GETTING A PART-TIME JOB

*Note: This handout is geared towards looking for jobs that don’t require a degree. Other job seekers looking for professional positions and internships should refer to the Job Search Process handout, or our website (http://career.boisestate.edu).

With the changing economy, part-time jobs have become much more competitive. With fewer jobs, and more applicants, to compete for a position, you'll need to step it up and be willing to work hard!

Finding Job Openings

Most companies don’t do much advertising for student jobs, so it is important that you use all the resources you can in looking for the job you want. You'll find specific instructions for applying on pages 2 and 3.

- **Look on BroncoJobs** frequently for both on-campus and off-campus jobs. (To get to BroncoJobs, go to [http://career.boisestate.edu](http://career.boisestate.edu) and click on the BroncoJobs logo.)
- **Network!**
  - Ask your friends who have jobs if there are any openings where they work.
  - Tell everybody you know that you're looking for a job, and ask them if they know of any companies that are hiring.
- **Keep your eyes open** for help wanted signs whenever you go out.
- **Identify places you’d like to work**, plan a day to visit those places, dress professionally, stop by with resumes in hand, ask to speak to a manager, and inquire about openings.

Note: Carefully evaluate and research jobs you find online. There are scams out there, even on reputable career sites. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

On-Campus Jobs

Consider applying for jobs on-campus. There are a lot of advantages to working on-campus, such as:

- There are a **large number of jobs**, and many campus departments hire every semester.
- There are a **wide variety of positions** available, some with more responsibility and opportunities for professional development than you might find off-campus.
- The hours are usually more **flexible**, and your supervisors will be **understanding** of the fact that your education is your first priority.
- It’s **convenient** and **maximizes your time** - you're already on campus anyway! You can walk to class, then be right back at work, rather than wasting time commuting that could be spent working or studying.
- There are opportunities to get a job that could give you skills related to your future career. For example, if you're a journalism major, you might be able to get a position with the Arbiter, or if you're a kinesiology major, you might apply for a job at the Rec Center.
- You may be able to find jobs on campus that require less experience than jobs off-campus.
- There are **leadership positions** available, which can give you great skills and experience to put on your resume.
- You'll be able to connect with your campus community and get to know other people on campus.

*If you have a Work-Study award: If you completed the FAFSA, you may have been offered a work-study award. If you accepted the award, this means that you can apply for positions that are classified as work-study. The process of finding and applying for these jobs is the same as for non-work study jobs. These are regular jobs (you are NOT paid to study!), and you are paid every 2 weeks only for the hours you work.*

Student Job Fair

The Student Job Fair, hosted by the Career Center, happens the first week of the fall semester. On-campus departments, as well as off-campus employers will be at the fair recruiting for student jobs. This is an excellent resource for finding a job! To be successful at the fair, follow the guidelines on the next page, including dressing professionally and bringing copies of your resume. For more information on the fair, and for the specific date and time for the upcoming year, visit the Career Center's website at [http://career.boisestate.edu](http://career.boisestate.edu).
Applying (Competitively!) for Student Jobs

Start with a Plan
Since most part-time jobs are not really advertised, finding and applying for them is going to take more than just browsing online to see what’s available. You need to have a plan. A successful job search in this economy involves first identifying goals—companies you’d possibly be interested in working for, and establishing a contact at each of those companies to find out if there are openings and to get a referral. Yes, this will take some work, but getting a job in this economy IS work. If you’re serious about getting a job, be willing to work hard at it and commit yourself to doing whatever it takes!

Preparing your “30-Second Sell”
Your “30-second sell” is your introduction of yourself and your qualifications. Think about it— if you introduce yourself simply as, “Hi, I’m Joe,” the employer will likely be thinking, “Ok, and I care why?” When you introduce yourself to a prospective employer or contact at a company, you need to do so in a way that will catch their interest, by explaining why they should be interested in having you work there. This means that before you ever go to talk to a company, you need to:

- **Assess your qualifications** for the job or type of job you would be trying to get there. Consider your skills, abilities, experience, knowledge, personal characteristics, and interests as they relate to the job. Think about why you’d be the best person for the job, and what you would contribute to the company.
- **Think through how you’d like to explain** your most important qualifications and how you’ll contribute to the company in your introduction.

Preparing your Resumes

*Yes, you need a resume, and it needs to be great!* Some employers will require a resume. Some will only require you to fill out an employment application, but having a resume that clearly shows your qualifications for the position will help give you a competitive edge. The Career Center can help you with this!

Resume tips for student jobs:

- Your resume is a marketing tool, not a biography, and the goal is to show the employer **HOW** you are prepared to do the job you’re applying for, so your resume must be **targeted** (see Resume handout).
- Determine the types of jobs you’re going to apply for, and make a resume targeted to each type of job.
- When applying for a specific opening, tweak the most similar version to fit their requirements.

