



Whether you have never looked for a job before or it's been a while since you applied to a job, this guide is here to help you begin your job search and learn where to find job listings. It will also provide suggestions on applying for positions and managing job applications.

Job Search Preparation

1. Update your resume and cover letter.

Resumes are necessary for almost any job. Before starting your job search, look at your most recent resume and make sure it's up-to-date and looks professional (see Resume Guide). Add any additional new experiences or skills and ensure all dates, positions, and descriptions are accurate. Revisit your cover letter and revise the message for each job you apply for (see Cover Letter Guide).

2. Check in with references.

Many jobs will also require you to supply up to three references who can talk about your work experience, work habits, character, and skills (see References Guide). It's a good idea to have at least three people in mind and contact them in advance to let them know that you would like to use them as a reference.

3. Clarify your job goals.

Depending on your current situation, you may be looking for your first job, seeking a new job in a similar industry, or exploring an entirely new career. To help you clarify your goals and get energized for your upcoming search, start by assessing what you're looking for and why you want to do that type of work.

After you identify your ambitions, there are several other factors to consider: What size and type of employer appeals to you? What kind of people, environment, workload, and wage are you aiming for? Are you looking for a foot in the door in a new field or are you looking for a comparable role in a similar company?

4. Update your online brand.

It is also important to make sure your online presence or "brand" is appropriate for employers to see. Many employers will Google the name of a prospective job candidate during the hiring process, so you may want to Google yourself to see what comes up. Usually, any social media accounts you have will show up first. Make sure that your accounts are only available to the people you want to see it, that employers are finding what you want them to find, and what they are viewing is appropriate.



Tip: Your social media presence matters to employers. According to a CareerBuilder survey, 70% of employers use social media to screen candidates during the hiring process. Be mindful of what you post and make your accounts private, if necessary.

On the other hand, you can use social media to your advantage. Use your profile to develop your personal brand, connect with others professionally, and bolster your own reputation with hiring managers. If you haven't done so already, **create a LinkedIn profile** and update your information regularly to reflect what's on your resume. You can find more information about using LinkedIn effectively here: <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/how-to-use-linkedin-2062597>. The site can be used to display your professional history, search and apply for jobs, read company profiles, network with others, join professional or alumni groups, and much more.

Job Search

Job Boards and Search Engines

The easiest and fastest way to begin the job search process is by going online. Using a job website is one of the most efficient ways to search for and apply to dozens of opportunities. Using job sites, you can receive notifications about local job opportunities, see what positions local companies are offering, or even find remote or contract work. **It's a good idea to vet each opportunity by doing a quick search on the company to make sure each job is legitimate.**

Commonly Used Job Search Websites:

- **Local Job Boards**

There are multiple statewide job boards that exclusively post opportunities in Vermont. These include [Think Vermont](#), [JobsInVT](#), [Vermont Job Link](#), [Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility Job Board](#), [Common Good Vermont](#), and [Seven Days Jobs](#). Front Porch Forum is also a great resource to find local job postings. You can subscribe to your local forum and view the posts from surrounding forums daily.

- [LinkedIn](#)

Your LinkedIn profile serves as a public digital resume and portfolio. Your profile information is sent to recruiters once you've applied for a role, so it's important to invest the time and effort to make sure it's detailed, accurate, and optimized for search. It's free to create a LinkedIn profile and browse opportunities.

Once you've filled out your LinkedIn profile, you can use it to apply to open positions and send connection requests (similar to Facebook friend requests) to grow your professional network. If [your profile is well-optimized for search](#), recruiters may message you directly about applying for specific opportunities.

- [Indeed](#)

Indeed posts listings for job seekers in every industry, every level from entry to executive, and every lifestyle (freelance, part-time, internship, full-time). Candidates can search by job title and location, salary range, date posted, and experience level.

- [CareerBuilder](#)

Unlike Indeed, CareerBuilder gathers job postings directly from employers. CareerBuilder also partners with many local news organizations to be able to list their local job ads from their “classifieds” section.

- [Glassdoor](#)

Job seekers can simultaneously search for open jobs and read detailed information on each company’s culture, CEO, benefits, and salary data.

