



Homeless Gear

*Offering Hope
and a Hand Up*

Class One: Job Leads and Applications

Keys to Learn

- ✓ **Job Leads** – Where to Look?
- ✓ **Applications** – Applications and Master Applications

Case Study - Staples

Imagine you are a manager at Staples, looking to hire 20 cashiers. What do you do?

Job Leads – Where to Look?

- The Internet (see list below)
- Newspapers
- Networking (including family & friends)
- Job Fairs (Ex: NoCoNet)
- Job Boards
- Work Force Center

Job Search Websites

- Work Force Center: <http://www.larimerworkforce.org/>
- Connecting Colorado: <http://www.connectingcolorado.com#>
- City of Fort Collins Jobs: <http://www.fcgov.com/humanresources/jobopenings.php>
- Craigslist: <http://www.fortcollins.craigslist.org/>
- Indeed: <http://www.indeed.com/>
- Simply Hired: <http://www.simplyhired.com/>
- SnagAjob: <http://www.snagajob.com/>

Visible and Hidden Job Leads- Few jobs are “visible,” meaning that they are advertized or published in the community. Most jobs are “hidden,” meaning that they are not advertized or posted. Instead, these jobs are filled by word of mouth. Research these jobs by talking to family, friends, other job hunters, and current employees at companies for which you would like to work.

Some places where you can find hidden jobs include:

- New Businesses: Openings of new businesses are listed in the business section of the newspaper, as well as advertized on store windows “coming soon.” Call these places to see if they are hiring yet.
- Chambers of Commerce: Each city in the country has a Chamber of Commerce office, which gives people information of industry, recreation, education possibilities, and maps.
- Manufacturers: The Chamber of Commerce and the local library will have information on which manufacturers are located in this area.
- Radio and Television: Listen and watch for new business openings or information on hiring. Bulletin Boards
- The Telephone Book: The Yellow Pages has every company in the county listed.
- Friends: Tell all of your friends that you are looking for work. Their employers or someone that they know might be hiring.
- Ex-Employers: Contact people that you used to work for; they may know of people hiring. Employers always know other employers.

- Old Co-Workers: Contact old co-workers. Employed people have daily contact with other employed people.
- Other Non-Manufacturing: All large retail stores, banks, school districts, colleges and universities have their own personnel offices.
- Business Section: The business section of the newspaper will report on how companies in our area are doing. You do not want to waste your time applying for a job at a company that has recently laid people off.
- Old Teachers/Classmates: Contact old teachers and classmates especially the ones that were involved in teaching you a trade.
- County Jobs: Contact your county personnel offices for job listings.
- City Jobs: Contact your city personnel offices for job listings.
- Federal Jobs: Federal Jobs are listed at the Employment Development Department. Check their bulletin boards.
- Hospitals: Hospitals are among some of the largest employers. Look for their job

Critical Thinking Points: Job Leads

- How do you break into the hidden job market? Who might you know who could help?
- Are you spending your time wisely? If something isn't working, have you tried or considered a new approach?

Applications – “Neat & Complete”

The Facts

- The purpose of the application is to gather employment information in an easy-to-read format.
- Not everyone has a long-term work history. Be creative: if you do not have any work experience, put down the items that you have done or have experience in whether it was paid or unpaid.
- Employers usually review the employment application for **15-20 seconds**; mostly they are **using the application to screen** for potential employees.
- On the application, it is important to make sure that **all** the information is there in the format that the employer wants.
- *Employers hire for attitude and train for skills*, so fill out your application in a way that demonstrates you are a dependable, reliable, and hard-working person.

Soft Skills vs. Hard Skills

Employers want to see that you have soft skills: positive personality traits (things like "communication skills," "honesty," or "kindness") that are difficult to teach, but greatly important in any job.

Employers might also want to see that you have hard skills: teachable skills (like the ability to operate a backhoe, or experience with a cash register) that are relevant to whatever job you are applying for.

You have narrowed down your search to two candidates, A and B. Each candidate is summarized below.

