NEW GUIDE, NEW DESTINATIONS

A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment

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"The [long-term unemployed] just need employers to realize it **DOESN'T REFLECT AT ALL ON THEIR ABILITIES OR THEIR VALUE.** It just means they've been dealing with the aftermath of this **REALLY TOUGH JOB MARKET,** and all they need is a fair shot. And with that shot, an out-of-work young person can **GET THE CRITICAL EXPERIENCE HE NEEDS** to improve his employment prospects for the rest of his life. With that shot, someone with decades of experience could **GET BACK IN THE GAME** and show a younger worker the ropes. We can give them that shot."

— President Barack Obama, January 30, 2014

INTRODUCTION

A MESSAGE FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Long-term unemployed job seekers have critical skills and experience that can help propel our economy. That's why the President has called on employers, non-profits, local elected officials, and community leaders across the country to help the long-term unemployed get a fair shot. We need your talent, your experience, and your energy.

— Jeff Zients, Director, National Economic Council, The White House

MAKE THE MOST OF THIS HANDBOOK

Unlike most employment resources, this handbook was created specifically to address the unique challenges facing the long-term unemployed (technically defined as job searching unsuccessfully for 27 weeks or more).

This "insider's perspective" is the result of conversations, research and survey results from hundreds of employers, job-seekers, and expert organizations working on the front lines to help solve long-term unemployment across the country.

ATTENTION VETS
If you are an unemployed veteran, there are additional resources available just for you – start here

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Even with a strengthening job market and growing economy, long-term unemployment is a serious problem facing the United States and its citizens. Long-term unemployment remains 2.5 times higher than the pre-recession average.[1]

If you are long-term unemployed, you may be asking yourself "Why am I not having success? What else can I do?" This handbook is designed to provide you with tools to help answer those questions and to enhance your job search.

The recommendations and resources provided in the following pages will challenge you to change the way you think about not just your job search, but also your career. Approaching your next steps with creativity and an open mind can help boost your search to land that next job.

1. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE** – as of September 2014, there were 3.0 million long-term unemployed Americans[2]

2. **SOLVING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT IS A NATIONAL PRIORITY** – under the leadership of President Obama, more than 300 leading businesses have signed the *Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed Workers*

3. **LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT AFFECTS A DIVERSE GROUP OF WORKERS** – it spans all industries, education levels, ethnicities, age groups, and skill levels. Learn from peers in the "Faces of Unemployment" section later in the handbook

4. **FINDING A JOB AFTER YOU HAVE A LONGER EMPLOYMENT GAP MAY REQUIRE TAKING DIFFERENT ACTION THAN WHEN YOU WERE RECENTLY UNEMPLOYED**[3] – there are specific things you should be doing to navigate out of long-term unemployment and get on the road to a full-time position

5. **RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT JOB** – taking advantage of them (and doing so as soon as possible) can make a big difference. This handbook is full of these resources

MAKE USE OF THE CHECKLIST

Based on extensive research and conversations with employers, experts in the field, and former and current long-term unemployed workers, this checklist reflects the latest leading practices to help you find the right job. While you may already be doing many of the items below, this handbook includes additional suggestions and recommendations, as well as real actions you can take now.

The checklist below is just the first step to working through this handbook. Each recommendation below is covered in its own section with additional resources and tips - resources listed are free unless otherwise specified. Interactive exercises and sample activities are included throughout. We encourage you to take notes and make this guide your own.

Use this checklist as a handy one-pager to help guide your job search strategy and approach. Tear it out, put it in a spot where you will see it often, and use the recommendations most relevant to you.

WHAT ARE INTERMEDIARIES?
Intermediaries are organizations that focus on providing skill enhancing opportunities or connections to potential employers, including community-based non-profits, government funded American Job Centers, staffing agencies and training organizations, among others.

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

- [ ] **UNDERSTAND THE JOB SEARCH**
  Knowing the unemployment landscape and the employers' point of view will help keep you informed and prepared

- [ ] **FIND THE RIGHT JOB IN THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM**
  Volunteering, building your skills, and being flexible can help you during your job search

- [ ] **SET YOUR DIRECTION**
  Assessing your career goals and having the goal in mind can help you find success in the long-term

- [ ] **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES**
  Don't forget to use American Job Centers and other available resources such as "intermediaries"

- [ ] **TELL YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE STORY**
  Pitching yourself in the right way tells employers who you are and what you can offer

- [ ] **MAKE CONNECTIONS**
  Reaching out to your professional, community, and personal contacts can be the key to finding your next job

- [ ] **DON'T LOSE HOPE**
  Staying positive will help you have the energy and attitude needed to conduct a thorough job search and will show potential employers that you want the job

“The job market is **MORE COMPETITIVE** than ever – and that means recruiters are busier than ever. There are often **HUNDREDS OF APPLICANTS** per position. Often, recruiters can’t give every resume the kind of attention it deserves, so applicants need to **GET THEIR POINT ACROSS – QUICKLY.**”

— Kim Dean, Recruiting Specialist (Atlanta, GA)

SECTION 1

UNDERSTAND THE JOB SEARCH

You already know that finding a job in today's economy is tough. Getting familiar with the current landscape and employers' perspectives will help you adapt to the changes and fuel your search strategy.

The process of finding a new job has changed since the height of the Great Recession in 2009. The good news is that the economy is growing, jobs are being created, and the unemployment rate has dropped significantly since 2009. The bad news is that it can still be challenging to find a job.

KNOW THE UNEMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

The job seeker's economy today is complex; depending on where you live, what industry you work in, and how much experience you have, you may have a number of employment opportunities available to you – or very few. Often, a high number of job seekers compete for a limited number of jobs, and the job seeker community includes not only the long-term unemployed, but also the more recently unemployed and currently employed. This handbook is designed to help you overcome the specific challenges that face the long-term unemployed.

Industries and occupations have changed – sometimes drastically – because of the recession and other economic changes. Some occupations have moved offshore, some have changed geographically, some have more (or different) required skills, and some may no longer be growing. Understanding the outlook for your occupation is important – explore the Bureau of Labor Statistics career outlooks here to research if and where your occupation and industry is growing. Also use the resources included in the call-out boxes to stay up-to-date on trends in recruiting and professional associations for your industry. Depending on your family and financial situation, you may consider moving to a community where there is significant growth in your industry and open jobs may be more abundant.

It is important to be flexible when searching for a job, as the typical career progression is changing in our society. In the past, it has not been uncommon for people to stay in one company or industry their whole life. Today, the career path is much more fluid and changes often.

FURTHER READING
Keep informed about trends in hiring and recruiting by reading talent blogs by experts in the field, such as the LinkedIn Job Seeker Blog or Undercover Recruiter

UNDERSTAND THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE ON HIRING

Unfortunately, long-term job seekers face significant stigmatization that is not grounded in their skills or experiences. The interview callback rate for the long-term unemployed is 45% lower than the callback rate for the recently unemployed, despite relative similarities across both groups in education levels and other characteristics.[4] Today employers do not rely on job boards as their main source of talent; instead, they heavily use employee referrals and their networks to hire candidates. Many hiring managers attach more credibility to applications referred by their employees than the several applications coming in through job boards.

SOME EMPLOYERS FOCUS MORE ON WORK HISTORY THAN SKILLS

Under tight timelines, some potential employers and recruiters overlook long-term unemployed candidates due to the high volumes of job applications they receive. Some employers see a gap in a job seeker's employment history and often do not have time to assess the reasons for that gap. Employers need to understand the employment gap so they do not overlook qualified candidates. That's why it's so important to tell your story the right way.

TECHNOLOGY IS RAPIDLY CHANGING THE RECRUITING LANDSCAPE

Many employers are using new forms of technology to find the right candidates, such as computer programs that scan your resume to determine whether you make a good fit. These applications pick resumes based on specific pieces of information – like your experience, education, and stated skills. Using the right words (similar to the words listed on the job description) on your resume can help you get through initial screens.

CROSS REFERENCE
Refer to the Tell Your Most Effective Story section for resume tips

Resumes and applications have also evolved due to the advent of technology in the recruiting and hiring world. Some job board websites, such as Apploi, allow you to record videos of yourself performing tasks or even talking about your experience to give potential employers a better understanding of who you are.

Furthermore, the internet can provide employers with a lot of information about you, well beyond your resume. They look at online sources like your LinkedIn and Facebook profiles, so having the right online presence can give you a leg up.

PRO TIP
Connecting with an external recruiter through non-official sources may help your chances of making a stronger first impression and telling your story the right way. Identify recruiters through LinkedIn and reach out to talk to them generally, or go to a job fair to meet people in person.

EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES IN MANY PLACES

Employers and recruiters use various methods to recruit talent, including:

- Connections made through networking – even strong applicants who were not selected for jobs that they previously applied for can become part of a recruiter's network – which can lead to another opportunity
- Current employees who may be looking for a new role
- Referrals from current employees
- Job boards like LinkedIn, Monster.com, and CareerBuilder.com
- Targeted advertising based on your internet search behaviors
- Mobile apps that push out notifications to mobile-savvy job seekers
- Staffing agencies for temporary or temp-to-hire work
- Outsourcing to a third-party for quality candidate identification
- Social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, to advertise job openings and recruit potential employees

GET SPECIFIC
Click here to find professional associations for your line of work and read about industry/occupation trends

BOTH RECRUITERS AND HIRING MANAGERS HAVE A ROLE IN HIRING

The key players in this process are the recruiters and hiring managers:

- **RECRUITERS** post jobs and review resumes to find good candidates that align with the hiring manager's criteria. They minimize the amount of time that it takes a hiring manager to recruit, source, and screen high-quality talent
- **HIRING MANAGERS** work in the business function that will be hiring the new employee (and are often the new employee's future boss). They work with the recruiters to help them understand what "great" looks like and ultimately make the decision on who is the right candidate

WHY POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS WON'T PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO YOU

Have you submitted your resume for a job and never heard back? Have you asked recruiters for feedback after an unsuccessful interview and received no response? Here are a few reasons why employers typically don't provide feedback:

1. **FEAR OF POSSIBLE LAWSUITS:** Employers and their legal teams are concerned that feedback can be misconstrued by the applicant to demonstrate discrimination in the hiring process.
2. **PROVIDING FEEDBACK IS TIME CONSUMING:** Employers have a limited amount of time to communicate with job searchers; telling you why you weren't selected takes valuable time.
3. **POSSIBILITY OF THE CANDIDATE BECOMING UPSET OR ANGRY:** Many hiring managers and Human Resources employees recognize that these are difficult conversations and many want to avoid an adverse candidate reaction.

UNDERSTAND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT IN AMERICA

Despite the strong job recovery from the Great Recession, long-term unemployment remains at historically high levels. While the overall unemployment rate has decreased since its peak in 2009,[5] long-term unemployment is more than double the pre-recession rate.[6] Long-term unemployment currently exists across industries, occupations, experience levels, and geographies. For example, nearly 70% of the long-term unemployed are younger than 50 and 27% have post-secondary credentials.[7]

FACES OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

The economy is changing at a fast pace and varying conditions can mean layoffs for everyone and anyone. Bottom line: long-term unemployment happens to all kinds of people, from all walks of life.

FOLLOW ALONG
Follow Monique, Alex, Ellen, and Joe throughout the playbook as they use the Checklist for Success.

MONIQUE ROBINSON

Monique is 24 years old. She graduated college in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in architecture, but has been unable to find a full-time job in her field. She moved back in with her parents and is considering taking an unpaid internship in a related field, like at a real estate agency.