Picking up Applications

Often, you’ll have to go to the company or department’s location to pick up an application. Follow these tips to make the process more successful:

- **Always dress professionally** (business casual), even though it’s not a professional job. Making a good first impression is critical! It impacts whether they tell you about job openings or not, and if you make a good impression, it can sometimes get you an on-the-spot interview.
- **Bring copies of your resume** targeted to the type of work you’d do there when you go to pick up applications or inquire about jobs. Try to give it directly to the manager. (If you leave it with someone else, you can’t be sure whether a manager will ever actually see it or not.)
- **Ask to speak to a manager.** The initial person you talk to won’t always volunteer to bring a manager out for you to meet and speak with about possible openings, but if you **ask**, they might. (Just don’t be pushy!) If possible, you want to meet the person who has the power to hire you, because it’s a lot easier to leave a lasting impression in-person than if they only know you on paper.
- It’s possible you may get interviewed on the spot, so from the time you first go in to ask about job openings, you need to **have your interview skills perfected**.
- **If you’re out** and you see a help wanted sign, it’s tempting to walk in right then and there and pick up an application. DON’T! **Come back later** when you’re dressed appropriately, have your resume, and are prepared for a potential interview.
Filling out Applications

Employment applications can often be long, detailed, and complicated. Here are a few tips for filling them out:

- **Don’t try to fill out the application while you’re there.** You want to take your time to ensure it is as neat as possible (this makes a difference!), and be able to double and triple-check for errors.
- **Keep a document of your work history.** Otherwise, you’ll constantly have to look up things like addresses and phone numbers for places you worked years ago. **For each job, you should have:** your job title, name of the company, dates of employment, starting wage and ending wage, your supervisor’s name, phone number of the company and/or your supervisor, address of the company, references and their contact information (address, phone, e-mail).
- Don’t list your social security number on applications (for security reasons). Unless it’s a government position, they shouldn’t need it until later in the process.

Getting a Referral

The reality of the job market right now is that there are more job seekers than there are openings. When a company opens a job, they’re usually flooded with qualified applicants. Especially in the case of student jobs that don’t require a lot of specialized skills, it is really hard to distinguish applicants on paper. Therefore, employers rely on referrals from their employees or from other trusted friends. When a current employee who is in good standing at the company tells the hiring manager to make sure to take a look at your application, your chances of being seriously considered for that job dramatically increase (this is different than a recommendation). Therefore, when applying for a job, **the best thing you can do is get a referral.**

Strategies for obtaining a referral:

- **If you already know someone who works there,** make sure they know you’ve applied or plan to apply, and ask if they would be willing to put in a good word for you with the manager.
- **If you don’t know someone there,** ask all your friends, family, and other contacts if they know anyone who works there. If so, ask if they can introduce you. When you talk to the person, make sure to have your “30-second sell” and your resume ready. After you’ve made a good impression, ask your new contact if they’d be willing to pass your resume on to the manager, or even introduce you.
- **If none of your current contacts know anyone there,** then it’s time to tap into your outgoing self, and go out and purposely meet someone at the company. As mentioned above, one option is to go to the company’s location and ask if you can speak briefly with the manager. If that doesn’t work, strike up conversation with one of the employees that seems approachable. For example, if you’re interested in working at a retail store, you could ask where to find something, and then say something like, “You know, it seems like this would be a fun place to work. How do you like it here? How did you get your job?” You could also first initiate a conversation about common interests, such as if you’re in a sporting goods store, to get their attention and establish a connection. Or, while at a restaurant, strike up a similar conversation with your server, and even ask about openings at other places, since restaurants are often pretty linked together. Remember, the key is to get someone who works there to like you and want to help you out.

Interviewing

Interviews for part-time jobs often seem informal, but you still want to take the interview as seriously as you would for a professional job. Often, they are looking more for things like maturity and responsibility rather than specific skills, and being professional in the interview is the best way to demonstrate those things. For more information on interviewing, refer to the Interviewing handout, and do a practice interview at the Career Center.

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**Tip: Use your part-time job to help boost your career.**

Determine what skills and experience you need for your future career, and look for a job that’ll help you get those skills and experiences. For example, if you’re getting your degree in education, you could look for tutoring jobs. We understand that you’re probably only looking for a part-time job because you need money, but in the long run you’ll be glad you picked a job that will help make you competitive for your career! Always keep in mind that you gain valuable skills from any job that you have, however, so in a tough job market, be open to all opportunities to gain skills and experience, even if it’s not your top choice.

The Career Center can help! Call to set up an appointment.

[http://career.boisestate.edu](http://career.boisestate.edu) • 426-1747 • career@boisestate.edu