

Counseling Job Search

Career Topics Series

There are two main ways to look for a job, and both can be a part of your search

- A. **Be Reactive**—Respond to position openings
- B. **Be Proactive**—Develop target list of employers and network with potential contacts and employers (over 75 % of positions are obtained through networking!)

Respond to position openings

Develop a list of job search sites that list openings related to your field and check them regularly. Start your search with these Career Services Center favorites.

- **MU Career Manager:** Online system posting internship and position openings, managing resumes for referral to employers, and coordinating on-campus recruiting activities.
- **Indeed.com and Simply hired.com:** National job search engines which you can search by location. These two resources pull in job postings from other job search engines.
- **All Job Listing Sites:** Local, national, and field-specific sites for job listings.
- **Organization websites:** Not all posted jobs can be found through job search engines so be sure to target employers you are interested in and check their websites regularly.

Additional websites directly related to your career goals may be found by searching the internet. The most effective ways of finding what you are looking for is to search by career field then using the words “jobs” or “careers.” Another way is by searching for professional association websites.

Professional Associations

- Go to favorite search engine such as Google
- Type: <your field> association
- Example: Counseling association
- Searching groups on LinkedIn can be a great way to find professional associations as well.

Develop a targeted list of employers (see resources below to get started)

Reference USA: Targeting a specific city? Use this database of 14 million companies and organizations to develop your targeted list by industry. This can be accessed at www.mu.edu/csc

Vault: Login at www.mu.edu/csc: Vault is the world’s leading source of career information. Including employers, industries, and career subjects infinitely easier and more efficient. Resources 80+ Career Guides, 3,000+ Company Profiles, 1,100+ Career Articles, and Industry Profiles.

Where in the World are MU Grads?™: This is a listing of job titles and hiring organizations of Marquette grads with data taken from annual survey of recent Marquette University graduates by the Career Services Center and the Office of Institutional Research. These handouts can be found in the Kimberly-Clark Career Library and on our website.

211 Impact: A comprehensive database of information on family, health, and human service resources in Milwaukee County with information on over 4,000 agencies and programs in the greater Milwaukee area. Please send an e-mail requesting the password to: career.services@marquette.edu

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Network with potential contacts and employers

There are two types of job markets, formal and informal.

The formal job market consists of jobs that can be seen, are advertised, and are made known to the public. They are also known as “traditional” or “visible” sources of job leads.

The formal job market makes up 25% of the job openings. These positions are advertised through job search websites, newspaper ads, positions posted with the career services office, private employment agencies, state employment services, and job search/employer websites.

The informal job market consists of jobs that cannot be seen, are not advertised, and are not made known to the public in a formal way. As many as 75% of jobs are not available through any publicly available process. In fact, most employers prefer referrals from employees or others since they know these are more reliable and less trouble. These positions are found through personal contacts, friends, relatives, direct contact with employers, and networking.

Networking is a necessary tool to access this informal job market. There are two ways to begin your networking process, through warm and cold contacts.

Warm contacts begin by networking with people you know. Examples of warm contacts include:

- Parents and Relatives (friends of relatives)
- Friends (relatives of friends)
- Neighbors
- Alumni, using the Marquette University Alumni Association group on LinkedIn
- Present and former co-workers
- Teachers and faculty (past and present)
- Members of professional organizations
- Service clubs
- Social groups (Young Professionals of Milwaukee, Young Professionals of Chicago)
- Religious institutions

Questions to ask these contacts include:

- Do you know of any openings for a person with my skills?
- Do you know of anyone else who might know of an opening?
- Do you know someone who has a good network of professional contacts?

It is important to follow up on this information because it can lead to several other contacts.

Set Goals and Time Commitments

- Finding a job is a full-time job. Set weekly goals for working on your job search.
- Send “cold letters” to former internship sites that you enjoyed
- Create a list of contacts in areas to which you are interested in relocating; send them all a cold letter and resume.
- Each week set aside a few hours to check the websites that you have identified as helpful and send out resumes and cover letters.
- Stay Positive. Feeling a little frustrated, stop by for a pep talk from Career Services.
- Throw away rejection letters! Onward and upward!
- Celebrate how far you have come.

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Develop effective interview skills

If an interviewer were to ask one question, would you be ready? “Why Should I Hire You?”