ALEX HERSCH

Alex spent 23 years as an accountant for a local manufacturing business until he was laid off in 2013. He hasn't found a job with comparative pay and ranking, and has spent over a year out of work. In order to keep his skills sharp, he offers his accounting services to a local non-profit as a volunteer, and continues to take online courses in the latest accounting software and technology.

ELLEN JACOBS

After seven years in sales, Ellen voluntarily left her job after the birth of her second child in 2009. As she looks to re-enter the workforce, she struggles to find full-time positions. It has been difficult to convince employers that her skills are still relevant after five years of being unemployed. Ellen has been applying for part-time jobs in the short-term as she continues to look for full-time work.

JOE HERNANDEZ

Joe worked as an electrician in the construction industry for 16 years when the housing crisis hit in 2009. He found himself out of steady work for over a year and a half, though he tried to get by with short-term projects. Frustrated with his situation, Joe is looking into going back to school to learn new technical skills in order to become more competitive.

EXERCISE

UNDERSTANDING THE JOB SEARCH

I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

NOTES

_____

_____

_____

"While I was unemployed and looking for work, **I VOLUNTEERED AT MY CHURCH** doing a variety of tasks from child care to office work. Volunteering gave me an opportunity to get out of the house, meet people, and **TALK ABOUT MY JOB SEARCH.** It provided a healthy alternative to sitting at home. Volunteering also **LIFTED MY SPIRITS** and gave me a sense of purpose during this difficult time."

— Pelecia Ward (Detroit, MI)

SECTION 2

FIND THE RIGHT JOB IN THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM

Your next job may not be your dream job. And it probably won't be your last job. Finding the right job may be a combination of short and long-term searching as well as thinking differently about what that "right job" looks like.

AVOID THE EMPLOYMENT GAP

Research suggests that the longer you are out of work, the harder it is to find it. In fact, only half as many long-term unemployed job seekers are called back for interviews as those that were unemployed for only one month.[8] The main takeaway: be flexible and creative when thinking about your next job. It may not be as simple as just looking for positions that mirror your last job. The reality is that many long-term unemployed job seekers initially take a job with a paycheck that is lower than their previous position.[9] But remember – this doesn't mean that there isn't room to grow that paycheck over time. *Don't let pay alone be a deal breaker or a limiting factor.*

Consider short *and* long-term strategies and think of your own ways to redefine what work looks like for you. Your journey may include taking part-time work until you find that full-time job, or volunteering to get relevant experience back on your resume.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

"After being unemployed for the better part of three years, I was able to obtain a part-time position with a small company. Although part-time employment was not something I was looking for, it was an opportunity to get back into the workforce and get a "foot in the door." I accepted the position knowing I would still have to find full-time employment or a second part-time job in order to stay afloat. After just three short weeks, my employer was impressed with my work and I was offered full-time employment! You never know what can happen and what doors will open for you if you are willing to put in the effort and be flexible."

– *Jami Klubek (Ansonia, CT)*

TAKE ACTION IN THE SHORT-TERM

Your actions in the short-term are critical. Focus on finding work, even if that work is short-term or not your first choice. The fact is that those who have jobs have an easier time getting jobs, and employment gaps get harder to explain as they grow.

INVESTIGATE PART-TIME WORK

While certainly not a replacement for a full-time job, part-time work offers a number of benefits:

- Provides income to you and your family
- Reduces the gap on your resume
- Keeps you active and interacting with others in a professional setting
- Could develop into a full-time position
- Keeps your skills sharp and/or helps you develop new skills. The loss of professional skills is a real concern for employers and could hamper your long-term search

If possible, look for part-time work in your industry or where your unique skills are valued. If you can't find part-time work in your industry, take advantage of the new skills you can learn through part-time work in other sectors. These can include soft skills (flexibility, personal skills, or customer interaction), most of which can be applied across industries and occupations, and be valuable to potential employers.

Remember – part-time work is not a long-term solution. You should also focus on finding a full-time position, even as you work part-time.

JOB LISTINGS

You can search for part-time work on nearly any job search board.

EXPLORE STAFFING AGENCIES

Staffing agencies typically provide employers with two types of workers – workers for temporary positions only (like seasonal work that will end), and temporary workers who may be considered for a full-time job (sometimes called "temp-to-hire" work).

Staffing agencies are an option to consider while you continue to look for the right permanent job. Advantages of staffing agencies include:

- They may be more accepting and willing to understand why you have an employment gap
- You may be considered for permanent positions. Ask specifically to be placed on temp-to-hire positions that take advantage of your skills
- The opportunity to hone your skills. Staffing agencies will check in with the employer on a regular basis to review assigned workers' performance, so you will get feedback on your work quality, as well as potential training opportunities available through the staffing agency

FIND A STAFFING AGENCY

America's staffing companies match millions of people to millions of jobs. Search this database to find a staffing agency near you.

While these resources are helpful, when it comes to your job search, don't rely on staffing agencies alone. The majority of their work is temporary and their first customer is the employer. Continue searching for a permanent position while working with a staffing agency.

CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING

If you are having trouble finding a paid position, consider volunteering full-time while you continue your job search. *Volunteering is work and can be put on your resume* – you don't receive a salary but volunteering still counts as work.

Key advantages of volunteering include:

- Reducing the employment gap on your resume
- Keeping up your skills and providing opportunities to learn new skills
- Helping you maintain a routine
- Creating and growing a new community
- Fostering appreciation for what you have in your life and reminding you to stay positive about what can be a consuming unemployment problem
- Feeding your interests and hobbies

You might also consider an internship. It serves as a way for a company to "test drive" an employee, while you "test drive" the company and the position. It can also help get your foot in the door and usually has the potential for hire. Find out more about internship opportunities by visiting company websites and inquiring about internship programs.

FIND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR AREA:

- Volunteer Match
- Volunteers of America
- United We Serve
- All for Good

LOOK FOR THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION

How do I actually go out and *land* that permanent position? You've probably been applying to job after job, and are starting to feel discouraged. This is normal, but staying sharp and focused in your long-term job search is crucial. Searching for the right job when you have been unemployed for a while takes a *strategic* approach.

CROSS REFERENCE
Check out the quiz in the Set Your Direction section for help identifying transferable skills and what new industries and occupations might be a fit for you.

BE TARGETED

Know your audience. It's common that as the unemployment gap grows, job seekers will begin to apply to more jobs that are not a fit for their skills or experiences. *This doesn't work.* Recruiters can immediately spot these generic resumes and will throw them out.

CROSS REFERENCE
Check out the Tell Your Most Effective Story section for more information on tailoring your resume

Customize your resume and cover letter for each job you apply to. Be flexible about the important things – salary, level, title, industry if you can – but don't apply to jobs for which you do not have skills or in which you have little to no interest.

BE FLEXIBLE ... ABOUT THE TYPE OF JOB

Apply to jobs in different industries or positions that could use the skills you already have in a different way. Consider your transferable skills – the strengths and talents you've gained through the course of your lifetime, both professionally and personally. Have an open mind about using these skills in occupations and industries in which you have not previously worked.

Some common transferrable skills:

- Communications (written, verbal)
- Research (gathering data, analysis, problem solving)
- Interpersonal skills

How to identify and communicate transferrable skills:

- Review your resume and experiences to identify your strengths. What are some of the intangible skills you used in your previous jobs?
- Review the job posting carefully and identify any of the "intangible" skills it would require for success. These skills won't be spelled out for you; think critically about what kind of creative and personal skills you would need
- Match up your transferrable skills to those required in the job you want, and make sure they are highlighted in your resume. Where possible, back up your skills with hard evidence and examples of your work

If you do apply for jobs in a different industry, get familiar with the issues and lingo of this new field. It can make all the difference as you tailor your resume and prepare for interviews.

BE FLEXIBLE ... ABOUT THE SALARY

While not ideal, it is important to consider jobs with a lower salary than your previous position. Most workers initially take a job with a lower salary when re-entering the workforce, and then move up within their new company; this has been increasingly more common since the Great Recession.[10] Focus on opportunities at companies that provide growth potential for employees and be okay with coming in at a lower level than you were in your last position.

LEARN MORE

My Skills My Future is a website that can help you identify jobs that are a good match for your skills and experiences.

ENTREPRENEURS WANTED

For some, starting your own business is an alternative to looking for a job with an employer. This is an option that should be considered carefully – investing in yourself can come with a large set of risks and challenges, usually involves start-up costs (check out this resource for help finding financing if you decide to go this route), and can be more or less of a feasible option depending on your experience and industry. Carefully evaluate if this option makes sense for you – check out this report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and think through these questions to consider, and do your homework on the demand for your business in your market.

EXERCISE

FINDING THE RIGHT JOB

MY TOP THREE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INCLUDE:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

IN THE SHORT-TERM, I WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF JOBS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

IN THE LONG-TERM, I WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER:

_____

_____

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

NOTES

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“A job search plan, especially for the long-term unemployed, is **MORE CRITICAL** and requires more discipline the longer you are unemployed. **REASSESSMENT IS THE KEY** in establishing your job search plan. You should reassess three things: your skills, your goals, and your state of mind.

Around your skills, consider: **HAVE YOUR SKILLS DETERIORATED** over your unemployment? Are there ways to sharpen them without being employed? Are there **SKILLS YOU HAVEN'T EMPHASIZED** in your resume that will make you more employable? Whether you want to or not, you will probably need to **RE-INVENT YOURSELF.**”

— Dennis Ahern (Derby, CT)

SECTION 3

SET YOUR DIRECTION

Figure out what you want – and what is realistic. Easier said than done, right? There are ways to help you discover your end goal – which will guide your job search.

Once you've set the direction you wish to take, target companies and/or industries and focus on preparing for your next role there.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

If you haven't done so already, take time to assess your skills. Ask yourself: "Do I have the skills required to perform the jobs I'm applying for?" The information on the right provides some options for how to assess your skills – either personal strengths, job readiness skills, or career fit. Many of these assessments may be available for free at your local American Job Centers.

CROSS REFERENCE
My Skills My Future helps you assess your match for jobs based on your skills

Understanding your skills will help you speak about what you can do more effectively. After you assess yourself, you may identify an opportunity to sharpen your current skills or add a new skillset. Remember to update your resume with these accomplishments.

1. **PERSONAL STRENGTH FINDERS:** These assessments identify what you excel at and enjoy. Skills you may already have such as relationship building and information analysis are very useful in the workplace. If you want to learn about what skills you can bring to your future job, consider taking a skills assessment for a nominal fee. Click here for an example of one of the many skill tests out there.

2. **JOB READINESS ASSESSMENTS:** These tests help to assess and credentialize your readiness for basic work and general work skills. WorkKeys is a leader in this type of testing – they offer a set of assessments including topics like applied math, reading for information, business writing, and locating information. Tests vary in cost based on your location, but they usually cost around $20 per section. You can even purchase a practice test online for $5. Contact your local American Job Center to see if they can help you find out how much this would cost for you.

3. **CAREER APTITUDE TESTS:** Career aptitude tests look at the skills you have and tell you what careers may be a good fit. Check out this link to see which career path may suit you.

