bureau of Human Resources, within Maine State Government, will review your job application carefully. They will see if your qualifications match those needed for the job. They will give your application a score based on the information you have provided.

Also, you may be asked to take a written test. You will receive a score on the results of that test by mail. Your name will be placed on a register. The Bureau of Human Resources will send the names of the people with the highest scores to the agency. The agency interviews these people.

Some people get discouraged when they are seeking employment with a government agency. Sometimes it takes a long time to get an interview for a job. You may have to apply for several jobs before you get an interview or a job offer.

The easiest way to get more information on state government jobs is to visit the State of Maine home page.

The address is **www.maine.gov**

In the upper portion of the screen, you will see a selection titled WORKING. Select the WORKING tab, followed by Job Opportunities. From here you can select from several options, one of which will be State Government Jobs. Ask your CareerCenter Information Specialist if you would like help using this site.

If you would rather speak with someone directly, call the Bureau of Human Resources at (207) 624-7761 or TTY 888-577-6690.

Some state agencies use the direct hire system. State hospitals, universities, technical colleges and the court system all use direct hire. Direct hire jobs will be listed separately in the CareerCenter, on the Internet and in the newspapers. Direct Hire positions have a special application form you must fill out. Be sure you get the right application for Direct Hire positions.

Getting Information

Direct Hire

Local Government Jobs

The key to effective answers to interview questions is a Skills Statement.



Each local government does its own hiring. This is also true for local school districts.

CareerCenters have information on most local government job openings.

Another way to keep up with job postings for local government is to read the newspapers. Read the news sections as well as the classifieds. Articles about events such as new road construction, public park expansion or other construction projects may mean there would be new jobs. You can also find out about changes in a school system this way.

Interviewing Tips

No matter where you are looking for work, you must be prepared to interview well to get a job. Here are some tips on doing your best at an interview.

Answering Interview Questions

Remember, no matter what question you are asked, the potential employer wants to know the answers to two questions:

- Why should I hire you?
- How will you fit in to my organization?

Here is the formula for a Skills Statement answer:

1. **Name your skill** and relate that skill to your worker preference with data, people or things.
2. **Give an example** of how you have demonstrated that skill by telling a story, mentioning an award or commendation, providing a statement from a reference or producing a portfolio.
3. **Give the outcome** or result you achieved.
4. **Relate this skill** to the position you are seeking.

Here are some sample Skills Statements:

Skills Statement Describing Using Data

I am very accurate with financial data. In my last position I was the person who checked the accounts receivable at the end of each day. I was the one who checked the books when no one else could find the error. I spent many evenings searching for errors that kept the books from balancing, and I always found it. To me, it's like a puzzle that I enjoy solving. I am always very thorough and accurate with financial data. I could bring this same thoroughness and accuracy to the position of bookkeeper here at Acme Widget Company.



Skills Statement Describing People Skills

I am very good at organizing a work team. I seem to have a knack for getting people working together to reach a common goal. For example, when I was shift leader at Acme Widget Company, our production was going downhill for two quarters in a row. I pulled the team together and let them discuss the issue and come up with possible solutions. We took the time to come together on a solution, implement it and monitor the results. The next quarter we were back on target. Everyone felt good about the results. I could have imposed my solution on the team, but better cooperation came from letting the team be a part of the solution. I could bring this same kind of teamwork to your organization.



Skills Statement Describing Things

I take good care of my tools. I always keep them clean and in their place when I'm not using them. A worker who respects his tools respects his work. I'm very proud of the fact that my workstation is neat, clean and safe. To me, that shows the pride I take in doing a good job every day at work.



