

JOB SEARCH BARRIERS: BIG DEALS OR NO BIG DEALS?

When people decide to get a new or better job, they start to think about the barriers they face.

That's smart. We all need to think about what might lie ahead. But it can sometimes be hard to tell what we should be most concerned about.

Take a minute to think about some different ways you would finish the sentence, "I'd like to get a new job, but ..." Be really honest with yourself.

Some of the ways you finish that sentence will probably be listed among the 20 barriers on this list. But there will also be some barriers that you don't have to face.

This list might even include some barriers you haven't thought about yet, but which you might have to overcome at some point during your job search.

How big is each of these barriers?

Some barriers are Big Deals for most people. They require a good deal of attention and work.

If a Big Deal barrier applies to you, please take it seriously. There are no barriers that most people cannot overcome, but be careful that you don't underrate what you may be up against.

Other barriers are No Big Deals. They might cause serious problems, but there are straightforward ways of dealing with them. You will learn some of those ways.

You might be surprised by what you learn.

1. There aren't many good jobs out there. NO BIG DEAL.

Lots of job seekers get discouraged if they hear that the economy is in a slump, or that nobody's hiring, or that there are thousands of other people out there competing to get jobs.

But none of that will have much effect on an individual job search. Here's why.

There are 70,000 jobs in the Greenville area, and new ones are opening up all the time. So tell yourself this when you get discouraged:

All you need to find is ONE JOB, and then you're done with your job search.

2. I didn't do very well in school. NO BIG DEAL.

Lots of people didn't do very well in high school. So relax.

But there is one question almost every employer will ask: Did you graduate? If the answer is no, it may be much harder for you to find a job.

Here's how to make it easier on yourself: Enroll in a community college program that will help you get a General Educational Development ("GED") certificate. In a few months you will probably be able to earn your GED, which is just as good as a high school diploma. GED programs are offered everywhere, and they are almost always free.

But what if you can't wait a few months to find work? When you apply for a job, say this:

"I didn't get a high school diploma, but I am enrolled in the GED program at _____ Community College. I plan to have earned my certificate in _____ months. If you hire me, I would be glad to accept that as a condition of my employment."

This shows you have what employers want most: responsibility, honesty, and integrity. That's way better than being an A student.

3. I have too many other responsibilities. BIG DEAL.

It's easy to let responsibilities pile up on us.

Family and friends need us. Things have to get done, or bad consequences will follow. The world is full of expectations, obligations, duties, debts and commitments.

And on top of them all, you are supposed to look for employment AND work on overcoming barriers? What if you are just too busy to get a job?

Everyone has responsibilities to juggle, whether they have a job or not. Here's how to cope.

1. Prioritize your responsibilities. Some are more important than others. Set aside time for the most important tasks first. If you don't have time for everything, make sure that the least important tasks are the ones that don't get done.
2. Delegate to other people if possible. Just because a task is important doesn't mean you are the only one who can do it.
3. Organize your time and your life. If things are out of control and you're not sure what might happen next, that doesn't reduce your responsibilities or make them any easier. But it can make you exhausted from worry, and from having to respond to emergencies.

Finally, think about how having a larger income could help you meet your responsibilities. Money won't buy happiness, but it is a wonderful tool for solving problems.

4. I don't know what kind of job to look for. NO BIG DEAL.

You are not alone. Many people scratch their heads when they think, "What is it that I really want to do for hours each day, and maybe for years into the future?"

But most people manage to answer that question. Here's how.

The trick is to find a job that:

- You enjoy (or can learn to enjoy),
- AND that you are pretty good at (or can learn to get pretty good at),
- AND that pays (and ideally pays more as you improve and advance),
- AND that is available near where you live (or is available somewhere you might like to live).

There are a lot of tests that can help you figure this out — for example, at www.mynextmove.org.

Once you have a few possible types of work in mind, look into them. See what employers are looking for. Ask yourself what you can offer, and what you can learn.

Then get ready to put yourself out there. Keep in mind that you will probably change course a few times as you explore, develop, and manage your career options.

Remember, looking for a job can be competitive. If you focus not only on what you need or want, but on what you can offer to an employer, you will be more likely to win.