ASSESS YOUR SITUATION

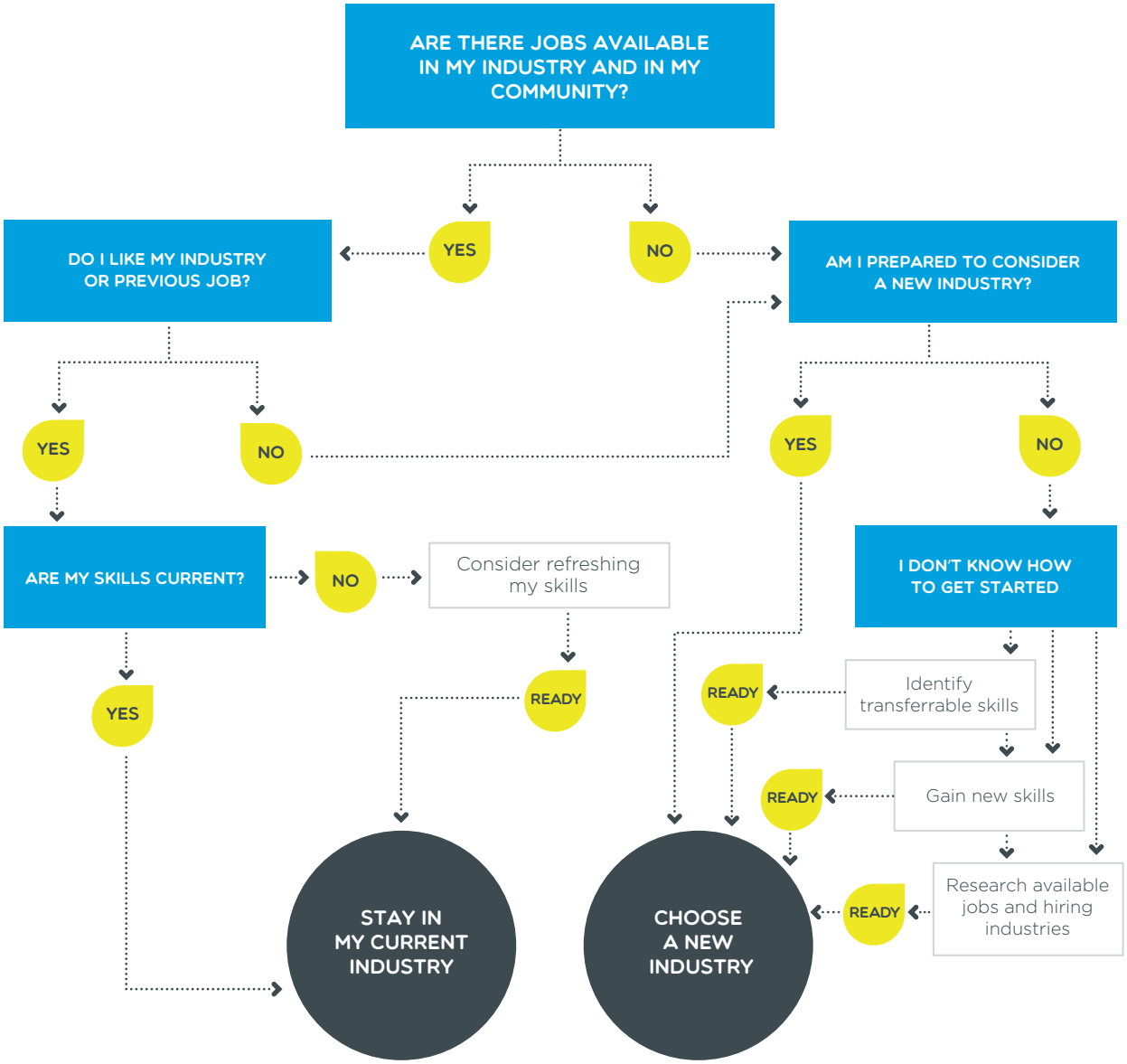
You just did an assessment of your skills. Now think about your experiences, career goals, and what's realistic in today's economy. Ask yourself "Did I like my last job? Do I want to do something different? Would my family and friends say my previous job was the right fit for me?"

PRO TIP

CareerOneStop provides information on federal programs, jobs, career guidance, trainings, and related resources.

SHOULD I STAY IN MY FIELD QUIZ

This quiz will help you assess if you are still a good fit for your industry or should consider a change.



BUILD NEW SKILLS

As you look into building skills, it is important to "work backwards" – start with the end goal in mind. This means identifying the occupation you are targeting and deciding what new skills you need to get a job. In general, make sure that you understand the qualifications for the job – for instance, if hands-on experience is preferred, make sure the skill building programs you look into have a work experience component. Investigate certifications carefully – some courses provide the certification upon completion, whereas others simply prepare you to sit for the certification test.

CROSS REFERENCE
Please refer to the resources identified in the Getting Local Appendix for local information for Chicago and Minneapolis

If you decide to build new skills, there are a number of options available to you. Before you start any new program, think carefully about the return on your investment. Whatever program you decide on, it will take time and potentially money.

Some questions to consider:

- Do you have the means (time and money) to invest in skill building?
- Does the average salary for jobs in this new industry justify the training cost?

DID YOU KNOW?

If you decide to pursue training and need financial assistance for tuition, your local American Job Center might be able to help – they receive funding for tuition support through the Workforce Investment Board.

This table describes some additional options and considerations for building new skills for your career change.

TRAINING OPTION	DESCRIPTION	COST	TIME REQUIREMENTS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Degree at a community college	Institutions typically offer a two-year associate of arts degree that can transfer to a four-year college or university	Average tuition between $1,500 to $3,000 per year	Need to complete 90 quarter credit hours or 60 semester credit hours of schooling; typically a full schedule takes approximately two years to complete	» Before selecting a course, research if local companies are looking for candidates with the skills that the course is teaching » Consider an independent industry-based certification program to acquire skills instead of a degree. Work with career offices to understand the skills needed in your desired profession before enrolling at a community college » Research the job placement rates for the schools that you are interested in, and focus on community colleges with consistently high job placement rates » A recent study shows that graduates of associate degree programs in a technical field have higher salaries than many graduates of four-year colleges[11]
Professional certifications	An examination or a record of work-related credentials. It is issued to an individual by an external organization to communicate a certain level of skill attainment	Varies depending on the certification subject and number of instructor-led classroom sessions	Varies between two to 12 months	» Use the American Job Center's Certification Finder to find occupation and industry certification requirements » Some universities offer professional certificates
Job readiness trainings	These trainings may target a particular industry or basic workplace skills. The curriculum would include diverse subjects - customer service, business ethics, teamwork, basic computer skills, workforce preparation, etc.	Varies, but some programs are offered at no cost to the participants[12]	Approximately two to four months for a wide range of careers; trainings are usually from 9am to 5pm like a full-time job	» Find out which employers are involved in specific readiness trainings and how many people have been hired after completing the training in the past » Employers may participate in some classes giving the opportunity to mock interview, answer questions about recruitment and employment opportunities » Modeled after on-the-job training programs, trainees may be placed at work sites with supervised training to gain real work experience while refining their work behaviors and job skills
Certifications offered at Workforce Centers	Some workforce centers offer trainings, which provide participants an opportunity to earn a certification at the end of the training	Usually no cost	Depends on the subject, starting at ten hours for an entry-level certification	» It's important to know what courses are out there and if the information you'll learn will help you get the job you want. Your first step should be meeting with a Workforce Center Career Advisor » Common certifications offered at American Job Centers are Typing Speed certification and Forklift certification. The centers may offer a range of training though not all will provide you with industry-recognized certifications
On-the-job (OJT) training programs	A program that reimburses a company for the cost of training a new employee. The formal training combines OJT with technical instruction for a specific trade	Usually no cost because employers provide the training at their own expense (and also subsidized by the government)	Training needs to be completed in approximately six months	» New employees will require training - which only your new employer or company can provide - to do the new job. During OJT training, new employees will be working and receiving pay » An OJT program helps unemployed people re-enter the workforce and gives businesses an incentive to hire and train them in full-time skilled or semi-skilled occupations » The OJT program matches businesses with qualified job seekers who are eager to work, but need the specialized training only an employer can supply » Employers agree to hire workers and train them in measurable skills » For more information, research your state's labor office

EXERCISE

SETTING MY DIRECTION

MY "SHOULD I STAY IN MY FIELD" QUIZ RESULTS ARE:

MY PLAN FOR SETTING MY DIRECTION INCLUDES:

1.

2.

3.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- [ ]
- [ ]

NOTES

“My job search was **VERY STRESSFUL,** especially because I had the added responsibility of being the sole provider for my family. **I SOUGHT OUT SUPPORT** from an American Job Center in Minneapolis; it was an **OASIS OF CALM,** provided numerous helpful resources, and had a staff that was affirming and reassuring. I entered desperate and fearful of what may come. I left **CONFIDENT AND WITH A ROADMAP** for what I wanted and how I was going to get there. I left with a renewed **SENSE OF THE POSSIBLE** and a group of friends who were working toward the same goal, **CREATING A BETTER LIFE** through finding the right career. I am incredibly grateful for the American Job Center and the Dislocated Worker Program. They gave me the **GUIDANCE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES** I needed to begin my new career.”

— Vernon Rowland (Minneapolis, MN)

SECTION 4

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES

There are many resources designed specifically to help you find the right job or provide you with support while you search. Many long-term job seekers wait weeks or months to access support - don't make that mistake.

GET TO KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

There are a number of public and private resources available to help you throughout your job search. Accessing these resources can help in a number of ways – from providing financial support to getting local insights into the job market in your community. However, these resources are chronically under-accessed due to misconceptions about what they are and how they work.

WHAT ARE INTERMEDIARIES?
They are typically non-profit third-party organizations that focus on providing you with skill enhancing opportunities or connections to potential employers

MYTHBUSTING: TOP MYTHS ABOUT USING UNEMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES AREN'T MEANT FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME—THEY CAN'T HELP

There is a range of assistance through the government that is not focused on industry, career level, or salary. Take advantage of the resources that are funded by tax dollars for all Americans. Check out your local American Job Center (an unemployment resource center located in every region) for services including individual job training and counseling on your local economy.

FINDING A JOB IS ALL UP TO ME

While it is easy to feel isolated during your job search, there are resources like your local American Job Center and intermediaries that can help you connect with employers and job counselors to improve your job search. Job counselors will provide coaching on career opportunities and training.

AMERICAN JOB CENTERS CAN ONLY CONNECT ME TO HOURLY JOBS

Whether you're looking for an entry-level job or something that requires more expertise, resources at your American Job Center can help.

THERE IS VERY LITTLE SUPPORT FOR WORKERS WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED

There are a number of federal and state resources available to you such as mental health care, food stamps, or even housing assistance that you can utilize depending on your location and financial situation. Continue reading this section for examples of programs you may be eligible for.

THESE RESOURCES ARE USED AS A LAST RESORT

While most people generally avoid or delay accessing community or government-funded resources, these centers can help you with your job search very early on. Some American Job Centers are connected to employers from your local economy that can help shortcut your search in the early stages.

TAX BENEFITS

Track the money and receipts for job search related expenses as some of these can be tax deductible, such as travel to an out-of-town interview, employment agency fees, and the cost to mail out resumes. Read the official regulations and details from the IRS here.

VISIT AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

American Job Centers are located across the country (click here to find one close to you) and offer a range of services that may include career counseling, job training, information on trends in your local economy, resume building, computer training, and GED courses. These resources are funded using tax dollars and are available for everyone – whether you are looking for your first job or you've had a long career. American Job Centers can be more versatile than you may think – some of them are connected to opportunities at a wide range of levels, industries, and sectors. It is important to keep in mind that not all American Job Centers offer the same services - if your local Center doesn't have what you are looking for, try out another location or look for your closest comprehensive center. The best way to get the most out of your American Job Center is to come early and come often. Also take the time to meet and form a relationship with a job counselor – someone who can give you personalized advice and direction.