More Interviewing Tips

- Get enough sleep the night before.
- Practice making skills statements so that you have your presentation ready.
- Arrive about 15 minutes early.
- Bring at least 5 copies of your résumé. Bring open letters of references or your list of references. Bring copies of licenses and credentials if you need them. Bring your portfolio if you have one.
- Dress appropriately for the interview. The Information Center has resources which describe the latest tips on dressing for interviews.
- Show your enthusiasm and self-confidence in your body language and tone of voice.
- Do not exaggerate your skills, but sell yourself.
- Always describe people and situations in a positive light.
- Let the interviewer do at least half the talking.
- Ask good questions.
- Make a strong closing statement and thank the interviewer for the interview.
- Express your desire for the job.
- Follow up with a thank-you note to each person on the interview committee.

If you want to know more about these interviewing tips, come to the CareerCenter and check out the resources in the Information Center.

Salary Information



Salary is an important part of a career decision. It's nice to know what you can expect as a pay range for a job before you decide to pursue it.

Salary information can also help you decide whether or not to take a job offer.

Remember that an average wage may not be what you can expect to earn when you start a new job.

Average wages show you what you can expect to earn after you have been working in a job for a while.

If your skills are in demand, you may be offered a higher starting wage. If you are an experienced worker, then you may be offered a higher wage.

On the other hand, you may be offered a lower salary if there are many qualified people competing for a job. You may be offered a lower salary if you have fewer skills or less experience than other workers do.

Do not talk about salary until you have been offered a job. An employer might think salary is the only reason you are interested in the job if you discuss salary too soon.

Many employers have a set salary scale. They do not negotiate wages with employees.

Other employers will negotiate. They will offer a higher wage to people with excellent skills and years of experience. If this describes you, then you may be able to negotiate your starting salary. If the starting wage is not at the level you want or need, then you may ask for performance reviews at regular intervals after you begin working. If you are doing a good job, then you can ask for a salary increase at this time if company policy allows.

Benefits can be part of a salary package. Health insurance, sick leave and paid vacation are examples of benefits offered by many Maine employers.



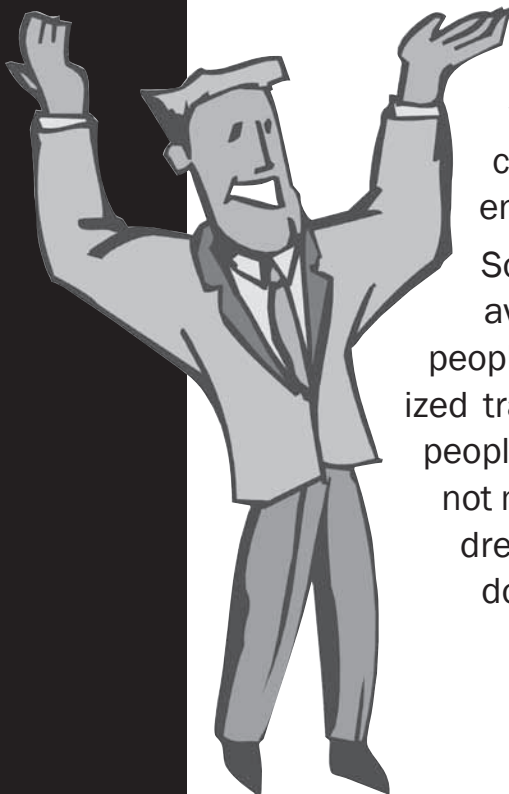
If you need information to make an informed decision, here are some resources that can help

You should judge a job offer on the total package offered to you, not just the entry-level salary.

- Your CareerCenter has current wage surveys for the state. You can also find wage information for Bangor, Lewiston-Auburn, Kittery-York and Portland. You can get this information in computer or print formats.
- The Center for Workforce Research and Information also has information on wages. You can call them at (207) 623-7900. If this is not a local call for you, come to the CareerCenter so you will not have to pay a long distance charge when you call.
- America's Career One-Stop, **www.careeronestop.org**, is an excellent resource for Internet-based wage information, for Maine and the nation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also provides this information on their Web site, **www.stats.bls.gov**. Select wages by area and occupation.

I Need a Job NOW!