Candidate A

- Excellent communication skills
- Organized
- Prompt
- Reliable
- Honest
- No hard skills (cannot operate a register, etc.)

Candidate B

- Can operate a register
- Has excellent computer skills
- Unreliable
- Dishonest
- Disorganized
- Poor communication skills

Who would you hire?

- *If you fill out an application well, it shows (in addition to the skills/experience that you write about) that you are neat, thorough, accurate, have written language skills, can spell, have the ability to follow directions, and possess attention to detail.*

Targeting Your Application

Employers want to see that you and the job are a match. So, if possible, try to relate yourself (your experiences, your education, and your skills) to the job that you are seeking. If you are applying for the job at Staples, for example, try to highlight the aspects of your previous experiences that might make you a strong candidate for that job; if you worked at a hardware store, you might want to focus on your customer service and/or cash register skills, rather than your knowledge of tools. Be honest but be creative: chances are, you have some (or maybe all) of the skills an employer is looking for.

Instructions for Filling out an Application

Some employers require the application to be filled out on site, so you must be prepared! Bring with you your master application (see below) so that there is less room for error. Filling out the application on site has its advantages: it cuts into your travel expenses, allows the employer to receive your application immediately, demonstrates that you are very interested in the position, and gives you the opportunity to interact with the other people working.

Master Application

- The purpose of a master application is to have a “master copy” that you can take with you and reference when you are filling out applications.
- This application should be filled out neat and complete with all of the correct information that is commonly found on most applications.
- The benefit of a master application is you have a tool of reference that supplies you with all of the correct dates, addresses, points of contact, and spelling information.
- Think of this as a useful cheat sheet to help insure that all of the information that you are providing to the potential employer is correct.

The Different Parts of an Application

Work History:

Every employer is going to be interested in your work history. It is for this reason you want to be careful explaining the reasons for leaving previous jobs.

Carefully prepare your answers for “reason left job.” Prospective employers are going to look at this portion of the application to get an understanding of your attitude towards work and your ability to get along with others in the work environment.

- It is important to give the impression that you wanted to continue at a previous job but circumstances prevented it.
- Write on an application “Will discuss in interview” if you were fired. Then you can tell the interviewer the reason from your point of view. In this situation remember to keep your answers brief; you want the interview to be focused on your positive points.
- Lastly keep in mind that anything negative that you say about a previous employer will reflect negatively on you as well.

Are there gaps in your work history?

- *Employers make negative assumptions about gaps. So, even if you were not traditionally employed, there is a good chance that – during those gaps – you gained some sort of experience. Emphasize the things you have done, rather than the things you have not: homemaking, care giving, hobbies, volunteer*

work, or unofficial/odd jobs. Employers are looking for what you can do, not how much you were paid to do it.

- Remember that you will need to provide a phone number to the person that can verify that you did the work you document on your work history.

List of possible work experience

Unofficial Work:

Gardening, mowing, etc.	Painting Loading/unloading	Repair work
Cleaning houses	Trucks or freight	Auto repair
Carpentry	Typing	Organizing
Moving furniture/equipment	Filing	Plumbing
Electrical Work	Volunteer work	

Household Management:

Cleaning	Cooking	Home office
Child Care	Repair Work	Painting
Purchasing	Budgeting	Bill Paying
Driving		

School and Training:

Welding	English class	Computers
Medical	ESL	Citizenship
Management	GED class	ANY class

Employers like educational experiences that you may have had that pertain to the job in question. Any class or educational experience is valuable on the application. If you were a full-time student, include a copy of your transcript.

Rehabilitation

If you have been in a rehab program, chances are you have done some work while enrolled. This may have included office work, cleaning, repairs, personnel, farming, or other tasks. Use these as part of your work experience, and if it was unpaid call it “volunteer” work.

Family Business/ Work at Home

Perhaps your family has a small business and you have helped by working there or have done business-related work at home; you may also use this as experience. Describe what it was that you did and how it relates to the job that you are applying for.

Self Employed

If you were self-employed in a legal business, describe it on the application. Provide the number of a business associate or customer that you worked with so that the employer can verify the information that you are providing. Employers like people who were self employed, even if they were not successful, because it shows initiative and responsibility.