PRO TIP

In addition to job counselor services offered at American Job Centers, you can hire a career coach to give you specialized or industry-specific guidance. Before hiring a professional job coach, be sure to get a list of their past references.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR JOB COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP[13]

BE ACTIVE

You need to be an active participant during your meetings with your job counselor. Come in with a clear idea of what you want. If you aren't vocal, your counseling experience will not be as effective as it could be.

BE HONEST

Your counseling session is a safe place to express any doubts or frustrations you may have about the job process. Be upfront about your concerns and challenges so your job counselor can help you address them.

BE OPEN TO CHALLENGE

While your job counselor will offer you support and empathy, they will also challenge you. Be open to constructive criticism and stepping out of your comfort zone.

SERVICES OFFERED AT YOUR LOCAL AMERICAN JOB CENTER

While services may vary depending on location, American Job Centers are designed to help you find a job as well as identify opportunities for skill building and training. Check out your local center to see what services are available to you.

American Job Centers can help you by:

- Sharing employer information and providing advice on employability and job search
- Conducting skills assessments to determine your strengths and key skills to be used on job applications
- Providing job matching for your skills and referrals to open jobs
- Providing free tutorials on commonly used workplace skills – English language, communication skills, computer basics
- Liaising with companies to arrange internships and OTJ trainings
- Connecting you with local support groups to meet people from all backgrounds and help each other attain employment goals
- Organizing workshops on resume writing, interview tips, etc., and invite guest speakers from the industry
- Allowing access to resources including computers, internet access, fax, telephone, etc.

While you can access some American Job Center resources on the web, you should strongly consider visiting the Center in person.

FIND AN INTERMEDIARY

You do not have to go through this search alone. There are a number of available intermediaries available to help you. Remember, intermediaries are organizations that focus on providing skill-enhancing opportunities or connections to potential employers, including community-based non-profits, government funded American Job Centers, staffing agencies, and training organizations, among others. Many intermediaries assign job seekers to a job counselor who learns your story and provides personalized support for your unique situation.

WHAT KIND OF INTERMEDIARIES ARE THERE?

THOSE THAT PROVIDE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Intermediaries help develop skills such as literacy, numeracy, comprehension, and critical thinking. They can help you improve skills that might be specific to your industry as well as help you write your resume and ace an interview.

HOW DO I FIND LOCAL INTERMEDIARIES?

- Ask your local American Job Center if they have references
- Check out the resources throughout this guide, and captured in the Appendix A: Getting Local in Chicago and Minneapolis

THOSE THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY

They are well equipped to help you deal with many issues that come along with being long-term unemployed; they are available to help build confidence and community with others in similar positions.

THOSE THAT CONNECT YOU TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Intermediaries communicate with employers to see what skillsets are required for their job openings. After getting to know you better as a job seeker, they can connect you to future employers if they think you would be a good match.

UNITED WAY 2-1-1 CENTERS

2-1-1 is a helpline phone number that will connect you to a variety of critical health and human services. This is a good resource to use if you want to learn more about mental health counseling, job training, transportation assistance, and education programs.

RESEARCH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

You may qualify for federal and state resources, depending on your financial situation. Check out your local American Job Center, contact your state's human service or social service agency, or click here for more information on available assistance.

FINDING INTERMEDIARIES

Check out these intermediaries with a national or multi-city presence to see what support is offered in your community:

- Goodwill
- Jewish Vocational Services
- Platform 2 Employment

EXERCISE

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES

THE CLOSEST AMERICAN JOB CENTER TO ME IS LOCATED AT:

RESOURCES THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK ABOUT AT MY AMERICAN JOB CENTER INCLUDE:

INTERMEDIARIES THAT I HAVE FOUND IN MY COMMUNITY INCLUDE:

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

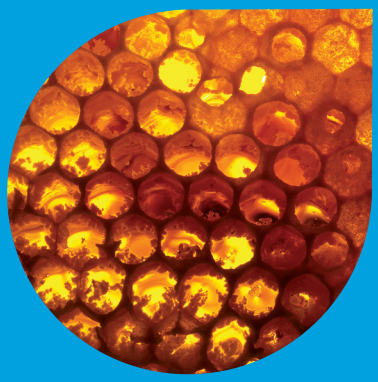
NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

NOTES



"You **KNOW YOUR BACKGROUND** and strengths more than anyone else; take advantage of the opportunity to **SELL YOURSELF FOR THE POSITION.** Make it easy for potential employers to understand how your skills and experience relate to the competencies needed for the job, and also remember to **SHOW HOW THE POSITION ALIGNS WITH YOUR CAREER GOALS.** Nobody wants to hire someone who just wants to collect a paycheck, nor would they want to hire someone who will be looking to switch positions a few months after starting."

— Jacob Grobe, Talent Acquisition Lead at Skills for Chicagoland's Future

SECTION 5

TELL YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE STORY

The reality is every potential employer will want to know why there is an employment gap on your resume. Telling an effective story – one about your experience, goals, and employment gap – is more important than ever. Use the tips and techniques below to educate employers about why you're unemployed, how you've spent the time to make yourself a great candidate, and what you've learned along the way.

BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE

Knowing what you bring to the table is important when it comes to any job search. Communicating it effectively is even more important. If you're currently unemployed, this could make the difference between getting a call back and being passed over. Your story is more than explaining your employment gap – it is also about convincing an employer that your skills and experiences make you the right fit for the job at hand.

There is an unfair stigma associated with being a long-term job seeker, and telling your best story may help overcome this stigma. The truth is that a long-term job seeker is about half as likely as a short-term job seeker to get an interview.[14] Employers may be passing over more qualified candidates simply because they are long-term unemployed.[15] To overcome this barrier, you must be able to clearly demonstrate to employers that:

- You remain a skilled and competitive candidate
- Your time unemployed has been spent productively
- You have a clear and consistent story for gaps in employment history

In today's technology-driven world, your first shot at a job likely starts (and might end) with a quick glance at your resume or LinkedIn profile by a recruiter. It's important that you tell your most effective story across every platform: your resume, your online presence, as well as during networking events and interviews.

LEARN HOW TO TALK ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT GAP

Your situation is unique; there is no one "right" answer or story. Use the tips below to help guide your story creation process.

EXPLAIN THE GAP IN YOUR RESUME AS A BRIEF PART OF YOUR STORY

Potential employers will naturally want to know why you have a gap in your resume. Don't fear the question; be ready for it.

Hold yourself accountable. Briefly explain why you've been unable to find a job. The reasons may vary, but you should be able to quickly share top challenges, changes, and trends in your industry. Focus on what you have learned, how you have approached the job search, and how you have spent your time. Don't discuss the fairness of your employment situation (or express bitterness against those who may have caused it). Instead, recognize the reality of the economic environment of your particular industry.

Discuss what you've learned during your time while unemployed and find a way to show how it will make you better at the potential job. Your case is strengthened if you can provide some constructive ways that you have spent your time other than job searching—for example, volunteer work or taking a training course shows employers that you've kept your skills current. Moreover, if you can tie your volunteering or other work to the position you're applying for, even better. While it is important to be honest about the gap in your employment history, there is no harm in not emphasizing it on your resume.

Always remember that your story is about more than your employment gap – it is ultimately about how you are an ideal fit for the job at hand. Address the employment gap, but then quickly focus on how you are qualified for the job due to your experiences, skills, and desires.

CREATE AN ELEVATOR SPEECH

An elevator speech is exactly what it sounds like – a short and sweet summary of you, your experience and skills, and your future goals – all must be conveyed during the length of an elevator ride (which is likely less than 30 seconds). This gets more complicated for the long-term job seeker because you may need to explain the gap in your resume.

Your elevator speech should include the following:

- Where you've been (your experience, background, and a *brief* explanation of your employment gap)
- What you bring to the table and why you are the most qualified (your unique skills and experience, as they relate to the job)
- Where you want to go (how you will use your experience and skills to succeed at the job)

EXHIBIT A:

ELEVATOR SPEECH TEMPLATE

When drafting your elevator pitch, consider including the following items:

- Years of experience
- Areas of specialization or industry focus
- Relevant technical or transferrable skills
- Accomplishments in previous jobs
- Activities or accomplishments during the time of unemployment – include any skills building or training
- Desired position or tailor to specific position that you're considering/ applying to

Don't forget to be enthusiastic, ask for some networking introductions, and say thanks!

Keep it as concise as possible – remember, your speech shouldn't be any longer than the average elevator ride. You want to get your point across before the listener loses interest.

Coming up with an effective elevator speech is great practice for networking and interviewing. It also helps you direct your job search as you determine what careers you want to pursue, skills you want to emphasize to potential employers, and why you're the best fit. Use your elevator speech as a guide as you update your resume – it should be a detailed, extended version in writing.

EXHIBIT B:

ELEVATOR SPEECH/SAMPLE 1

JOE INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO A CONTRACTOR WHO HIS FRIEND PUT HIM IN CONTACT WITH

Hello, my name is Joe. I have 16 years of experience in electrical engineering, which includes installing data cabling and fiber optic systems for construction companies. I am currently looking for full-time employment as an electrician. Throughout my career I have acquired the analytical and technical skills essential to be successful as an electrical engineer including interpreting building plans, electrical, mechanical and architectural drawings, and electrical code specifications to determine wiring installations. Over the past two years, I have been working on various short-term projects and going back to school to refine my technical skills. My friend told me that you have contacts in the construction industry who are working on large projects and would be hiring – could you introduce me so that I could talk to them and see if I would be a fit for the open electrician positions? I'm excited to apply my vast experience and recently acquired skills in a professional setting. Thanks for your time and help.

EXHIBIT C:

ELEVATOR SPEECH/SAMPLE 2

ELLEN SPEAKING TO AN EMPLOYER AT BB MARKETING SHE MEETS IN LINE FOR THE TRAIN

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER
I hope this train doesn't run late, I have a crazy day at work.

ELLEN:
Where are you working?

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER
I work at BB Marketing. I'm Jane.

ELLEN:
I'm Ellen, great to meet you. You work at BB Marketing? I've actually been looking into applying to jobs there.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER
Oh really? Where are you working now?

ELLEN:
I've actually spent the past five years staying home to raise my children. I am now looking for a brand manager position at a company with an established marketing program, such as BB Marketing. Previously, I was a brand manager at AA Marketing, an advertising and marketing firm, where I used my marketing and sales skills to establish new clients and implement client loyalty programs that led to a 5% increase in our company's sales from loyalty program members. I really think my skillset could be fully utilized at BB Marketing. Would you happen to know who I can contact for more information about employment opportunities? I would love to learn more about the company and how I could contribute my skill set to a company like yours.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER
Actually, some of my close colleagues work in recruiting. Let me get your name and contact information to them.

HOW TO ADDRESS BEING OVERQUALIFIED FOR A JOB YOU ARE APPLYING TO

Employers are sometimes hesitant to consider overqualified applicants because they fear that they cannot retain them or that they will not be able to settle on a salary. It is important to show that you are a good fit for the position, are willing to accept the market rate salary, and that you want to be a growing part of their company.

One way you can ease the apprehension of the employer is by addressing your salary in your resume. Experts suggest that giving a wide range of salaries you would consider up front dispels the assumption that you will not accept the salary that the employer offers.

