Finding a Job in a New Town

By Tracy A. Bumpus, CPRW, JCTC

Securing new employment is hard enough when you are familiar with the area and are living in that location, but finding a job in a new town that is far distant from your present location can be even tougher. The unfamiliarity of the economy, the geographical layout of the city, the job market, and the local culture can combine to make for a tremendous hurdle in job searching.

Some useful tips for making a relocation-related job search easier:

If possible, wait until you get there to get a job. I realize that is not always possible due to financial situations, but it can make a big difference on finding satisfying employment. Taking a job without knowing about the area can end up as a nightmare. You may find yourself working for less than market value, working for a less than desirable organization, or working in a location that is very inconvenient or possibly dangerous.

Subscribe to the local newspaper as far in advance as possible. You will learn about schools, crime, jobs, industry, and community direction through the local paper. Watch the classified ads—not for job openings, but rather to gauge the employment market and get an idea concerning the demand for your skills.

Contact the local Chamber of Commerce. They will send an information packet concerning the community and local businesses. You can use this information to compile a list of prospective employers.

Send a letter of introduction. Rather than sending your résumé out before you arrive in town, send a letter of introduction. A letter of introduction is a document that is similar to a cover letter only longer. It is sent without a résumé but the content contains much of the same information that your résumé contains. It will initiate contact and begin generating interest in your qualifications among employers.

Do some informational interviewing over the phone. If you feel comfortable doing so, contact employers and talk with the HR directors. Ask them for ten minutes of their time, explain that you will be moving to the area soon, and would like to know more about the company and the local industry. Do not ask for a job! Only ask for information. If they say, "We don't have any openings at the present." you say "That's okay. I'm really just looking for some information at this time."

Follow any networking connections that you have in the area. If you know someone that already lives in the area, you have a definite advantage. Talk to that person and get information concerning the community and employment. Give him/her copies of your résumé to distribute to anyone who might have need of your talents.

Work with recruiters or staffing firms in the new location. A good way to get your foot in the door is through temporary or contract work. Temporary work will also provide you with income while you are continuing to look for a job.

Finding work in a new town can be challenging, but it is possible. Be organized, stay focused, exercise diligence and you will succeed!

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