

Job Search

Description

In the job search process, employment counsellors are guides rather than experts and their focus is on creating means of supporting people in their job search. These means can take many forms:

1. Job Finding Clubs are support groups of peers who share serious barriers to employment. They involve group work, pairing off with partners to practice skills, and one-to-one time with the club facilitator. Skills in how to handle an interview, resume writing, networking, and telephoning may be addressed through a Job Finding Club.
2. Systematic training sessions can be designed and held to develop the same sorts of skills.
3. Resource centres can be set up with computers, photocopier, fax machine, internet access, telephones, etc., that will be used by job-hunters who do not have these resources. Beyond this equipment, a resource centre can also be a hub of training, employment counselling, job postings, etc., that further support the job seeker.
4. Job banks or boards list currently available jobs. Human Resources Development Canada has a job bank available on the internet for searching by job title or geographical area, but a local job board may be even more effective.

Again, the job search service is best established as part of a human resource system for the local community.

Benefits

Job search assistance provides valuable support for the people who face systemic barriers to employment and are the most needful of employment assistance in the community. But services tailored to others will tend make the gaps in employment shorter and the community more resilient in the face of any employment rate decline.

Major challenges

The various job search techniques do not, after all, create jobs, but often funders, job-seekers, and even agency staff themselves entertain unrealistic expectations about the kinds of jobs and the numbers of jobs that can be found.

Some practical steps

1. Build on the resources that already exist in your community. For example, the public library may have books and resources on the current local labour market situation, directories of companies, etc., that can be accessed by job seekers.
2. In training and job clubs, create an environment of involvement, where people practice answering interview questions, making cold calls, etc., and support each other with feedback and suggestions.
3. Think out your policies about personal use of equipment by clients, because it is natural that a computer or photocopier and so on, may be used for other than job search purposes.

Resource organizations & contacts

- Learning Enrichment Foundation, 116 Industry Street, Toronto, ON M6M 4L8 (Phone: 416-760-2553; fax: 416-769-9912). LEF has one of most developed job search centres, conducted within in a systematic human resource program.
- New Westminster Community Skills Centre (Vicki Austad, Manager) Telephone: 604-517-6150; email: vicki_austad@skills.bc.ca

Publications

Working Solutions: Facilitator's Manual for the Job Finding Club. Human Resources Development Canada. Provides a step-by-step guide to starting and running a Job Finding Club.