Below are some questions you could be asked in the interview, and some tips you can use as you think through your own responses:

1. **WHAT WILL MOTIVATE YOU IN A ROLE THAT MIGHT NOT UTILIZE ALL OF YOUR QUALIFICATIONS?**
   Consider emphasizing your desire to learn different skills and be a mentor to those who might be less experienced. Employers are concerned that you may not be stimulated by your job if you are overqualified, so it is important to show what you can get out of the position.

2. **WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR COMPANY CAN OFFER YOU THAT WILL MAKE YOU STAY HERE?**
   Employers are concerned that if they hire overqualified candidates, they may continue to look for work. One way you can put them at ease in your interview is by highlighting your professional growth in the past, especially in positions you have held for an extended amount of time, and try to link it back to specific opportunities that are available to you at this company.

3. **WHAT FUTURE DO YOU SEE AT OUR COMPANY?**
   When answering questions like this, it is important to emphasize your enthusiasm for the prospective company and show that you could see yourself there in the long-term. The key is to show your interviewer that you are interested in steady career advancement and not just a string of promotions.

TIPS FOR OLDER WORKERS

As an older worker, you may have unique challenges when it comes to writing an effective resume – you want to convey experience, but don't want to be discounted because of age. Some tips:

- Emphasize accomplishment, not years of experience
- Express your technical aptitude
- Keep it brief – one page is standard
- Include recent work, not all of your work

KNOW WHERE TO TELL YOUR STORY

Ok, you've got your story down pat. What do you do with it? Get it out there using four main outlets: your resume, your online presence, at networking events, and during interviews.

PERFECT YOUR RESUME

Research suggests that employers are screening out resumes of the long-term unemployed simply because they have an employment gap on their resume – and missing candidates that are more qualified.[16] A strong resume that addresses your unemployment and highlights your skills and experience is crucial in today's job market. It's the first thing that recruiters and hiring managers will look at. Make sure that yours includes:

- A compelling objective statement at the top that mirrors your elevator speech, explains your unemployment, and demonstrates your enthusiasm for the position
- A clear demonstration of specific, measurable skills and experiences you have gained during your unemployment
- A clear demonstration of the specific skills and experiences that makes you most qualified for the position at hand

Your resume is always a work in progress – keep it updated to track your current activities and always look for ways to improve it, especially if you are unsuccessful in receiving callbacks for interviews.

GET FOUND

Including key words from the job description will increase your resume's likelihood of getting matched by the Applicant Tracking Systems that recruiters use to evaluate online resumes.

EXHIBIT D:

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

MORE EFFECTIVE OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

ALEX HERSCH: Highly accomplished accounting professional with more than 20 years of experience in accounting and strategic financial management. Proven track record of managing finances of $10.5 million, leading and motivating teams, and driving bottom-line performance and profit improvements. Looking for a position as a Accounting Sales Manager that serves clients in the Health and Life Sciences industry.

This is a strong objective statement because Alex lists his years of experience and focuses on his expertise by stating his specific accomplishments.

ELLEN JACOBS: Experienced marketer with seven years of experience working in sales. After raising children for the past five years, eager to apply my significant marketing skill and organizational project management learned from my recent PTA leadership as a manager in a marketing company.

This is a strong objective statement because it explains Ellen's employment gap by showing that she has been raising a family, and she explains what skills she brings to the position.

LESS EFFECTIVE OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

ALEX HERSCH: Experienced professional seeking a position with potential quick advancement in the accounting industry.

This objective statement is less effective because Alex only seems interested in a position where he can achieve a series of promotions.

ELLEN JACOBS: Want a position with standard hours that incorporates a team-oriented environment and fosters my professional development

This objective is too vague and does not clearly state the desired professional opportunity. It also emphasizes personal interest as opposed to how she can benefit a company.

EXHIBIT E:
SAMPLE RESUME 1

Monique Robinson

243 Building Lane | 214-555-5555 | morobinson@ymail.com

Objective

Strong project manager who excels at problem solving, planning and organizing events, and developing meaningful personal and professional relationships. Recent college graduate in residential architecture pursuing an entry-level residential real estate agent position. Looking to leverage analytical and communication skills as well as motivation and passion.

Education

BACHELOR'S DEGREE | GRADUATED: SPRING 2012 | UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

- Major: Architecture
- Minor: French
- Relevant coursework: Real Estate and Property Management
- GPA: 3.1

If you are a recent college graduate or your education is not directly linked to the job you're applying for, consider including relevant coursework to show employers how you are qualified

Experience

VOLUNTEER AT LOCAL HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OFFICE | 2009-PRESENT

- Supported Director with management of fundraising initiatives, including the proposal, development and execution of 10 events
- Spearheaded volunteer efforts that included driving recruitment, organizing, and executing 6 service events for approximately 70 students to travel to local communities and building 5 houses for residents in need
- Communicated the organization's mission by presenting at 8 information sessions on college campuses to over 200 students
- Served as representative and liaison by answering phone calls and customer questions from local community members and businesses
- Provided administrative support to Habitat for Humanity office, such as filing, service requests and project reports

If you do not have extensive work experience, include volunteer positions and explain your responsibilities and impact using business language to demonstrate how your skills can be utilized in the workplace

OFFICE ASSISTANT AT UK STUDENT CENTER | UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS | 2009-2010

- Served as a representative of the University's Student Center and acted as a point of contact and source of information for current and prospective students
- Planned and executed over 4 Student Center game nights, attended by 150 people-- Increased ticket sales by 10% by promoting the event online
- Created new system to track ticket sales for Student Center events, resulting in increased efficiency and accuracy
- Managed an activity budget of more than $2000

Demonstrate your leadership skills by describing how you added value to the positions you held and what accomplishments you experienced

Awards

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OFFICE | MARCH 2013

DEANS LIST AT UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS | MAY 2011

Skills

SOFTWARE
Knowledgeable in Commercial Complete
Advanced with Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word

LANGUAGES
Proficient in French

Activities

UNIVERISTY OF KANSAS'S FRENCH CLUB | SECRETARY| 2011-2012

RELAY FOR LIFE | 2009-2012

Noting your involvement with extracurricular activities or hobbies and stating the leadership positions you held is a good way to show employers that you are a well-rounded job candidate who has leadership experience

EXHIBIT F:

SAMPLE RESUME 2

ALEX HERSCH

555 Second Ave Chicago, IL 60661
alex.hersch@email.com 555.555.5555

Objective statement

Highly accomplished accounting professional with more than 20 years of experience in accounting and strategic financial management. Proven track record of managing finances of $10.5 million, leading and motivating teams, and driving bottom-line performance and profit improvements. Looking for a position as an Accounting Sales Manager that serves clients in the Health and Life Sciences industry.

Experience

Fairview Cares – Finance Manager 2011- Present

- Provides pro bono service to manage finances for Fairview Cares
- Reviews and prepares monthly financial reports, budget and quarterly rolling forecasts and complete the reporting requirements
- Trains Fairview Cares accountants on Microsoft Office and Acumatica
- Successfully developed MIS reports on cost consumption and provided recommendations to take corrective actions
- Generated 26% savings by conducting preferred vendor analysis and managing finances of the new contract

Smith Industries—Senior Accountant 2000-2011

- Managed daily financial transactions of up to $10.5 million including reconciliation, expense reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable and vendor relations
- Maintained the relationship with internal and external stakeholders to manage finances for 9 internal functions
- Oversaw a team of 20 employees for Smith Industries' accounting and financial reporting functions
- Led the initiative to secure financing through bank loans to fund the renovation and equipment for a capital project at an all-time low interest rate
- Led the automation of all reporting systems through Hyperion, reducing FTE costs and improving accuracy of reporting by 50%
- Reduced overhead costs by $50,000 yearly by consolidating operations, computerizing processes across functions
- Recipient of the Smith Industries Leadership award—given to ten individuals annually who demonstrate strong management skills

Smith Industries —Accountant 1994-2000

- Helped generate $40,000 in interest earnings in 6 years by working with leading investment bankers to maximize company's investment portfolio
- Partook in development of a new analysis tool that was used company-wide to measure financial performance at each location
- Participated in offering training to more than 50 employees on Tally, Oracle Business Suite and Hyperion Financial Management
- Assisted management with firm's budget and forecasting processes

Keller Pharmaceuticals—Accountant 1990-1994

- Provided day-to-day support to Senior Accountants in preparation of financial reports, cost analysis and other finance transactions
- Prepared more than 20 monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports on accounts payable and accounts receivable
- Managed invoice generation and collection for more than 15 clients simultaneously
- Filed corporate, tax returns, business license renewals for all 5 functions across the organization

Education

Southern New Hampshire University—Masters in Managerial Accounting, 1990
University of Vermont—Bachelor's degree, Accounting and Economics, 1983

Certifications

- Certified Management Accountant
- Certified Public Accountant

Technical Skills

- Advanced knowledge in Acumatica, Oracle Business Suite, Hyperion Financial Management, Smart View, Quickbooks and Microsoft Office
- Proficient in SAP and MYOB

If you are currently volunteering your time and skills, describe your volunteer work the same way you would describe work experience. Be sure to emphasize the impact you made on the organization

If you are applying for a management position, demonstrate experience in leading or mentoring colleagues in an official or unofficial capacity

Wherever possible, quantify the impacts you have made in past jobs. Use real data to support your capabilities, be prepared to explain and validate the numbers

If you have spent an extended amount of time at one company, consider emphasizing the promotions and different roles you have filled to show career growth

If you have significant work experience, consider listing your experience before your education

And remember: *speak to your audience.* Have multiple versions of your resume and take advantage of the opportunity to write a cover letter (if asked) – each tailored to whoever is going to read it and designed for the specific job and/or industry you're pursuing. Carefully read the job description and look for key words that you can incorporate into your resume. In order to avoid being overlooked due to your age, consider listing the amount of time you held a position as opposed to the specific start and end dates. Recognize that a cover letter gives you the opportunity to tell your story in a more story-like format – talk about how your skills and experiences make you a fit for the role and briefly explain your employment gap so that they can understand and overlook it.

CROSS REFERENCE
For information on networking, check out the Making Connections section

USE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Chances are a recruiter will immediately search for you online if he or she is considering you for a job. What pops up – or what doesn't pop up – during that search could help or hurt you. Investigate your online presence and search your name to get started. Your LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter profiles are all important places where you can tell your story. Take them seriously and use them strategically.

Use these websites and social media outlets as a way to market yourself to potential employers. Below is some basic information about how you should use them to tell your story:

LINKEDIN:

Create a well-rounded profile, listing details about your previous employers, job titles, responsibilities, skills, and accomplishments. Ensure your profile picture is professional. Seek out endorsements of your skills from past colleagues.

FACEBOOK:

Create a professional profile, or scrub your current profile of anything inappropriate. Ask yourself, "Would I want my future boss or co-workers to see this?" Check your privacy settings to see who is and isn't able to view your profile page and update accordingly.

TWITTER:

Create a "handle" (Twitter-speak for a username) and profile, and follow companies and industry-related handles. This will demonstrate to potential employers your interest and that you are staying up-to-date on the latest news and trends in your field.

EXHIBIT G:

SAMPLE TWEETS

MORE EFFECTIVE TWEETS

MONIQUE ROBINSON @moniquerobinson
@BrooksideRealEstate, Extensive knowledge in #residentialconstruction— Seeking #entrylevel position to further skills in #realestate. See [Insert Linkedin profile]

This tweet provides compelling information about the candidate's background and interests. It includes a link to a Linkedin profile, making it easy for employers to learn more about Monique.

ALEX HERSCH @alexhersch
@Aronson, Over 20 yrs in #Accounting, Contributes management skills and knowledge of #Acumatica to local nonprofit. I can do the same for you! [Insert Linkedin profile]

This tweet is effective because it highlights Alex's years of experience and demonstrates how his skills are benefitting others outside the workplace.