5. I don't want to have to take a drug test. BIG DEAL.

In fact, it's a VERY Big Deal.

Alcohol and drugs can be career poison, whether you are job searching or already employed, and whether you abuse alcohol or drugs on or off the job.

You can be the most qualified job applicant in town. But if you can't pass a pre-employment drug test you won't get the job, and your job search will be a waste of time.

You can be the most competent and popular member of your employer's team. But if you show up drunk or high you'll get fired.

That's the plain truth. If you need help changing a drug or alcohol habit, then get it.

Don't let it delay the start of your job search. Your job search will probably take weeks or months, so it's a good time to start changing any habit. But don't ignore it or put it off.

P.S. There are a lot of ways that people try to fake their way through drug tests. None of them work.

6. Looking for work makes me feel like a loser. NO BIG DEAL.

Some people feel that being unemployed and looking for work makes others see them as stupid or as losers.

But think about all the employed people you meet. They are all around you every day. Each one of them has trekked through a job search — probably more than once.

And notice that some of these employed people may not exactly be geniuses. If they can find jobs, you can too.

But what if you really ARE a loser? Here's a secret: Everyone else is too.

People fail all the time. Most just don't talk about it much. The ones who do talk about it will tell you that their failures taught them what they needed to be successful.

7. I have a physical or mental disability. BIG DEAL.

There are all sorts of disabilities.

Physical disabilities include blindness or low vision, full or partial deafness, and difficulty using hands, arms, or legs. Mental disabilities include anxiety or attention disorders, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, psychiatric illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia, and intellectual disabilities (what people used to call retardation). Some disabilities can be both physical and mental, like many brain injuries. And some disabilities can be practically invisible, such as epilepsy and other seizure disorders.

But don't disabled people get income from Social Security or SSI? Sometimes.

Are they able to be successful at jobs? Usually.

Do they WANT to have jobs, even if they already have an income? Very often.

If you have ever been diagnosed with a disability, you can probably get help with your job search from the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other sources. If you have ever suspected you have a disability, check with a doctor.

There is a LOT of help available. Why make life harder on yourself by ignoring it? More information about the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other state services can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/disability-services/employment-services-for-people-with-disabilities.

You might also want to check the Disability Advocates and Resource Center at www.darcnc.org (252-355-6215).

8. I have a criminal record. NO BIG DEAL.

A past felony conviction makes it harder to find a job. It doesn't make it impossible.

You can't change your past, so there's no use letting it discourage you. But there is one — and only one — good way to deal with this part of your past.

When (not if) an employer asks whether you have a criminal record, be honest. Admit you made a big mistake. Be ready to give the dates of your conviction, incarceration, and release, but only if the employer asks for them.

Don't say that you were treated unfairly, even if you were. Point out that you learned from the experience, and that you have changed. When you give this response, you might be surprised at the respect you receive.

That person interviewing you has probably done some things he's glad others don't know about. Most people have.

Also, the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions offers help to former offenders in overcoming employment barriers. You can learn more at www.nccommerce.com/wf/job-seekers/former-offenders.

Own your past. But make it clear that it's your past, not your future.

9. I probably wouldn't get fair pay. NO BIG DEAL.

By "fair pay" do you mean roughly the same amount of money that someone else doing similar work is paid, regardless of race or sex? If so, don't be concerned. Employers are required by law to pay everyone fairly.

By "fair pay" do you mean the amount of money you deserve? Then you're still okay. But what you deserve won't be decided by you, or your boss, or your boss's boss. That decision is made by the labor market through the economic law of supply and demand.

Here's how it works. If you can do things that most other people can't, or if you can do things a lot better, then the supply of good employees like you is low. That low supply can boost your paycheck. If employers need lots of people like you, then the demand for people like you is high. That can boost your paycheck too.

On the other hand, if certain types of employees are easy to find, or if not many employers want to hire them, then their paychecks will be lower.

That's why people with more training — especially in fields that are growing and need more employees — get paid better than others. You can influence the size of your paycheck by the type of employment you choose, the training and qualifications you earn, and the quality of your work.

10. I have a bigger dream to follow. BIG DEAL.

Young people are often attracted to careers in entertainment or sports. That's not surprising. Making it to the top can mean wealth and fame. People can do it if they have talent, energy, persistence, help, and luck.