Survival Jobs



Sometimes we need to get a job (**any job**) right away. We have to feed our family, pay the rent or make the car payment. We will take any honorable work we can find quickly. These jobs are sometimes called “survival jobs” because we take them to make ends meet.

Some survival jobs are entry-level jobs. Other jobs are available because of high employee turnover. Most people can qualify for these jobs without a lot of specialized training. Some people enjoy these jobs, but many people do not. If you find you must accept a job that does not match your worker preferences, do not give up your dream of a job you might like better. In the meantime, do this job to the best of your ability.

Here are some tips to make a “survival job” situation better.

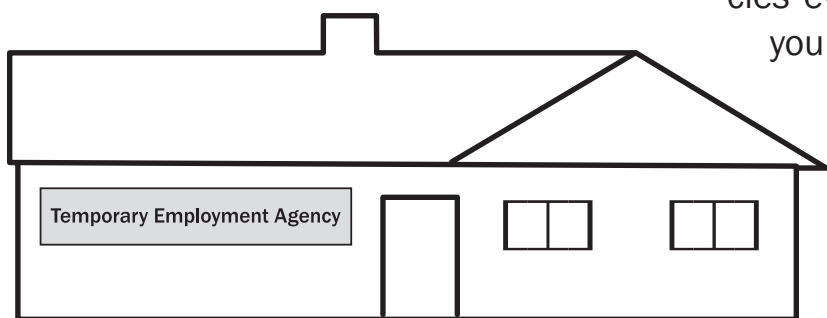
- You can work your way up in the company to something you like better.
- You can continue your job search while working.
- If you give the job a chance, you may find out that you like it.
- Remember that this employer gave you a job when you needed one so badly. Do not leave that employer without following accepted business practices.
- Give two weeks notice if you must leave.
- Do your job to the best of your ability while you are there. Remember, you will have to place this job in your work history. Demonstrate your Essential Work Competencies to the best of your ability.
- Make this employment situation a Win/Win situation for everyone.
- Always remember that it is easier to get another job when you are working than when you are unemployed.
- If you are seeking a first job, then a survival job can help you build your work history.
- If you have been fired or have a less-than-perfect work record, then a good record in any job will help you rebuild your work history.

Temporary Agencies

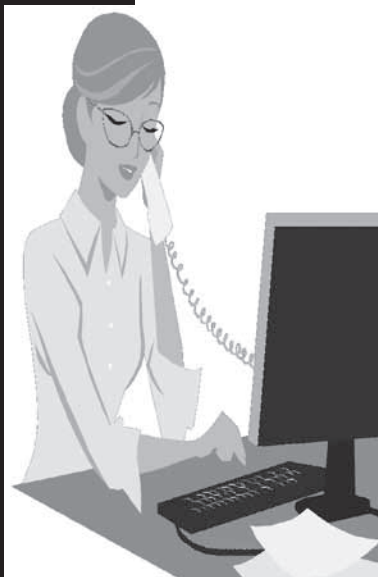
Accepting a job through a temporary agency is another way to find a job fast. Working as a temporary worker will give you an opportunity to showcase your knowledge, skills and abilities to an employer. There are many good temporary agencies in Maine. Some temporary agencies even offer benefits and paid leave after you have worked a certain number of hours.

Sometimes using a temporary agency is the only way to become employed by some companies. These companies pay the temporary agency to fill entry level positions. They then offer permanent employment to those people

who meet their full-time permanent employment standards. Look in your local telephone book or visit your nearest CareerCenter to find a listing of temporary agencies.



A secretary may have to take a keyboarding test to measure speed and accuracy.



Be a wise consumer when choosing an agency. Be sure you understand what services the agency offers its customers. Be sure you understand what is expected of you as a temporary employee. Most agencies have relationships with employers to screen applicants and provide qualified workers to their workforce. They are paid by the employer to perform these services. Therefore, most agencies collect fees from the employer, not from the job seeker.