LESS EFFECTIVE TWEETS

MONIQUE ROBINSON @moniquerobinson
@BrooksideRealEstate, Do you have any positions available for an internship? While I might not have a lot of experience in that field, I'm eager to learn!

This tweet isn't as effective as it asks for hiring information that could be looked up and highlights the lack of experience.

ALEX HERSCH @alexhersch
@Aronson, my 23 years of experience in a high paying job has given me the skills to be successful with your company. Let me know if you have any job openings!

This is a less effective tweet because it asks for a high paying position which could turn off a potential employer. It also focuses on personal success as opposed to what one can offer a company.

PRO TIP: The use of hashtags and retweets will help recruiters or employers find these tweets when they search for potential new hires

EXHIBIT H:

SAMPLE LINKEDIN PROFILE

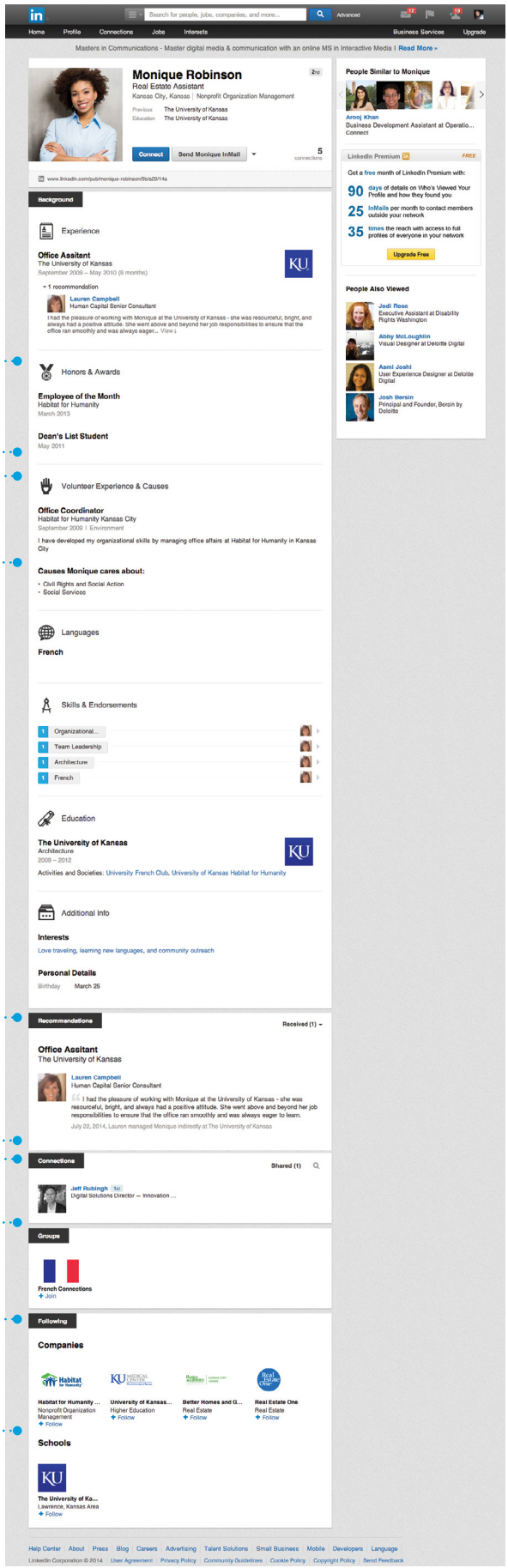
Listing awards received in school or in work is a good way to show employers your accomplishments within your work experience

If you have less work experience, describing your volunteer positions as you would work history lets employers see how you have been spending your time and what skills you have to offer

Ask past colleagues or managers for recommendations. These will help to show potential future employers and recruiters what you have excelled at and that you maintained strong relationships with those in your network

Connect with your peers—see if they are connected with companies that you are interested in and get their help to make new connections

Following companies that you are interested in is a good way to get in contact with potential recruiters and stay up to date on news that the company shares publicly



NAIL THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations, you got an interview! Make sure you nail it by preparing and being able to clearly and quickly explain your unemployment and what you've learned through that experience – all while remaining positive and optimistic.

First, make sure that you are prepared to talk about position at hand. Do your homework and research the employer, job, and industry you are interviewing with. Some tips:

- Read the job description posting carefully and take note of key terms and phrases
- Review your network and see if you know anyone who works at the company – ask them for anecdotal feedback about the culture, interview style, and company values
- Check out company websites for latest news and developments, history, programs, and leadership
- Pay attention to the company's mission statements and vision and learn their culture
- Do the same for the company's competitors
- Search to find out if the company has been in the news in the past few months and familiarize yourself with these stories so you are informed
- Prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer throughout or at the end of the interview
- Visit industry message boards, blogs, and websites to get up to speed on the latest trends

EXHIBIT I:
ADDRESSING THE GAP IN YOUR WORK HISTORY

HOW TO ADDRESS THE GAP IN AN INTERVIEW

SCENARIO 1: JOE

INTERVIEWER: Can you explain to me why you left your last job and how you've been using your time during the past year and a half?

JOE HERNANDEZ: After the housing crisis in hit in 2009, my company had to significantly downsize their operations and I was let go. Since then I have been working on short term projects, but have really been focusing on enhancing my construction skills by going back to school to learn plumbing skills and how to conduct home inspections. Having done that, I am excited to get back to work, and I think that I could contribute to your company with my newly acquired skills as well as the 16 years of experience I have working on circuits, wiring, and installation in the construction industry.

SCENARIO 2: ELLEN

INTERVIEWER: Ellen, I notice on your resume that you have been out of work for a few years. How have you been spending your time and what are you looking to get out of your job as you reenter the workforce?

ELLEN JACOBS: Yes, I left my job in sales and marketing after the birth of my son. Now that he's in school, I am very excited to further my professional career in marketing and contribute to a growing firm. I'm looking for a career where I can grow and apply the management skills I've learned over the past five years at home in a professional setting.

Then, make sure you come to the interview ready to tell your story well. Some interview tips:

- **ADDRESS THE EXISTENCE OF YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT GAP AS *PART* OF YOUR STORY – NOT YOUR WHOLE STORY.** You should not spend more than a few minutes of precious interview time on your unemployment; instead, turn the conversation to the skills and experience that make you the best candidate for the job. Explain the gap and what you've learned, and then move on to more relevant topics like your skills and experiences to demonstrate your fit for the job
- **DRESS THE PART – MAKE SURE YOU SHOW UP TO YOUR INTERVIEW IN THE APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**. Your appearance is the first impression you give to your interviewer—you can show them that you are composed and up to date, even before you introduce yourself, by how you dress
- **EXPLAIN YOUR EMPLOYMENT GAP *FACTUALLY* AND *BRIEFLY.*** Talk about what you have been doing during your time out of work and how you've utilized this time to your advantage
- **REMAIN PROFESSIONAL AND FOCUSED ON YOUR NEXT JOB – NOT YOUR LAST ONE.** Do not discuss your personal feelings about the fairness of your unemployment situation
- **SHOW ENTHUSIASM.** Even if it's not your dream job, you should only be at the interview if you truly want the job. Make sure your employer knows it
- **DON'T ACT DESPERATE FOR THE JOB.** Instead, be enthusiastic and communicate how much you would enjoy the job

WHAT TO SAY AND WHAT NOT TO STAY IN AN INTERVIEW

✓ "I'm really excited for the opportunity to work with such talented people and contribute to the company's growth."

✕ "I'll take any job, I just want to work."

Many employers today use "behavioral-based interviewing," which allows them to learn about your experiences and skills to assess if you would be a good fit in their company. When answering behavioral interview questions, it is important to give a specific example of a problem you faced, business related or otherwise, and how you overcame it. Try using the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) method when answering an employer's question:

S **SITUATION:** Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

T **TASK:** What goal were you working toward?

A **ACTION:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on you. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution?

R **RESULT:** Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event/project/situation end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer includes outcomes and positive results.

Be confident and remember your worth – you have a lot to offer any potential employer.

EXERCISE

TELLING MY MOST EFFECTIVE STORY

Complete the following statements, keeping in mind that your explanation of employment gap, elevator speech, and objective statement are interrelated. Your elevator speech should include a much shorter version of your employment gap explanation, and your resume objective statement should just be a shorter version of your elevator speech.

WRITE YOUR EXPLANATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT GAP:

WRITE YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH:

WRITE YOUR RESUME OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- [ ]
- [ ]

NOTES

“My unemployment experience was **PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY STRESSFUL.** Though I sought employment vigorously, I was not initially successful and it **BECAME VERY FRUSTRATING.** My resume was always with me. I gave it to my family, friends, church family, and anyone I encountered - even old friends that I ran into at the grocery store. After still being unemployed for two years, **I FOUND MYSELF DOUBTING,** fatigued, frustrated and embarrassed, and I grew weary, **BUT I NEVER LOST HOPE.** I kept PRAYING and HOPING that this would end.

Finally, **SOMEONE CONNECTED ME** to a potential employer. After an interview, the potential employer, trusting the referral of my friend, **TOOK A CHANCE ON ME** and offered me the job. They believed in me. It’s been two and a half years now and I look forward going to work every day.

— Andrea Butler (Greenwich, CT)

SECTION 6

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Everyone has a network. Your family, friends, former colleagues, neighbors, and anyone else you meet can all form your "network." Your network will be an invaluable tool in your job search – if you engage with them effectively.

NETWORK PROACTIVELY

Networking is easier than you might think. There are various ways to connect yourself with potential job opportunities, and some of them are available in your own community. Not all networking needs to be done in person; you can establish effective relationships with employers and recruiters online. The key to networking is being proactive.

DID YOU KNOW?
70% of jobs are obtained through networking[17]

CONNECT PROFESSIONALLY

Your professional network consists of work colleagues, friends in similar industries, former clients, or former employers. They are all resources you already have, so it is important to stay connected with them. Don't be afraid to reach out and inform them about your unemployment situation. They could give great insight towards finding another job opportunity or refer you to a position at their company. Using your existing professional network while making new contacts will increase your exposure to different job.

PRO TIP

A great way to make an in-person connection with small employers to whom you have submitted an application is "cold calling" or calling their office directly to inquire about the job. Small employers are far more likely to be able to put you in contact with the hiring manager, which may allow you to tell your story in person.

TOP FIVE WAYS TO NETWORK PROFESSIONALLY

1. **STAY ACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**
   Don't fall out of touch with the friends you have worked with or those you developed a professional relationship with. These are the people who are already familiar with your skill set and work ethic—they could give you a good referral. Reach out to your local Job Club to meet people in your community who can connect you to available resources and help you expand your network.

2. **USE LINKEDIN TO THE FULLEST**
   Adding yourself to different groups on LinkedIn based on your skill set or interest can help you connect with people who are already employed in that field. Also, take it one step further: Engage with online talent communities on LinkedIn to get connected with recruiters – these are virtual communities where you as a job seeker can build relationships with a single employer's recruiters and learn about the company. If you're interested in a job, send them a message stating what you're looking for and what you offer.

3. **ATTEND JOB FAIRS**
   Contact your local community college or American Job Center to gain more information about job fairs in your area. This is a great chance to make a lasting impression on a recruiter in a face-to-face environment, and help you get a feel for the different job options available to you.