Especially luck.

But as they get older, most people learn that they have about as much luck as most other people. That's why only a tiny percentage of very talented, very persistent, and VERY lucky athletes and performers can make a career of it.

Most people also learn that there are other ways to live a fulfilling life. For example, enjoying a family, contributing to a community, and making a positive mark on the world.

Be careful that you don't gamble away that dream in hopes of becoming a star. Apply some of your talent, energy, and persistence to a career in which luck doesn't play such an enormous role. You can almost surely get a good job, but it takes focus and motivation.

You don't have to give up on your dreams. Just don't limit yourself to one.

11. I don't have a reliable way to get to work. NO BIG DEAL.

How can a person get a job and some income if they don't have a car or other reliable transportation?

That's a sensible question. But it makes even more sense the other way around: How can a person get a car or other transportation if they don't have a job and some income?

It is generally easier to get income if you don't have your own transportation than it is to get your own transportation if you don't have income. So solve this problem the easiest possible way: Concentrate first on getting a job, then on getting regular transportation.

Once you get a job, you may be able to share transportation with someone who works at the same place or nearby, and who would appreciate a little help with gas money. Or you may be able to get rides from friends or relatives who want to help you succeed. Or they could let you borrow their cars. Or you might be able to use public transportation.

You may even be able to get a loan to buy your own car, especially after a couple of months on the job.

But what if you don't have a driver's license as a result of DUIs or other problems? Don't be shy: Write to the judge about how you are staying straight, trying to work, and doing the right thing. The judge may decide to encourage you by lifting your restrictions. If you think this never happens, you're wrong.

This is a problem you can solve — as long as you don't give up.

12. I'm not sure I could make myself show up on time every day. BIG DEAL.

Success means doing good work, and being recognized and rewarded for it.

A guaranteed way to NOT do good work is to do no work at all.

A guaranteed way to do no work at all is to not be there to do it.

That's why employers value reliability more than any other single employee skill or characteristic. More than education, experience, or anything else.

That's good news. Because even if you don't have much training or don't think you may be very good at a job, you will go far toward being successful if you can just be relied upon to show up on time.

13. I don't have many job skills. BIG DEAL.

When people think of job skills, they often think of professional licenses, or certified trades like plumbing and welding, or specialized college degrees. If you have an opportunity to pursue training in a profession or trade that interests you, you should definitely look into it.

But that's just one type of skill — and it's not even the most important type. The most important type of job skill is simply the ability to understand, think clearly, and communicate.

Everyone has this ability to some degree, but everyone can get better at it. It can be demonstrated by how well you read, do practical math, and understand things like charts, graphs, and technical diagrams.

If you are already good at these things, then consider documenting your ability by getting a Career Readiness Certificate. A CRC is a sort of professional license or degree for people who may not be eligible for other types of licenses or degrees, but who want evidence to show that they have what employers want.

If you are not already good at these things, there is an online study program that will help you earn a CRC within a few weeks. The CRC program is free for some people, and almost free for everyone else.

CRC holders have a huge advantage in their job searches. Many employers give preference to CRC holders, and some employers won't even consider hiring people who don't have CRCs.

You can learn more about Pitt Community College's CRC program at www.pittcc.edu/continuing-education/national-career-readiness-certificate/index.html (252-493-7549).

The Career Readiness Certificate is Helpful for Most Job Seekers

The CRC is one of the most useful tools for job seekers who want to document their skills, regardless of how much or how little education or experience they have. It relies on the WorkKeys job skills assessment system developed by American College Testing ("ACT"), a company that also offers the ACT examination for high school seniors.

The first step in getting a CRC is to enroll in Room 403 of Pitt Community College's Greenville Center, 3107 South Memorial Drive, any time during CRC Open Lab hours. To see the current schedule of Open Lab hours, click on the link in the Scheduling section at www.pittcc.edu/continuing-education/national-career-readiness-certificate or call 252-493-7549. There is no charge to enroll.