- [Idealist](#)

Idealist publishes jobs, volunteer opportunities, and internships with mission-oriented organizations and nonprofits around the country and internationally. Idealist also hosts career and graduate school fairs in many cities (and now virtually).

- [Google for Jobs](#)

Like other Google products, Google for Jobs works very simply. When you type a query into Google search, it will give you a list of jobs that match that query. For example, try searching Google for “jobs near me.” The Google for Jobs search mechanism will retrieve jobs from many different job sites and list them at the top of your search results.

- [UpWork](#)

UpWork is a great resource for those looking for freelance jobs, as it connects companies and freelancers.

Remote Job Search Websites:

- [Skip the Drive](#)

SkipTheDrive tries to simplify the job search process by providing pre-filtered job listings that allow for work-from-home opportunities. You can search by keyword or by category.

- [National Labor Exchange \(NLX\)](#)

The NLX collects and distributes job openings exclusively found on corporate career websites, state job banks, and federal government job sites.

- [Virtual Vocations](#)

Virtual Vocations browses multiple job boards and company career pages and provides you with a curated database of work from home and remote jobs, all in one place.

Tips for using job websites:

- When using one of the large online job search engines listed above, narrow down your search right away. Click on “advanced search” if the site offers that option. Narrow down your search by experience, locations, and any particular keywords. You can also narrow down your search by salary range, though not every company will post their hiring range. If there are certain companies you do not want to work for, most job sites allow you to “block” these companies.
- Although you may find the same jobs listed across multiple job boards and search engines, each site gathers data in different ways. Therefore, you will miss some opportunities if you only use one search site.
- Instead of regularly searching the same sites over and over, create a saved search and set up email notifications whenever a job with your specific search parameters is posted.
- Be specific with the settings you choose so you aren’t bombarded daily with jobs that aren’t of interest to you or are outside of your geographic area.

Using Your Network

Although browsing through job listings of websites might be a quick and easy way to apply for many positions, most jobs are actually found through networking. Networking is the process of nurturing existing relationships and getting to know people who can help you develop your career prospects (see Networking Guide).

One of the major reasons that networking is such an effective way to get a job is that there is what some people call a “hidden job market”. Some estimate that as many as 80% of new jobs are never listed but are instead filled internally or via word of mouth. This is actually cheaper for employers, as they don’t have to spend all the time and money posting jobs, screening applicants, and interviewing. However, be mindful that networking takes time and shouldn’t be used exclusively when you need to find a job.

Applying and Managing Job Applications

Some job search engines allow you to create a profile and upload your resume and then apply directly through the site. Other job postings ask applicants to visit the employer’s website and apply through a portal. Additionally, other listings may have specific instructions about who to send resumes and cover letters to and what the subject line of the email should say. Make sure to follow these application directions carefully.

It’s important to note that you don’t need to meet all the qualifications to get the job. In fact, research shows that to apply for a job, women feel they need to meet 100% of the criteria while men usually apply after meeting about 60%. Most of the time, the requirements listed in job descriptions are a wish list, not what they actually need. If your skills are transferable, you feel you could easily learn the job, and you’re excited about the position, then just apply! You may end up being the most qualified person that applies, or you may have a certain skillset that they are really excited about. You never know!

If you're applying to multiple jobs at the same time, create a system to stay organized. A good place to start is by creating a spreadsheet or document that stores all your job application information in one place. Create an entry for each job you apply to and include the following information:

- Position title
- Company name
- Job description
- Date applied
- Whether you've heard back from the hiring manager
- When to follow up
- If and how you followed up

As you move forward in the hiring process, you can add additional details including:

- Hiring manager's name and contact information
- Interview dates/times
- Interview notes (if you have multiple interviews, having notes can be helpful so you can remind yourself of what was discussed in each interview—and what you need to reference in any upcoming interviews)
- Thank you note or email sent
- Date to follow up
- Outcome (hired/not hired)

Conclusion

Job searching is a tiring process and it's easy to burn-out. Set reasonable, achievable goals for yourself. For example, you might aim to apply to a specific number of jobs per week or reach out to a certain number of people about informational interviews. Be sure to set aside time to complete these goals. You might have to make some sacrifices, such as getting up an extra hour early or using your evenings to search and apply for jobs.

No matter what, have confidence in your abilities and have patience with the process!