4. **BE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA**
   Facebook and Twitter are also good ways to expand your professional network. Connect yourself to Facebook talent communities and get to know recruiters. Familiarize yourself with a particular company while interacting with recruiters and potential employers within these communities. Keep an eye out for recruiting or talent Twitter profiles within the company you want to learn more about. Sometimes they post job offerings on Twitter. See below for more social media tips.

5. **ATTEND PUBLIC CONFERENCES OR WORKSHOPS TO KEEP UP YOUR SKILLS AND MEET NEW PEOPLE**
   Connect yourself to those in your desired profession by attending conferences that are about those specific industry issues. Participation fees may be a point of consideration—make sure you balance your time and resources in the way that best suits your goals.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHT: SOCIAL MEDIA WEEK

This event collaborates with leading companies to provide an opportunity to connect with global organizations that are innovating in the social space, building solutions in social media.

CONNECT YOURSELF TO RECRUITERS AND EMPLOYERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

LINKEDIN:

LinkedIn is a popular "professional networking" website. You can create a profile that lists your experience and skills, connect with colleagues and potential employers, learn more about specific industries and topics, and get recommendations. LinkedIn is a good resource for every type of job seeker – recruiters use Linkedin to fill all types of jobs from entry level to executives – so don't underestimate its power for your search.

HOW TO USE IT:

- Create a profile and post your resume. Note that while many features of LinkedIn are free, some are only available by obtaining a paid account, which starts at $24.95 per month. Evaluate the different features to determine which account is best for you
- Seek out recommendations and endorsements from former colleagues and professional friends
- Actively connect with past colleagues and friends and look through their connections for people to whom you would like to be connected (such as people who work at companies that you are interested in pursuing)
- Join industry/sector groups where you have relevant experience
- Visit company profile pages to view and apply to available job listings
- Once you apply, send introductory messages to relevant hiring managers or recruiters to express interest and enthusiasm for the position
- Post and comment on articles that are related to your job search or industry – this shows that you are active and adding content and perspective for your network as well
- If you enjoy writing, consider blogging about a professional topic and posting your blog on LinkedIn to socialize it with your network and potential employers and recruiters
- Check out similar websites like Monster and Apploi

LEARN HOW
New to social media? Take an online course or two to familiarize yourself before creating your own profile

CROSS REFERENCE
Check out the Telling Your Most Effective Story section for more details about what to include on social media.

FACEBOOK:

While Facebook is usually more personal than professional, it is still an important source of information for any potential employer. On the flip side, you can connect to employers that have fan pages and recruiting pages.

HOW TO USE IT:

- Create a profile that contains work-appropriate personal information about yourself—make sure you keep an eye on your privacy settings
- If you already have a profile, carefully review it and remove "unprofessional" content or ensure that your privacy settings allow only professional content to be available to the public. Ask yourself, "Would I want my future boss and coworkers to see this?"
- Search for the profile pages of companies you are interested in and subscribe to them by "liking" or "following" them
- Visit company pages to find available job postings
- Find and interact on talent community pages (specific recruiting pages for a particular company)

GET MORE INFO

Facebook and Twitter are the main channels that recruiters use to showcase employer brand – 65% of recruiters surveyed use Facebook and 47% of recruiters use Twitter to post about company culture.[18]

TWITTER:

Twitter is a popular social networking and micro-blogging website that allows users to send and read 140-character text messages, called "tweets." Users can read other users' tweets by "following" (i.e., subscribing to) them.

HOW TO USE IT:

- Create a "handle" (i.e., user name) and profile
- Follow employers you are interested in
- Follow industry-related handles to stay fresh on news
- Tweet about topics that show your interest and skills such as #impactinvesting or #digitaldesign
- Retweet (i.e., tweet other user's) posts about your industry/favorite companies
- Know what's going on in your field or geographic area with similar skill sets to yourself by using hashtags to search
- Find employer or listings by searching for hashtags such as #hiring or #jobpostings

TAP INTO YOUR PERSONAL NETWORK

Your strongest connections will be the ones you already have. Contact your personal network, including friends and family, and ask that they refer you to potential employers they may be aware of. Referrals are powerful in the eyes of a recruiter – they help show that you are qualified for the position because recruiters trust whoever referred you. Referrals are valuable throughout the job search, especially for someone with an employment gap.

BE VOCAL

Keep your community informed of your employment status and interests. Anybody you interact with on a regular basis could be a good resource for you. In order for your personal network to help point you in the right direction of a job, they will need to know if you're still job searching.

KEEP UP WITH THOSE IN YOUR PERSONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Staying active in organizations can be a good way to network with your personal contacts. Many community organizations—such as churches and libraries—provide resources for job seekers, such as free resume reviews or community groups for those conducting a job search.

TIPS FOR NETWORKING

Knowing how to talk to your friends or family about your job search is important. Follow these tips:

- Start by asking them about their business
- Show your value - talk about what you want to get involved in, what skills you have, and show that you can be of value to them. Be positive and specific
- Ask their advice on your next steps:
  "Do you know of any job openings that would be a good fit for me? Do you have advice for contacts I should reach out to or employers I should research?" [19,20]

EXERCISE

MAKING CONNECTIONS

I HAVE ACCOUNTS ON THE FOLLOWING SITES:

I NEED TO CREATE ACCOUNTS ON THE FOLLOWING SITES:

COMPANIES I'D LIKE TO CONNECT WITH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:

PEOPLE IN MY NETWORK ARE:

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- [ ]
- [ ]

NOTES

"Hope is the faith that enabled me to **ENDURE AND EVENTUALLY OVERCOME** the challenges of long-term unemployment. Although my previous employment record was positive and I had a great education, within weeks of my unemployment **I BECAME COMPLACENT** and frankly scared. It became increasingly **MORE DIFFICULT TO FOCUS ON MY NEXT CAREER** and what needed to be done to regain employment. But all throughout, I had hope that at some point the right thing would happen to lead me to the job of my dreams. **HOPE PROVIDED ME WITH THE THE COURAGE, CONFIDENCE AND CONVICTION** I needed to persevere through my job search."

— Joe Carbone, President and Chief Executive of The WorkPlace

SECTION 7

DON'T LOSE HOPE

Stay positive. It can be discouraging when you're out of work and you can't seem to get hired. Consider the specific tools and steps below to visualize your unemployment as something in the past – and focus on the present and moving *forward.*

KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE

You already know this – a long job search can wear on your attitude and outlook. It can be frustrating and challenging, which can make it difficult to remain upbeat and energetic. Grief is a natural response to loss, and that includes the loss of a job. Just remember that you are not in this alone.

NOT CONVINCED? CONSIDER THIS:

- Currently there are 3.0 million long-term unemployed Americans, those without jobs for 27 or more weeks[22]
- More importantly, job seekers are finding work every day all across the country. Approximately 800,000 long-term job seekers have found employment in the past six months[26]

KEEP HOPE ALIVE

Staying resilient in the face of rejection can be a challenge in itself. Even so, employers consistently say that a positive attitude is a differentiator in interviews. The good news is that despite the stress of long-term unemployment, there are many things you can do to take control of the situation and maintain your spirit. Consider these ways to help renew your strength and stay the course to finding work.

USE YOUR ASSETS
In a Census Bureau Survey of Employers, it was found that employers rate attitude and communication skills as more important than previous work experience for non-supervisory jobs[23]

ACTIVELY MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

You are unique and have skills that will be valuable to an organization. It's easy to start criticizing or blaming yourself when you are out of work and struggling with the job search process. Avoid putting yourself down. Challenge negative thoughts that go through your head and write down evidence to the contrary. Research shows that staying positive on your job hunt leads to higher chances of getting a job.[24]

Focus on small wins. Congratulate yourself on what you have done to date. You are unique and have qualities that can make you stand out in the crowd of job seekers.

KEEP ACTIVE

Searching for a job has proven to increase physical and mental stress in job seekers.[25] Not only does this stress hinder your job search, but it can also strain your personal relationships. Staying active can help you stay positive. Physical activity can be a great outlet to recharge, de-stress, and help you establish an active lifestyle. Maintaining a routine of keeping an active schedule during your job search can help you stay positive by setting your alarm, spending some time outside the house, and maintaining the lifestyle habits you did when you were working. Including physical activity in your schedule is important. Research shows that exercise gives you more energy and confidence, which can be helpful during a long day of job hunting.[26]

While you likely spend the majority of your day job searching, take quick breaks to get energized through physical activity. If paying for a formal exercise program or membership isn't an option, there are many free options in all communities to stay active:

- Keep active in and around your home by cleaning the house, washing the car, or tending to the yard and garden
- Borrow workout videos from friends, family, or the library
- If you have access to nature trails, go for a hike or walk in your local area
- Check your local community centers, like the YMCA, for low cost activities
- Join free sports teams or leagues

MAINTAIN YOUR INTERESTS, HOBBIES, AND ROUTINE

Just like it is helpful to keep your body active, it is important to keep your mind active by pursuing your hobbies and interests. Giving yourself this chance to learn new things will keep your mind stimulated and allow you to remain focused on the job hunt.

Staying organized and managing your job search is important to helping you achieve a balanced life while you are looking for your next employment opportunity. Create a workspace where you can be productive in your job search, and keep it organized with the research you have done on prospective companies, tasks you need to complete, your target schedule for the day, people you wish to network with, and contact information of employers and recruiters. Compartmentalizing your job search will help you be more productive, and also help you plan to spend your time being active while you're not applying for jobs.

GETTING SUPPORT

You can find support online as well as in person if your local community using these resources:

» Networking and job search support groups by state

» Neighbors Helping Neighbors

» Unemployment Support Group

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

"I attribute my success in finding a job to keeping my faith and staying positive. I stayed humble and grounded, reminding myself that I had been truly blessed and would continue to be. During the months that I spent unemployed I was truly tested - being told multiple times 'Thank you but no thank you' was difficult to hear. I cried and I laughed but decided each time that I heard 'no' that defeat was not an option. I combated those remarks by surrounding myself with positive people. I worked really hard to stay focused and was determined to find a way to employment even if it took my last dime to get the next interview. I did what I do best – gave it my all with the attitude of nothing to lose but everything to gain."

— Connie Ly-Barksdale (Chicago, IL)

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Maintaining a social life is important to help keep a positive attitude during a longer than ideal job search. Staying in touch with family and friends, and seeking out peers who are going through the same thing are crucial to staying in the right frame of mind to find work. Don't retreat from your family and friends or feel like your unemployment means you shouldn't spend time with them – research shows just the opposite. A support system is most important during these times.[27]

Remember that there are other people who are looking for work just like you. Other job seekers can be sources of encouragement, support, and job leads. Try consulting an online job seekers' forum for a dose of anonymous support, or perhaps join a group in your city targeted at fellow unemployed job seekers. Being around other job seekers can be energizing and motivating, and help keep you on track during your job search.

TO FIND A JOB CLUB IN YOUR AREA, CHECK OUT:

- Your local public library
- Professional networking sites
- Your religious organization
- The classifieds or career section of the newspaper

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

"Life when I was unemployed for over 27 months was extremely difficult and really beyond my comprehension. My self-esteem and motivation - along with 28 years of tremendous career growth and accomplishments - seemed to erode overnight. Each morning, I wanted to pull the covers over my head and not face the reality of my situation. My friends and family weren't used to seeing me in this depressed state because their image of me was one associated with success, motivation, and a can-do attitude. During my job search, one interviewer was honest enough to tell me how visible my depression was in my voice and body language and that was not helping me to find employment.