After enrolling, the student completes a pre-test to determine current "baseline" skills in three areas: reading, applied mathematics, and locating information on charts, graphs, and diagrams. The student's baseline skills are classified into one of seven skill levels for reading and math, and one of six skill levels for locating information. Students can then improve their skills by completing online lessons and quizzes at higher levels.

The pre-test takes most people about an hour to complete, and each of the online lessons takes about two hours. They can be completed from any internet-connected device including a home computer, a computer at a public library, or the CRC Open Lab. There are no time limits for completing the pre-test or the lessons. Also, the pre-test and each of the lessons can be stopped at any point so the student can return to them later.

After enrolling, you can sign in to the WorkKeys system at www.keytrain.com/careerready101.asp. When students believe they are ready, they can ask to be scheduled for the final exam, which is given at PCC.

The exam includes a 55-minute test with 33 - 35 questions in each of the three skill areas. About 90% of students pass the test, which requires achieving a skill level of at least 3 in each area. But as with any test, it's better to achieve higher scores than lower scores.

Employers may require higher CRC scores for more demanding jobs. But whatever their scores may be, earning a Career Readiness Certificate shows that job seekers possess key skills and that they have the initiative to continue learning.

What if You Can't Read or Do Math Well at All?

Many people have a very hard time with reading or math at a basic level. One out of every seven adults in Pitt County shares this problem.

Don't worry. Reading and math are skills, like any other skills. You can learn them at any point in life.

Contact the Literacy Volunteers of Pitt County at www.pittliteracy.org (252-353-6578) or Pitt Community College Transitional Studies at www.pittcc.edu/academics/instructional-support-and-transitional-programs/index.html (252-493-7628). You can also practice reading and math skills online at www.gcflearnfree.org/reading and www.gcflearnfree.org/math.

14. I don't know much about technology. NO BIG DEAL.

Technology plays a role in most job searches — and in most jobs.

You will almost certainly need to know a few things about computer technology. But don't worry. You probably already know more than you think you do. And what you don't know, you can learn.

Computers and related technology can be very frustrating when you're learning. But once you know how to do what you need to do, you'll be fine.

The Goodwill Community Foundation has a free website where you can learn more about computers (and lots of other things) at www.gcflearnfree.org. If you would like to take a class on basic computer skills, they are offered by Sheppard Memorial Library in downtown Greenville (<http://sheppardlibrary.org/techclass>, 252-329-4580); the Transitional Studies program at Pitt Community College (252-493-7396); Literacy Volunteers of Pitt County (www.pittliteracy.org, 252-353-6578); and the Disability Advocates & Resource Center (www.darcnc.org/computer-lab-services, 252-355-6215).

How Computer Software Programs Can Help You

Learning about computers means learning about software programs. These are the tools that computers use.

There are many kinds of software programs. But among the most important programs are the ones used for writing and for managing lists.

Most employers use two programs called Word and Excel, which were developed by the Microsoft Corporation. They are part of its Office group of programs, which rely on Microsoft's Windows operating system.

These two programs are found on almost every computer at every public library, school, and employer. Learning some basics about these programs can be helpful to you in your job search, and probably in your job as well.

Microsoft Word is used for word processing — what people used to call typing. This is useful for making printable documents such as your resume (a one-page document with your name, contact information, and a summary of your job goal, education, experience, and skills), your cover letter (a letter that you attach to your resume before you give or send it to an employer), and your list of references (former bosses or other people — not including your family members — who know you, and who an employer can call to find out more about you).

Microsoft Excel is used for spreadsheets, which are simply sheets divided into little boxes called cells. Numbers, words, dates, and other information can be typed into the cells to make any kind of list. Once you have made a list, you can use it for things like keeping track of your job applications, managing your budget, and lots of other tasks.

Microsoft comes out with a new edition of Word, Excel, and Windows every few years. Each edition looks different, but operates much like the earlier editions. Many people continue to use older editions long after newer ones have been released.

You can learn how to use any edition of Word or Excel at a free training website offered by the Goodwill Community Foundation, www.gcflearnfree.org/office. You can learn more about Windows at www.gcflearnfree.org/windows. If you want to learn how to type well rather than using the "hunt and peck method" on a keyboard, visit www.gcflearnfree.org/computers/typing.

How Online Job Searching Can Help You

For years, most people began a job search by looking at the classified ads in the local newspaper. Today they usually go online.