Many people are hired by companies they temped for. Even if there is no possibility of being hired as a permanent employee in the position you are filling, people will see that you are a good worker. Do a good job. Try to fit into the workplace and they will think of you when there is another opening. Again, always demonstrate Today's Work Competencies in every work situation.

Employment Tests

Some employers and temporary agencies use tests to choose the most qualified candidates for a job. These tests relate directly to being competent in a particular job.

Some employers use tests of reasoning skills. You may be asked what you would do in a situation. Companies may test managers, researchers or prison guards with this type of assessment. The questions may be designed to measure a candidate's ability to think in new and different ways.

Some tests measure intangible things. They may assess your values and attitudes. Others assess how you prefer to think or make decisions and how you can vision future situations.

Survival jobs and working through temporary agencies are ways to keep your work history current while you are trying to find the right position or while you are growing your skills to become more competitive for the kind of position you desire.

Test Taking Tips

- Use the CareerCenter or library to brush up on good test-taking techniques.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the test site.
- Know for sure where you are going. Call ahead to get directions on how to get there and where to park.
- Make sure you have all necessary items for test taking.
- Listen carefully to all the directions and be sure you understand the different parts of the test.
- If you take a “speed” test, work as quickly as you can without making mistakes. Remember “speed” tests are designed so they can’t be completed in the allotted time.
- Do not work too long on any one question. Go to the next question. Then come back if you have time.
- Always review your answers if you have time.
- Be careful if you change an answer. Your first choice has a better chance of being accurate.
- Sometimes clues from later questions will help solve earlier ones. Remember testing is only one part of the interview or application process.

What If I Need Help Now?

You may find that you are facing an emergency. If you need temporary housing, food or any other emergency help, come to the Information Center. If you want to find out what kinds of resources may be available to you and your family, check with the Information Center’s Information and Referral Services. The staff can help you find what’s available to you and your family members as you go through a difficult situation.

A Final Word

Looking for work can be very stressful. Many people have compared being out of work to facing a death in the family or a personal illness. There is a grief process of letting go of the old job before we can move into a new job successfully.

Many people handle these ups and downs with the support of family and friends.

If you are experiencing more than your share of down times, then find a professional you can talk to. A counselor, a clergy member or a support group may be able to help you move toward reaching your goal.

Here are some suggestions to help you cope with job search stress.