It was at that point that I finally looked for professional support. I found a program that coached long-term job seekers like myself. My new attitude must have been reflected in my job search, because it wasn't long after my new appreciated outlook on life that I finally nailed an interview and landed a job. I'm so grateful for the change to reclaim my life, stability, and happiness every day and I try to pay that forward by helping others in the same situation."

— Mark Charpentier (Naugatuck, CT)

SEEK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Your mental health plays an important role in your overall well-being, and it is an important thing for you to pay attention to and take care of as it can negatively affect your loved ones as well. If you are experiencing one or more of the following characteristics, you may be suffering from depression:

- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness,[28] and/or helplessness
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Irritability, restlessness
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Depression is a very real illness that can be treated if you seek professional support. As a result of the Affordable Care Act,[29] mental health treatment is a required covered treatment, so seeking professional help may be more affordable than you may think. Getting healthy is a crucial step to being ready to conduct the best job search, and mental health is a very real part of that.

ADVICE FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

If you are unsure where to go for help, talk to someone you trust who has experience in mental health—for example, a doctor, nurse, social worker, or religious counselor. Ask their advice on where to seek treatment. If there is a university nearby, its departments of psychiatry or psychology may offer private and/or sliding-scale fee clinic treatment options. Otherwise, check the Yellow Pages under mental health, health, social services, crisis intervention services, hotlines, hospitals, or physicians for phone numbers and addresses. In times of crisis, the emergency room doctor at a hospital may be able to provide temporary help for a mental health problem and will be able to tell you where and how to get further help.[30]

EXERCISE

"LIST YOUR POSITIVES" EXERCISE

Complete the worksheet and based on your answers, write your top three successes in the "What I have to offer" box on the right. Cut out the box and carry it with you to remind yourself of your strengths.

THREE ADJECTIVES USED MOST OFTEN TO DESCRIBE ME:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MY THREE BIGGEST LIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS TELL ME THAT I AM REALLY GREAT AT:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

THREE THINGS THAT I KNOW I'M GOOD AT:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

AT MY LAST JOB, I WAS GREAT AT WHAT I DID BECAUSE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

THREE STRENGTHS OF MY WORKING STYLE ARE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

THREE THINGS THAT MAKE ME UNIQUE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER:

1.

2.

3.

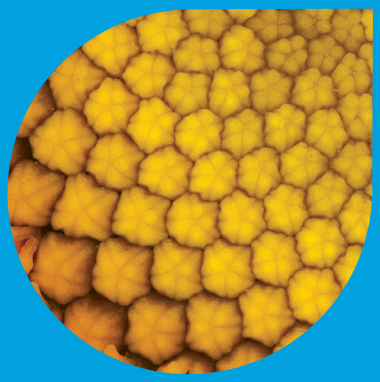
EXERCISE

MAKE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

At the end of the handbook, you will have the opportunity to put together your own checklist. Think about what action items you will personally do as you finish each section.

- [ ]
- [ ]

NOTES



“Looking for work can be a long and **FRUSTRATING PROCESS** - even more so when you’re unemployed. You don’t have the luxury of hiding in the work of a current job when things get frustrating or the support of a set of coworkers that may be in a similar position. There is also the **STIGMA OF BEING OUT OF WORK** and what your family and friends think. What I tried to remember was that **YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE AN OPPORTUNITY WILL COME FROM** (a person, organization, meeting or event) but you need to be ready. What is it that you have to offer that can make a difference? In the end it can be hard work, but you have to **TAKE THE FIRST STEP** and then stick with it. Just wishing for it and hoping it will happen is not the strategy you want to use - those that are **PREPARED WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY COMES** are those that succeed. You have to get out there and make it happen.”

— George Vukotich (Chicago, IL)

SECTION 8

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Finding work takes work. This handbook is about action – it is about working smarter to find the next job. It's time to take it to the next level and make a plan to navigate out of long-term unemployment – and then to make your plan a reality.

CREATE YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

This handbook has presented a lot of ideas, recommendations, resources, and tips to help you raise the bar on your job search. Some of these may be more applicable to you than others – that's fine. Your job search and situation is just as unique as you are. Use the worksheet below to create an action plan, and then start checking the boxes.

EXERCISE

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Underneath each checklist item from this handbook, list the actions you are going to do and set personal deadlines for each task.

UNDERSTAND THE JOB SEARCH:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

FIND THE RIGHT JOB IN THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

SET YOUR DIRECTION:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

TELL YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE STORY:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

MAKE CONNECTIONS:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

DON'T LOSE HOPE:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

ADDITIONAL:

- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____
- ☐ _____ DUE DATE _____

APPENDIX A:

GETTING LOCAL IN CHICAGO AND MINNEAPOLIS

To make this handbook, we dug deep at the local level – because that is where the action happens. Focusing on the cities of Minneapolis and Chicago (which represent very different economies and have great local resources), we spoke with intermediaries, employers, and job seekers to get a full picture of the complex situation on the ground including the challenges and the many sources of support that are available.

If you are a job seeker in the Chicago or Minneapolis area, these resources should be on your "Tying it All Together" worksheet, if you haven't connected with them already.

CHICAGO

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	Non-profit organization that offers free programs including resources, career counseling, occupational training, and job placement services for Cook County job seekers. Local administrator of the public workforce system, which includes a network of 49 agencies	http://www.workforceboard.org/
Chicago Workforce Centers	Each workforce center in Chicago provides free resources to the public to assist with the job search. Programs include career counseling, workshops, career research, resume and interview coaching, skills assessments, and job skill trainings	http://www.workforceboard.org/career-resources/workforce-centers/
City Colleges of Chicago	The largest community college system in Illinois, offering programs including two-year associate degrees, occupational certificates, and free GED/ESL courses. They work with corporate partners to ensure that programs train students for success and then assist students with securing employment post-graduation	http://www.ccc.edu
Illinois Job Link	A free online job board for the State of Illinois, run through the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). This website allows the creation of multiple resumes, advanced job searches, and access to services though IDES	https://illinoisjoblink.illinois.gov/ada/default.cfm
Skills for Chicagoland's Future	A public-private collaboration that matches businesses with unmet hiring needs to qualified job seekers. More than 900 unemployed job seekers have been hired through collaborations since 2012	http://www.skillsforchicagolandsfuture.com/

MINNEAPOLIS

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
City of Minneapolis Employment and Training	Minneapolis Employment and Training administers a variety of employment and training programs that include services for low-income Adult, Dislocated Workers, MFIP recipients, and Youth. In Minneapolis, these services are delivered to job seekers by community-based organizations which have been competitively evaluated and selected based on their ability to effectively serve target groups and achieve employment-related outcomes, including both placement and support for retention in employment	Home page: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/metp/index.htm Directory of employment service providers: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-129777.pdf
Local Networking Events and Job Clubs	A consolidated list of networking events and local job clubs in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area	http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers/networking/
Minneapolis Workforce Centers	These American Job Centers offer a wide array of no-cost, workshops on topics such as career exploration, resumes/cover letter writing, creative job search, and interview coaching. They also offer programs that provide individual services such as case management, assessment, and access to training to update or learn new skills	http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers/
Minnesota Office of Higher Education	The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a state agency that provides students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. Their website offers a searchable list of postsecondary institutions that can be referenced for skill building and continuing education opportunities	http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/instSearch.cfm?pageID=909
Minnesota Unemployed	A website that pools all of the online resources available to serve the needs of Minnesota's unemployed	http://minnesotaunemployed.com/
University of Minnesota "Experiencing Tough Times Now"	Provided by the University of Minnesota, this includes a series of fact sheets designed to help job seekers adapt to common aspects of unemployment, including financial issues and support services	http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/tough-times/experiencing-tough-times-now/

APPENDIX B:

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[12] http://www.secondchanceprogram.org/job-readiness-training/

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[23] "Increase your success with the Long-term Unemployed", a presentation by Melanie Arthur Consulting, 2014

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[29] http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/community-conversation/information_brief_english_07-22-13.pdf

[30] http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml

APPENDIX C:

HYPERLINKS

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Veterans resources:
http://theveteranssupport.org/

Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed Works:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/best_practices_recruiting_longterm_unemployed.pdf

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LinkedIn Job Seeker Blog:
http://blog.linkedin.com/topic/jobseeker/

Undercover Recruiter:
http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/

Page 10

Professional associations:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Professional_associations_based_in_the_United_States

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Staffing agency database:
https://www.americanstaffing.net/jobseekers/find_company.cfm

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Volunteer Match:
http://www.volunteermatch.org/

Volunteers of America:
http://www.voa.org/Landing.aspx

United We Serve:
http://www.serve.gov/

All for Good:
http://www.allforgood.org/

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My Skills My Future:
http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/

Self-employment report from Bureau of Labor Statistics:
http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/

Self-employment questions to consider:
http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-1310-Career-Growth-Change-Should-You-Try-Self-employment-12-Things-to-Consider/

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My Skills My Future assessment:
http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/skillstransferability/CareerMatchesPageHelp.aspx

Personal strength finder:
https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/?gclid=CKfQsouslb8CFQwGaQode2gAUA

Job readiness assessment:
http://www.act.org/products/workforce-act-workkeys/

Career aptitude test:
http://www.careerinfonet.org/skills/default.aspx?nodeid=20

Page 21	**CareerOne Stop:** http://www.careeronestop.org/
Page 23	**American Job Center's Certification Finder:** http://www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/Find/Certification.aspx
Page 27	**Tax Benefits:** http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p529.pdf
Page 28	**American Job Centers:** http://www.careeronestop.org/disasterrecoveryservices/findos/
Page 30	**2-1-1:** http://211us.org/index.htm **Financial Assistance:** http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Benefits.shtml **Goodwill:** http://www.goodwill.org/find-jobs-and-services/ **Jewish Vocational Services:** http://www.iajvs.org/iajvs_network_services.htm **Platform to Employment:** http://www.platformtoemployment.com/
Page 48	**Job Clubs:** https://partnerships.workforce3one.org/page/job_clubs **Social Media Week:** http://socialmediaweek.org/ **Social media courses:** http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-social-media or http://mashable.com/2012/06/12/social-media-beginners-guide/
Page 55	**Library:** http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/librarysearch/ **Nature trails:** http://www.nwf.org/naturefind.aspx **YMCA:** http://www.ymca.net/find-your-y/ **Sports teams or leagues:** http://sportsvite.com/
Page 56	**Networking and job search support groups by state:** http://www.job-hunt.org/job-search-networking/job-search-networking.shtml#top **Neighbors helping neighbors:** http://www.neighbors-helping-neighbors.com/ **Unemployment Support Group:** http://www.dailystrength.org/c/Unemployment/support-group

APPENDIX D:

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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For more than 100 years, The Rockefeller Foundation's mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Today, The Rockefeller Foundation pursues this mission through dual goals: advancing inclusive economies that expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, and building resilience by helping people, communities and institutions prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. Together with partners and grantees, The Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot – or will not. Today, the livelihoods of entire groups of people are threatened by demographic shifts and economic stresses worldwide, and the United States in particular is facing challenges from significant unemployment and underemployment. The Rockefeller Foundation is working to address the root causes of emerging challenges such as chronic unemployment, and promotes new approaches to achieving economic and charitable goals to ensure that prosperity is more widely – and equitably – shared.

Deloitte and The Rockefeller Foundation, in support of the National Economic Council (part of White House Office), seek to expand the opportunities for the long-term unemployed. Through this unique collaboration, Deloitte and The Rockefeller Foundation seek to build a stronger country by creating tools for employers and long-term unemployed job seekers to help move the needle on Americans returning to the workforce.

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