To go online you need to use a web browser, which is a type of software. Most people use one of three web browsers — Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Most computers that are connected with the internet have one or more of these browsers on them. You can use any of these browsers to find job postings, which are the modern equivalent of newspaper "help wanted" ads.

Before opening a browser and going online, ask yourself which organizations near you hire people who do what you want to do. Find an organization's website by typing the name of the organization into the browser's keyword search area. Then look for a link to the part of the website where available positions are listed. The links will usually include the words "jobs," "careers," "opportunities," or "employment."

Each job posting will have a few basic parts: 1) a job name, which typically links to 2) a job description, which usually includes a job number or position number; 3) a list of responsibilities, which are the specific tasks you would be expected to do in the job; 4) a list of requirements or qualifications, which describe the education, skills, and experience that the employer is looking for; and 5) a link to apply online, which often requires you to set up an account with a username and password. Some job postings include a link to download a document that you can print, fill out, and return. Others may simply include information about where to send a resume by email or regular mail.

When you find the available positions on the employer's website, look down the list quickly to see if any of the jobs look like ones that would interest you. When you see one, open it up and read through the posting. Pay special attention to the requirements or qualifications to make sure that you meet them, or at least come close. You will probably look at many job postings before finding one for which you decide to apply.

Always follow the application instructions carefully. Keep a record of each of your applications, including at least the employer name, job name, job number, the date on which you applied and — if you have set up an account — your username and password.

You can also use multi-employer job search websites such as Indeed.com, Monster.com, Craigslist.com, and NCWorks.gov. These services gather job postings from employer websites, and also allow employers to post their job openings directly. Multi-employer websites do a lot of the searching for you. But be careful how you use them.

Finally — and this is important — don't rely completely on websites to find job opportunities. Talk about your job search with other people, including family, friends, people you went to school with, people you used to work with — anyone who might know about jobs that are available, or that might be about to become available.

This is called "networking." It will increase your chances of finding a job sooner rather than later. You may be surprised at how many people can give you good tips, and how happy they are to do it.

Some hiring experts advise job seekers to only spend about a fifth of their search time online, and to spend the rest on talking to people, volunteering, learning new skills, and other activities that will help them connect with opportunities.

A Closer Look at Some Pitt County Employer Websites

Most of the larger employers in Pitt County recruit employees through their websites, and all of their websites offer information that is useful for job seekers.

Here are some websites of employers in the Pitt County area. Each listing includes the community in which most of the employer's jobs are located, and the approximate number of employees. For employers who post available jobs on their websites, these links will take you directly to the postings.

- **AccuLink** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Commercial Printing & Binding; about 50 employees): <http://acculink.com/careers/>
- **Alliance One International** (Farmville; Manufacturing - Tobacco Processing; about 850 employees): <http://www.aointl.com/>
- **Ambleside, Inc.** (Snow Hill; Healthcare; about 60 employees): <http://ambleside.net/>
- **ASMO Greenville** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Small Electric Motors; about 540 employees): [https://denso.taleo.net/careersection/careersection/common/search/jobsearch.ftl?lang=en&portal=12100011410&searchtype=3&f=LOCATION\(26800011410\)&s=3%7CD&a=null&multiline=false](https://denso.taleo.net/careersection/careersection/common/search/jobsearch.ftl?lang=en&portal=12100011410&searchtype=3&f=LOCATION(26800011410)&s=3%7CD&a=null&multiline=false)
- **Attends Healthcare Products** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Paper Products; about 300 employees): <https://attendsusa.worldsecuresystems.com/>
- **Bojangles** (Greenville; Restaurants; about 500 employees): <http://www.becajun.com/employment>
- **Carolina Classics** (Ayden; Manufacturing - Catfish Processing; about 120 employees): <http://cccatfish.com/>
- **CMI Plastics, Inc.** (Ayden; Manufacturing - Plastics Thermoforming; about 60 employees): <http://www.cmiplastics.com/index.htm>
- **Coastal AgroBusiness** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Pesticides; about 150 employees): <http://coastalagro.com/careers/>