Know what you have to offer and be ready to articulate your strengths, abilities and experience

Be prepared for “behavioral interviewing” questions like:

Tell me about a time when...

- you had a problem and how you dealt with it, you went above and beyond what was necessary
- you had a problem with a co-worker or a supervisor

Different types of interviews:

- Telephone screening, second interview or organization interview (company visit), panel interviews

Send thank you letters, with 24 hours after the interview – timing is critical.

- Express genuine appreciation , reaffirm your commitment to the organization
- Express enthusiasm for the job and that you are more convinced that you are an excellent match for both the position and the organization

Some Common Counseling Interview Questions

- What do you see as the main role of a (specific) counselor?
- What influenced you to be a counselor?
- What is the counseling theory or approach that you most closely follow?
- What innovative and new ideas would you like to employ as a counselor?
- How would you divide your time between meeting the needs of the students/clients and keeping up the paperwork?
- How would you handle an irate parent? How would you handle a passive (perhaps irresponsible) parent?
- How do you see yourself fitting in with counselors who have many years experience?
- How would you fit in with a large staff?
- What is your strongest asset?
- What do you think is the most important characteristic of a counselor?
- What do you see as the role of a counselor in a school/clinic this large?
- What makes you want to work at _____ School/Clinic?
- What is it that you like about working with (grade level) school students/population of clients?
- What is something new you could bring to our program?
- How do you handle criticism? How do you handle stress?
- How would you deal with cultural differences in this setting?
- What might your professional development plan look like?
- What practical experiences have you had that make you feel capable of being a counselor?
- Describe how you would implement small group counseling/guidance lessons?
- What has your experience been in working with students of color & GLBT students/clients?
- Tell us about a successful (satisfying) case that you have handled? And, one that was not so successful; what would you have done differently?
- How do you handle conflict with a colleague, parent, family member?
- How do you keep yourself organized? Discuss how you multitask.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

- You suspected one of your clients is being abused?
- You suspect one of your students/clients is abusing drugs/alcohol?
- One of your students/clients admits to being sexually active?
- You see one of your clients in town?
- One of your students/clients talks to you about wanting to kill themselves?
- One of your students/clients told you he/she is gay?

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Develop your job search documents

There is no “right” way to write a resume. Employers have different opinions on what they prefer; therefore, it is important for your resume to best highlight your skills and interests.

Resume Key Components

- Basic Information/Heading
- Career Objective/Profile
- Skills Summary
- Education
- Experience
- Honors/Activities/Leadership/Special Skill

Quick Tips

Design: Resumes tend to be very conservative in format; the primary goal being readability.

Experience: Use headings to market similar experiences together such as: Clinical Experience, Career Related Experience, Publications Experience, Research Experience, and Other Work Experience.

Briefly describe for each position:

- Job title, organization name, location (city, state), and dates. List the most recent position first and work backwards.
- List your responsibilities for each position using a variety of ACTION WORDS to describe situations and achievements.
- Elaborate on accomplishments, additional responsibilities, improvements made on the job, and supervisory duties in bulleted format.
- Unless necessary, avoid using articles in descriptions such as “a”, “an”, “the.”
- Include scope of responsibility such as: Trained eight student workers
- Concretely outline any outstanding results such as: Developed new computerized customer listing using MS Access software to improve output by ten percent

Objective: Adding an objective helps the employer know for which positions you are applying. Try and include those experiences on your resume that demonstrate skills related to your objective. Be sure to include an objective that is specific without generalizations.

Strengths: Think of 2-3 strengths that set you apart from others. When you look back on your experiences, what are skills you gained that made you most proud? What did your supervisors praise you for?

Student Activities: Use your involvement experience to demonstrate your skills. List these just like a position with your title (member, membership chair, and president), name of the organization, Marquette University, and dates.

Career Related Experience: Separate out the experiences that best relate to your objective. Use headings such as Career Related Experience or even naming each section based on your career goals such as Marketing Experience or Leadership Experience. This tactic helps to make the connection for employers from what you’ve done to what you can do. It also allows you to put your more career-related experiences toward the top even if they are not the most recent.

Action Word Phrases: Action words help demonstrate what skills and experience you have that would help an employer know why he or she should hire you. Be sure to use bulleted lists to help the reader. A list of action word phrases can be found on the Career Services website www.marquette.edu/csc or in the Career Guide available in the Career Services Center.