Work in Prison

If you spent a significant time in prison in the last ten years you can use any of the work or training that you received while there on your work history. Describe those experiences to be as valuable as you can. Make arrangements by phone with the prison personnel office to verify those experiences if the employer wants to call. Keep in mind that a large number of people are coming out of prison and looking for work. It is to your advantage to present your experience in prison better than others. *Please discuss your background with your case manager. They can assist you in representing your past in a productive way.

*As long as you can show support, you can argue that you gained skills and experiences above (or any others) and were productive during your gaps in employment

Education/Training:

- Have information about schools, addresses, dates attended, and type of certificate earned. If you have completed any college courses, reflect that on your application.
- Have the phone numbers of your high school, if possible. If you have a GED, write that you have received your GED certification and the date that you received it.
- If you did not graduate from high school or get your GED, talk to your case manager about completing a GED program. If you are in the process of getting your GED write, "I am working on my GED."

Availability:

- Be as flexible as possible with your availability when you are starting at a new job or are trying to find a job. State "Full or Part time," or "All Shifts."

Convictions:

- Hand Up Cooperative has a class on this subject called 'Breaking Down Barriers' held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:30pm. Ideas will be shared on having a conviction in the professional world.

Skills:

- Employers want to see that you have the basic skills necessary in order to teach you new skills that are required for the job.
- Use your resume and application to show that you have the skills to be an efficient and productive employee.
- There are many lists of different skills that you may want to list on your application or resume. Talk to your case manager if you want to see these lists.

References

- It is best to use past employers that will speak well about you. However if this is not possible, it is also acceptable to use friends, co-workers, and family friends that who can say good things about you. **Focus on professional relationships whenever possible.** If you need help identifying references, please speak with your Hand Up case manager.
- Before you write down references, be sure to call and ask that person if it is okay that you use them as a reference. You do not want your references to be surprised when they get a call from a potential employer.
- Verify all contact information
- Do NOT use family members

Appropriate and Professional Answers for Leaving a Job

Laid off

Temporary Job

Re-organization

Merger

Change in Management

Business slowdown

Not enough work

Company shutdown

Seasonal Work

Voluntary

Better Opportunity

Returned to School

Not a chance for
Advancement

Raise a Family

Relocated

New job

Involuntary

Hurt on the Job

Job Changed

Job requirements
changed

Personal Reasons

Will discuss in interview

- If you have had many jobs for short periods of time, put down 1-2 of the best ones, so that it does not look like you move around too much.

Do's and Don'ts in the Application Process

Do's

- Read over the entire application before you begin filling it out
- Follow all of the directions carefully
- Answer every question; do not leave questions blank. If you do not wish to answer a question, write 'N/A' for not applicable or 'will discuss in interview.'

- Bring pens, white out, and a portfolio or folder with Master Application
- Have your social security card, state ID, or work permit (green card) with you
- Have copies of military discharge papers or DD214 (in folder)
- Have copies of licenses, certificates, and diplomas (in folder)
- Have copies of letters of references to attach to the application (in folder)
- Write neatly
- Use your legal name
- Use accurate dates and information for past employment. If the employer learns that you were misleading on your application, you will be disqualified for the job. This is why it is a good idea to carry your master application with you so that there is not a mess up in dates, phone numbers, addresses, or spelling.
- Write "open" or "negotiable" for salary desired.

Don'ts

- Do not state "see attached resume" in place of an answer
- Do not leave any blanks
- Do not write in pencil
- Do not use a nickname
- Do not use family members as references

Filling Out Applications On-Line

- When a company asks that the application process be completed online there are several things that you want to be aware of.
 - Use your master application and double check that everything is done right. Once you hit that submit button, there is no going back.
 - Be aware of the words that the company uses in the job description. Sometimes larger companies use filters that pass on the applications that have those key words.
 - Leave yourself a good chunk of time to complete the process as many companies use personality type tests, skills assessments, and other steps that can be very time consuming.
- What are some of the pros and cons of filling out applications online?