- **Convergys** (Greenville; Customer Service Center; about 530 employees):
<http://www.convergys.com/careers/na/united-states>
- **Cooke Communications / Daily Reflector** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Printing / Newspaper; about 180 employees): <http://www.reflector.com/>
- **Dixon Foods** (Greenville; Restaurants; about 700 employees):
<http://www.dixonfoods.com/employment.php>
- **DSM Dyneema, LLC** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Chemicals; about 350 employees):
http://www.dsm.com/products/dyneema/en_GB/home.html
- **East Carolina University** (Greenville; Education; about 5560 employees):
https://ecu.peopleadmin.com/applicants/jsp/shared/Welcome_css.jsp
- **Eastern Carolina Vocational Center** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Picture Frames & Battery Terminals; about 190 employees): <http://ecvcinc.com/careers-ecvc>. ECVC chiefly hires people who have physical or mental disabilities.
- **Executive Personnel** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 50 employees):
<http://www.executivepersonnelgroup.com/greenvillejobs.html>
- **Food Lion** (Greenville; Grocery Stores; about 700 employees): <http://www.findyourjob.net>
- **Grady-White Boats** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Fiberglass Boats ; about 200 employees):
<http://www.gradywhite.com/>
- **Greene County Government** (Snow Hill; Local Government; about 150 employees):
<http://www.co.greene.nc.us/job-listings>
- **Greene County Health Care** (Snow Hill; Healthcare; about 80 employees):
<http://www.greencountyhealthcare.com/>
- **Greene County Public Schools** (Snow Hill; Education; about 300 employees):
<http://www.gcsedu.org/jobs>
- **Greenville City Government** (Greenville; Local Government; about 760 employees):
<http://www.greenvillenc.gov/government/human-resources/current-employment-opportunities>
- **Greenville Utilities Commission** (Greenville; Public Utilities; about 420 employees):
<http://chc.tbe.taleo.net/chc02/ats/careers/jobSearch.jsp?cws=1&org=GREENVILLE>
- **Ham Produce Co., Inc.** (Snow Hill; Manufacturing - Food Processing; about 150 employees):
<http://www.hamfarms.com/index.php>
- **Harris Teeter** (Greenville; Grocery Stores; about 300 employees):
<https://www.harristeeter.com/careers#/app/cms>

- **Hexacomb / PCA** (Farmville; Manufacturing - Honeycomb Structural Panels; about 50 employees): <http://www.packagingcorp.com/employment>
- **Holden Temporaries** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 50 employees): <http://holdentemporaries.net/>
- **Hyster-Yale, aka NACCO Materials Handling** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Lift Trucks; about 1000 employees): <http://hyster-yalecareers.com/apply/>
- **Jack A. Farrior Steel Works** (Farmville; Manufacturing - Metal Fabrication; about 60 employees): <http://www.farriorsteelworks.com/jobs.htm>
- **Manpower** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 60 employees): <http://www.manpower.us/en/Job-Seekers/Search-Jobs.htm?keywords1=&location1=Greenville%20nc&distance1=56&service-lob=s&preferred-language=&preferred-country=&inst=&debug=&start=1&lat=35.612661&lon=%20-77.36635380000001&>
- **Megaforce** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 50 employees): <http://jobs.megaforce.com/>
- **Mestek (Sterling Radiator)** (Farmville; Manufacturing - Gas & Steam Unit Heaters; about 170 employees): <http://www.mestek.com/>
- **Metallix** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Refining Of Precious Metals; about 70 employees): <http://metallix.com/about/careers/>
- **Metrics Contract Services** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Pharmaceuticals; about 300 employees): <https://www2.appone.com/Search/Search.aspx?ServerVar=maynepharma.appone.com&results=yes>
- **North Carolina State Government** (Greenville; State Government; about 800 employees): <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/northcarolina>
- **Nease Staffing** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 75 employees): <http://neasepersonnel.com/job-openings-greenville-office/>
- **NWL Capacitors** (Snow Hill; Manufacturing - Electrical Components; about 60 employees): <https://www2.appone.com/Search/Search.aspx?ServerVar=nwl.appone.com>
- **Overton's Sports Center** (Greenville; Mail Order Sales; about 360 employees): <http://careers.gandermountain.com/apply/#retail>
- **Package Craft, Inc.** (Bethel; Manufacturing - Corrugated Containers; about 40 employees): <http://www.packagecraft.com/>
- **Parrott Canvas** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Canvas Products; about 40 employees): <http://www.parrottcanvas.net/>