Use of pronouns: Eliminate all use of pronouns (I, me, my, etc). Instead, use action word phrases and bullets.

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Street address ● city, state, zip ● email address ● phone number

PROFILE

Highly <adjective> candidate offering over <#> years experience in <area> and <area>.

Seeking a position as a <position title> at <Company Name> utilizing the following strengths:

- Action word statement of relevant skills gained
- Action word statement of relevant skills gained
- Action word statement of relevant skills gained

EDUCATION

Bachelor of _____ Degree in <field of study>

Month 20xx

Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Major: _____, Minor: _____

GPA: x.x/4.0

School attended for study abroad, City, Country

<Semester> 20xx

- Statement of skills gained

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Position Title

<Month> 20xx – <Month>20xx

Company, City, ST

- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result
- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Position Title

<Month> 20xx – <Month>20xx

Company, City, ST

- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result
- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Position Title

<Month> 20xx – <Month>20xx

Company, City, ST

- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result
- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Company, City, ST

<Month> 20xx – <Month>20xx

- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result
- Action word statement of skills gained, accomplishments, scope of experience, or quantifiable result

HONORS AND AWARDS

Name of Scholarship or award

<Month> 20xx – <Month>20xx

Jamie A. Thomas

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PROFILE

Seeking a counseling position in the mental health field utilizing the following strengths and experience:

- Interacting with and appreciating individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Able to communicate effectively and sensitively in both individual and group interactions
- Experience working with children who are at environmental and/or biological risk
- Three years experience working directly with youth including drug and alcohol counseling, foster care and teen pregnancy
- Approach all tasks in a professional manner with energy, efficiency and compassion

EDUCATION

Master of Arts Degree in Community Counseling
Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

May 20xx

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology
University Of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

May 20xx

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Positive Psychology, Quality of Life, Grief Counseling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

Counseling Intern

Summer, 20xx; Part-time 20xx-20xx

Rogers Memorial Hospital, Milwaukee, WI

- Interdisciplinary team member within the eating disorder intensive outpatient, partial, and in-patient hospitalization program
- Received training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Mindfulness skills
- Counseled clients individually and in group settings with various diagnoses, including mood disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, and trauma patients
- Experience in leading mindfulness exercises, facilitating check-ins, teaching DBT and CBT skills in group and individual settings
- Facilitated treatment with other health care providers for patient care coordination and educational support meetings for family and friends of clients
- Participated in weekly case conferences and consultation, ongoing research, community outreach, and education

Psychotherapy Intern

20xx-20xx

Aurora Family Service, Milwaukee, WI

- Provided individual and couples therapy to underserved and culturally diverse client population
- Built strong therapeutic relationships with clients with a variety of mental health issues
- Created and executed psychotherapy treatment plans
- Participated in agency in-services and events focused on cultural diversity and mental health
- Assessed suicide and violence risk in clients both in person and in phone consultations
- Properly documented therapy sessions according to ethical and legal standards of the counseling profession

School Based Mental Health Intern

20xx-20xx

Aurora Family Service, Milwaukee, WI

- Counseled culturally diverse middle school students with a variety of behavioral and mental health issues
- Collaborated with parents to facilitate proper treatment strategy for students
- Consulted with school officials and nursing staff to resolve student safety and family crisis situations

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COUNSELING EXPERIENCE - CONTINUED

Alcohol Counselor Intern

20xx-20xx

South Shore Teen Rehabilitation Center, Milwaukee, WI

- Worked with teens involved in drug and alcohol rehabilitation
- Presented educational films and lectures
- Co-facilitated small group discussions

Social Worker Assistant

20xx-20xx

Teen Pregnancy Service of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

- Learned caseload management of low-income, prenatal and postnatal clients
- Assisted with pregnancy testing, program intakes, home visits, and coordination with a multi-disciplinary team
- Conducted individual sessions using motivational interviewing practices and interpretation of assessment measures
- Facilitate patient intake and deliver group education presentations

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Volunteer

20xx-20xx

Milwaukee Center for Independence, Waukesha, WI

- Helped organize, plan and participated in educational and social activities with a group of mentally handicapped teenagers
- Developed listening skills and maintained confidentiality of clients, assisted in fundraising efforts, and managed client scheduling

