



# Geographic Job Searching

Locating the right career opportunity in a specific geographical area requires a large quantity of research, planning and effort. Several suggested resources that may be helpful to you in conducting a geographically specific job search are described below. However, realize that each of these suggestions may be valuable to you regardless of your geographic area of interest.

## Direct Employer Contact

While essential for a geographic job search, direct contact takes planning and preparation. The first step is to list potential employers in your chosen geographic area, realizing that you will continually add to this list as your job search progresses. The local public library is a priceless resource in this effort by providing tools to use in identifying potential employers and preparing your job search strategy. Specific publications to review include the phone book, Chamber of Commerce listings, employer profiles, industry guides and newspapers. Additional directories and publications that may be useful in specific geographical areas include:

- *The Job Bank Series*
- *Thomas Register*
- *The Career Guide - Dun's Employment Opportunities Directory*

Other sources of information to use in developing your list may include local schools and community agencies.

Once you have your list, develop a strategy to approach each employer. There are many approaches available and you will want to vary them depending upon the circumstances and your preferences. You can fill out an application, send a résumé, call the employer directly or arrange for an informational interview. The most important thing is that you take action by making direct contact in some type of professional manner.

## Networking

Networking plays a very important role in job searching, regardless of the geographic location you have chosen. If you are unclear how to begin networking, schedule an appointment with your

college career coordinator. You should also talk with your advisor and other faculty members to see whom they may know. Remember to use your own network of family, friends, parents, etc.; in other words, people you know and respect and who have your best interests in mind. You never know – your cousin Sue's husband's sister who graduated from OSU may be able to give you some solid information about a company or position.

## Professional Associations or Groups

Many people belong to one or more professional associations. If you never joined the professional organization related to your field of study or your membership has expired, this might be a good time to become active. Being involved in professional organizations provides an excellent source of networking opportunities. These organizations often have membership directories that most likely will include members from the geographic location in which you are interested. You will also be able to find out when the next professional group will meet. In addition, many associations provide placement assistance to members, host career fairs at conferences, or even list positions related to their specific industry on their association Web site.

## Want Ads

Be familiar with the newspapers in cities where you want to work. Find out which sections carry the want ads and on what days they appear. You can subscribe to these papers or purchase them at local bookstores. Publications with want ads from all over the country include:

- *The National Business Employment Weekly* contains a compilation of the previous week's want ads from the regional editions

of *The Wall Street Journal*, plus its own want ads.

- *National Ad Search* is a weekly tabloid that includes a compilation of want ads from 75 key newspapers across the U.S.

Want ads also may appear in professional and trade publications.

### **Private Placement Agencies**

Employment agencies come in all shapes, sizes and prices. Many employers have exclusive arrangements with employment agencies, and they can be an excellent resource for job leads. Some agencies also specialize in very specific occupational areas. If you are interested in the services of an agency, investigate them carefully. Determine what they will do for you and how much it will cost. You should seek to use those agencies with no fee whenever possible.

### **Public Employment Agencies**

All states have a Department of Labor or a Bureau of Employment Security with offices located in major cities. These offices list job openings from many employers, including professional positions. Many also offer workshops on résumé writing, interviewing techniques and other job search skills. These offices may also provide career counseling. In addition, they provide access to a computerized job bank with job listings from around the country. All services are free.

### **College & University Career Services Offices**

Most college and university campuses have a career services or placement office that may be able to assist you with a long distance job search. OSU Career Services will be happy to give you a letter of reciprocity addressed to a college or university in the geographic area you have chosen. This document will allow you to use services in that specific geographical area.

### **Alumni Associations**

The OSU Alumni Association is an excellent resource for developing job leads. Using the membership list available through the on-campus

office in 212 Student Union, you may be able to develop geographic career networking contacts and job leads. For more information on services provided by the OSU Alumni Association, call (405) 744-5368.

### **Job Fairs**

Job fairs may give you the opportunity to find out what positions are available in the geographic area you have selected. Even if there is no immediate opening, job fairs give you the opportunity to gather important information about the participating companies, to inquire about future job openings for which you may qualify, and to get the name and number of a company representative for later follow-up. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce or leading newspapers to find out a schedule of upcoming job fairs.

### **Location**

In addition to searching for your job, you may also want to do some research about your future home. Find a source such as the *Places Rated Almanac*, which ranks 343 metropolitan areas and compares living costs, job outlook, housing, transportation, education, health care, crime, the arts, recreation and climate. You may even want to consider subscribing to the local Sunday paper or going to the library to scan their vast collection of newspapers from across the country. Not only will you find articles about the geographic area in which you are interested, but possibly information about employers and actual job listings as well.

### **The Secrets to Geographic Job Search Success**

Persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful geographically specific job search. If you are serious about employment, plan your follow-up. There is no such thing as a wasted effort and the only dead lead is the one you chose to eliminate. Keep in mind that situations change, and the employer who is not hiring today may be looking for someone with your qualifications in the future.