- **Patheon, Inc.** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Pharmaceuticals; about 900 employees):
<http://www.patheon.com/en-us/About-Us/Careers/Job-Opportunities-Search?regionId=1&countryId=1&locationId=6&functionId=0&search=true>
- **Physicians East** (Greenville; Healthcare; about 540 employees):
<http://www.physicianseast.com/careers>
- **Pitt Community College** (Greenville; Education; about 950 employees):
<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/pittccedu/default.cfm>
- **Pitt County Government** (Greenville; Local Government; about 910 employees):
<https://www.pittcountync.gov/512/Job-Opportunities>
- **Pitt County Schools** (Greenville; Education; about 2810 employees):
<http://www.pitt.k12.nc.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=194>
- **Roebuck Staffing** (Greenville; Temporary Staffing; about 75 employees):
<http://www.roebuckstaffing.com/job-openings.html>
- **Sag Harbor Industries** (Farmville; Manufacturing - Electronic Components; about 50 employees):
<http://www.sagharborind.com/>
- **The Hammock Source** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Canvas Products Hammocks; about 150 employees): <http://thehammocksource.com/contact-us/careers>
- **TRC, Inc.** (The Roberts Company) (Winterville; Manufacturing - Metal Fabrication; about 650 employees): <https://careers-robertscompany.icims.com/jobs/intro?hashed=-435711769&mobile=false&width=890&height=500&bga=true&needsRedirect=false&jan1offset=-300&jun1offset=-240>
- **UNX, Inc.** (Greenville; Manufacturing - Laundry Chemicals; about 70 employees):
<http://www.unxinc.com/employment.asp>
- **Vidant Health** (Greenville; Healthcare; about 6900 employees):
<http://careers.vidanthealth.com/US/Careers/Job-Listings/>
- **Wal-Mart** (Greenville; Department Stores; about 800 employees): <https://careers.walmart.com/>
- **Wells Fargo Dealer Services** (Winterville; Financial Services; about 330 employees):
<https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/careers/>
- **Weyerhaeuser Co.** (Ayden; Manufacturing - Pine Lumber; about 170 employees):
<http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/careers/>
- **Winterville Machine Works** (Winterville; Manufacturing - Machine Assemblies, Plating; about 70 employees): <http://www.wmwworks.com/>

How Using Multi-Employer Job Search Websites Can Help You — or Hurt You

Multi-employer job search websites collect job openings from all over the internet. These websites can be great for finding jobs posted by small employers — or sometimes by larger employers that you may not have considered.

But they can also be dangerous (especially Craigslist). Don't let anyone use a multi-employer website to rob or exploit you, or to try to take the control of your job search out of your hands.

- DO NOT respond to a posting that doesn't clearly describe the job, or that seems too good to be true. Many of these postings promise quick hiring ("Apply Today, Start ASAP!"), high pay ("Top Tier Salary, No Experience Necessary!"), glamorous opportunities ("Modeling Agency Looking for Talent!"), or unusual flexibility ("Work at Home! Set Your Own Hours!"). Also, don't respond to postings that just sound sketchy (for example, jobs that involve cashing checks, reshipping packages, or being a "secret shopper"). These are almost always scams.
- DO NOT respond to postings or other "job opportunities" that require you to buy anything, pay anyone, or go into debt. Real employers are willing to pay YOU. You should never agree to pay for books, training, hiring assistance, sales leads, inventory, or anything else being sold through a fake job posting.
- DO NOT sign up for "email job alerts." These will typically flood your email in-box with job postings that aren't related to your interests or skills. And important emails from employers might get lost in the jumble.
- DO NOT post your resume on a multi-employer website. Employers are not looking for it there. But someone else might use it for their own purposes.
- DO NOT provide an employer with your credit or debit card information, the passwords to any of your personal online accounts, or other information that could be used to steal your identity. Also, don't give your Social Security number to any employer until after you have had a face-to-face interview and are satisfied that the employer is legitimate. At that point your Social Security number may be needed for the employer to run a background check. Later, after you have begun work, you may need to provide your employer with your bank information so that your pay can be deposited directly.
- DO NOT apply for a job directly through a multi-employer website. If the posting identifies the employer, look for the employer's website and apply there, or call the employer to get the name and the email or street address of the person you should contact. If the posting doesn't identify the employer, and the employer can only be reached through the multi-employer website, be careful. Instead of sending your resume, send a brief statement of your interest and qualifications, and ask for the employer's name and address so that you can provide more complete information (maybe after doing a little research). Remember, good employers want to hire people who are careful and smart.