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, XXXX Program

November 20xx - Present

- Developed handouts and co-facilitated discussions related to XXXX
- Presented a poster session *Title of Research Presentation* at the International Counseling Conference in Chicago, IL

Marquette University

January 20xx – May 20xx

Research Assistant to Dr. XXXX, Ph.D., Psychology Department faculty

PRESENTATION/WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE

“Unintentional Racism and Racial Microaggression: Implications for Education, Training and Practice”

Wisconsin Psychological Association Spring Annual Convention, Middleton, WI

20xx

“Opening the Dialogue: Addressing Spiritual Issues in Counseling”

Aurora Family Service, Milwaukee, WI

20xx

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Counseling Association

20xx - Present

Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling

May 20xx

Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology

Graduate Student Organization

September 20xx - May 20xx

- VP of Student Professional Development

20xx – 20xx

Cover Letters

The key to a successful job or graduate school search is to communicate with the person who has the ability to hire or admit. Therefore, your cover letter is extremely important. Effective cover letters convey a sense of purpose, project enthusiasm for the position or program, and demonstrate your knowledge of the employer or graduate program's goals and needs.

Many times individuals will spend hours writing a "perfect" resume and very little time writing a quality cover letter. Remember that your cover letter not only accompanies your resume, it is usually on top of your resume when the envelope is opened. A positive first impression requires that your cover letter be neat and concise, containing no errors in spelling or grammar. Each cover letter should be customized to fit the position for which you are applying.

You will want to customize your cover letter depending on its purpose. Some reasons for sending a cover letter may be:

- ~ A result of a direct search
- ~ A response to an advertisement
- ~ A follow up on a contact made through networking

No matter what your reason for sending a cover letter, be sure it contains the following information:

- ~ Return address with the date
- ~ Name, title, organization, and address of the person you are writing

First Paragraph

- ~ State purpose of letter
- ~ Catch attention
- ~ Indicate your interest in the position or company
- ~ Flatter your audience by using company/ program information found through research

Second Paragraph

- ~ Explain how your background makes you a qualified candidate
- ~ Give an example, talk about a specific project, accomplishment, or service
- ~ Highlight information found in the resume

Third Paragraph

- ~ Refer the reader to your enclosures (resume, reference, examples of work)

Final Paragraph

- ~ Indicate your intentions for follow-up
- ~ Repeat a number where you may be reached

Closing

- ~ Salutation
- ~ Signature

Jamie A. Thomas

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March xx, 20xx

Hiring Manager
Alma Center, Inc.
2568 N. Martin Luther King Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Dear Hiring Manager:

This letter is in submission of my application for the Case Manager-Life Skills Specialist position currently available with the Alma Center, as posted on the company website. Based on the position description given, I am confident that my skills and abilities are a good fit for this organization.

The position of Case Manager-Life Skills Specialist at the Alma Center is very appealing to me for a number of reasons. The mission of the organization, to eliminate violence and abuse in intimate relationships, matches my personal values. One of my core beliefs is that peaceful interaction is always the best path, and being a part of an organization that also holds those beliefs is something I value highly. Having the opportunity to work with fathers to foster this belief directly is another strong point of interest regarding this position. My background is in working with children and teenagers at an environmental risk, and working with the Alma Center would provide me the opportunity to assist this client base, albeit in a different manner than in the past.

The traits I hold match very closely with those that you seek in a Case Manager-Life Skills Specialist. Through my internships I have had the opportunity to work in case management at South Shore Teen Rehabilitation Center, with public welfare programs, develop programs for those in at-risk environmental settings, and facilitate group counseling discussions. These skills are all important traits for any counselor to have, and especially for a Life Skills Counselor. During my time at South Shore, I handled numerous case files, working with teenagers to overcome drug and alcohol addictions. This experience taught me the value of remaining open-minded and compassionate while maintaining a positive attitude, as without those aspects, the clients would not be able to receive the aid they required.

I feel that my experience and strong desire make me an excellent candidate for the position of Case Manager-Life Skills Specialist. Enclosed please find a current copy of my resume. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you in the near future. If you have any questions regarding my documents or qualifications, please contact me at 847-111-2222 or through email at Jamie.thomas@marquette.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie A. Thomas