Application Tracking Forms

- Application tracking forms are a great way to keep track of what companies you have contacted and where you are in the application process with those companies.

- In this booklet is a job application tracking form. Each time you sent in a new application to a company it is important to document the application so that you are more apt to follow up.

After You Submit Your Application

The Hand Up Cooperative recommends that you contact an employer approximately three days after you submit an application. When you call, be sure to have a copy of your application and resume in front of you. The follow-up call serves several purposes:

- It demonstrates your interest in the position.
- It reminds the employer that you submitted an application.
- It ensures that the employer received your application.
- It could give you the chance to talk to a hiring manager. Depending on the hiring manager's, you might be able to talk to him/her about your interest in the position, and why you are the right person for the job.
- It could give you a sense of how close the employer is to making a decision. It is okay to ask: "Do you know when you expect to make a decision?"
- It could allow you to schedule an interview.

Hand Up Cooperative Job Search Form

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address _____

Phone: _____



Focusing Your Job Search

1. What job specific skills do you have? Think soft skills. (EX: reliable, honest)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. What transferable skills/strengths do you have? (EX: Customer service)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My Career Path

- It is important to look at the whole picture in your job search. Whether you are looking for a job to help pay the bills or looking to begin on your career path. Fill out the exercise below “My Career Path.” The career path helps you plan strategically your next career move. It is a plan to help you figure out how to get from where you are now to the position that you want in a career.

GOALS

- Identify entry career jobs that you are qualified to start pursuing to gain the needed experience.
- Identify employers locally that can help you start on your desired path.
- Meet with people in the position you see yourself in the future and ask them questions as experience needed for their position.
- Gain the needed education and experience.
- Transition to higher levels on your career path, closer to your career goal.

Informational Interviewing

Who can you talk to at these companies to find out more information about the job(s) that you are interested for your career path? List position and then do your research and find out a name and contact number. A good way to do this initially is calling the companies human resource department.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What to say in an interview:

Introduction/Objective

Hello. My name is _____. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I am considering a career change and would like to ask you some questions. My career goal is to achieve the position of _____. I am coming to you to for more information on how to reach that goal.

Key Questions to Ask

What experience and education is required to become a _____?

What positions do people hold prior to becoming a _____?

What are two other questions that you would ask?

1 _____

2 _____

Make the close

Thank you for your time; you have been very helpful.

4. What will you tell the employer?

List the skills that are needed for the jobs that are on your career path leading up to your dream job. Pull these from job descriptions. Circle the ones that you have and underline the ones you can work on.

Entry level job 1- _____

Transition job 1- _____

Transition job 2- _____

Dream Job- _____

Now think of certain situations that you have used the skills that are listed above and how you would talk about them. These are your skill stories. Choose at least 5 skills from your list and explain how you have demonstrated that skill in a real life situation.

5. How will you sell yourself for a job?

Check off the tools that you have (or have practiced for) to help sell you for a job.

- Application (this includes a completed master application for the future)
- Resume
- Cover Letters
- References
- Interview
- Follow up plan and/or thank you notes

List the tools that you do not have below and note what you will do to get prepared.

Tool	What I need to do	Date I will have it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



Staying Organized

6. How will you keep track of all your work?

What systems (notebook, calendar, file, etc.) will you use to keep track of job leads, networking contacts, marketing tools, and all other paperwork?

Provided is a *Hand Up Cooperative Job Tracking Sheet* to help you keep track of the contacts that you have had with employers.



Addressing Challenges

7. What challenges do you have and how will you address them?

List the two largest concerns an employer is likely to have when thinking about hiring you.

What are three things you can do or say to lessen their concern?

If you have found any major challenge(s) in completing any part of the job search plan, what have those challenges been?

What is your plan for addressing those challenges?

What assistance, if any, do you need in addressing the challenge(s)?

- Career exploration classes
- Resume writing classes
- Cover letter writing classes
- Interviewing classes
- Basic internet search skills
- MicroSoft Word/ computer skills
- Application/Master Application
- GED, training, or education skills
- Access to appropriate dress for interviews