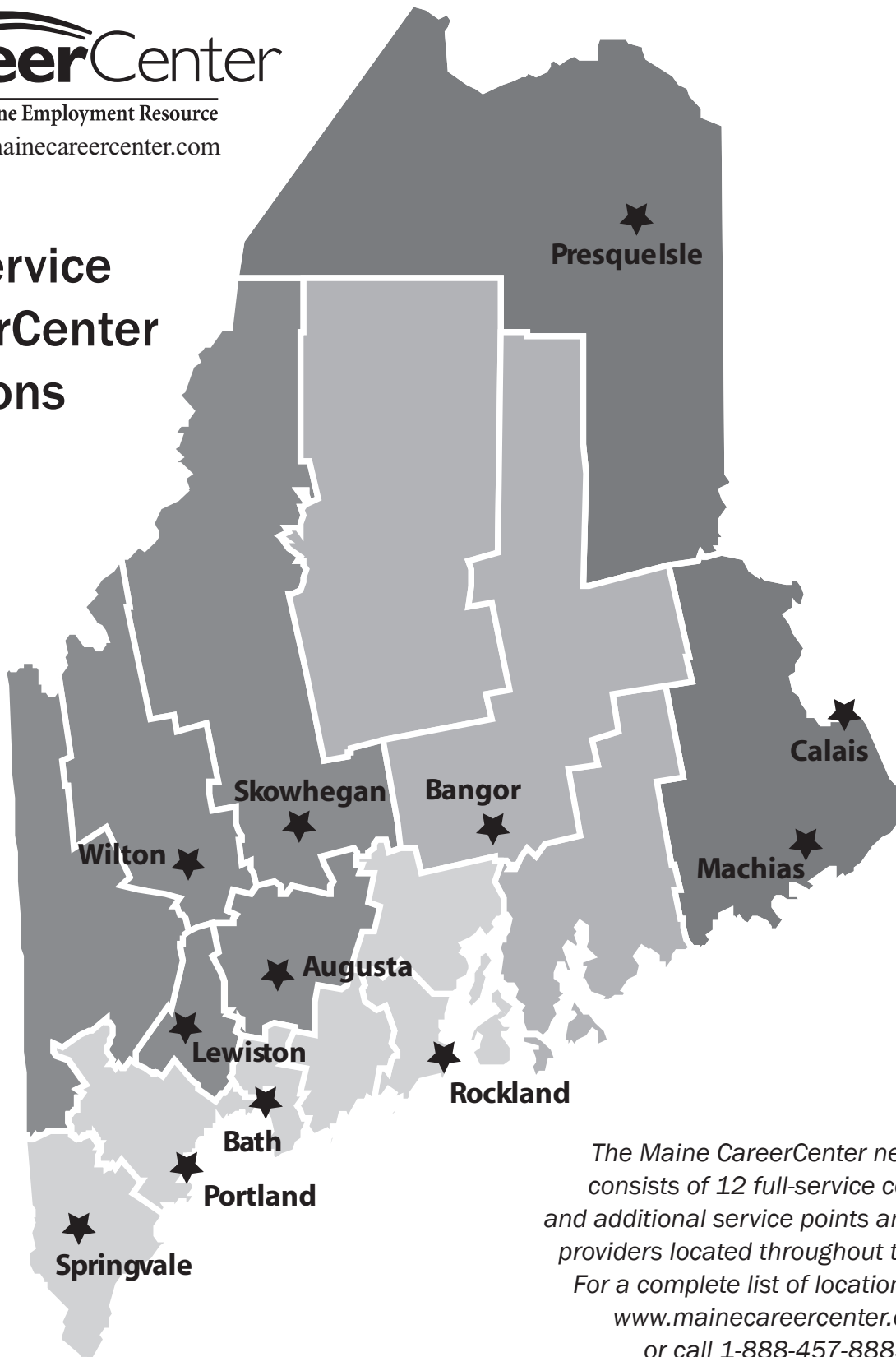
1. Get organized! Use a datebook, personal phonebook or computer to keep track of your schedule and contacts.
2. Set a schedule. Structure your time. Use a calendar to schedule your daily and weekly job search activities.
3. Take time out for yourself to do things you enjoy.
4. Join or develop a support group. Groups are usually available through churches, professional organizations and community agencies. Get out and be with positive people. Help others. Be a volunteer. Network with other job seekers.
5. Schedule variety in your week. Direct your job search in different areas and try new techniques. (See the Information Center staff for various job search techniques.)
6. Treat your job search like a real job. Job search all day during regular business hours.
7. Exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet.
8. Review your accomplishments each day.
9. Do not be upset when you do not get a job offer at every job interview. Try to learn from these experiences.
 - Do you need to learn better interviewing skills?
 - Are you searching for a job for which you are qualified?
 - Does your résumé need to be upgraded?
10. Maintain important relationships. Let family and friends know what you feel. Your family is under stress too. Be kind to one another.
11. Learn and use relaxation techniques.
12. Use the CareerCenter and Information Center as a resource for your job seeking needs. The friendly staff can help you reach your employment goals.



Good Luck in Your Job Search!

A new job can be a new beginning. Remember, employers are seeking workers who can document their Essential Work Competencies. Keep searching. There is an employer somewhere in Maine who is looking for someone just like you! Your CareerCenter can help you find the right employment opportunity and connect you with that employer. With your CareerCenter as your partner, now is a great time to be job hunting in Maine!

Full-service CareerCenter locations



The Maine CareerCenter network consists of 12 full-service centers and additional service points and partner providers located throughout the state. For a complete list of locations, visit: www.mainecareercenter.com or call 1-888-457-8883 TTY: 1-800-794-1110