A Closer Look at Some Multi-Employer Job Search Websites

There are many multi-employer websites (which are also known as job boards, or job search engines) but they copy most of their job postings from the same employers. That's why you may see the same job listed on several different sites, or even several times on the same site. Since looking at many multi-employer sites probably won't help you find many more good job postings than looking at just a few sites, you may want to pick a few that you like and then visit them regularly.

Most multi-employer sites allow you to search by location (zip code, city, county, or region) and by the type of job that interests you. Since jobs can be classified in many different ways, you will run less chance of missing a good job opening if you search only by location.

Also, a multi-employer site might not take down a job posting as soon as it has been closed by the employer. As a first step in applying for a job posting that you find on a multi-employer site, check with the employer to make sure the job is still open.

In addition to job listings, many multi-employer sites include advice and resources for job seekers. Some of this is good, and some isn't. Finally, remember to be careful of scams!

Here are some of the most popular multi-employer sites. They include all kinds of jobs, but some of the sites are more useful for certain broad types of jobs — for example, Craigslist is helpful for finding blue-collar jobs at small businesses, while Linked In may be more useful for white-collar job seekers .

But if you have experience in a particular type of work and would like to find something in that field, you may be able to find a specialized multi-employer site by using the keyword search box of your web browser.

NC Works Online (sponsored by the North Carolina state government): www.ncworks.gov

Career Onestop (sponsored by the US Department of Labor): www.careeronestop.org

NC East Alliance WorkReady (for holders of a Career Readiness Certificate): www.ncworkready.org/for-job-seekers

Indeed: www.indeed.com

Simply Hired: www.simplyhired.com

Monster: www.monster.com

Snag a Job: www.snagajob.com

Craigslist: <http://eastnc.craigslist.org/search/jjj>

Glass Door: www.glassdoor.com

Career Builder: www.careerbuilder.com

Link Up: www.linkup.com

Careers.org: www.careers.org

Live Career: <https://jobs.livecareer.com>

Linked In: www.linkedin.com

Zip Recruiter: www.ziprecruiter.com

How Email Can Help You — or Hurt You

Email is how individuals send and receive most written communication. It is essential to many job searches, and to doing the job well after you have been hired.

Setting up an email account is free and fairly easy, though if you have not done it before you may need a little help. The most popular free email services are Google's Gmail, Microsoft's Outlook, and Yahoo Mail.

You might communicate with an employer by email several times before you receive a job offer. Keep these DOs and DON'Ts in mind:

1. DO consider setting up an email account that you will only use to communicate with employers. If you use one email account for communicating with friends and family as well as with employers, there may be a chance that an email inviting you for a job interview will get lost among twenty emails about cute pictures of cats.
2. Whatever email account you use for your job search, DO remember that you need to check your in box at least once each day, just like the messages on your phone.
3. When choosing a username for your email account, DO remember that you need to convey a serious, responsible image. A username like PartyMonster@yippeedippeedoo.com probably won't do that.
4. When emailing an employer about a particular job opening, DO include the job name and, if possible, the job number in the Subject line.
5. Emails tend to be more casual than business letters, but DO remember that a little polite formality never hurts. When emailing an employer, begin with "Dear" or "Hello" (Mr. or Ms.) _____:
6. DO always be brief, courteous, and to the point.
7. At the end of each email, DO add your first and last name, your phone number, and your email address. Why include your email address, when the person you are emailing could simply hit "reply"? That person may forward your email to others, and you want it to be as easy as possible for any of them to get in touch with you.
8. If you have received instructions from the employer about how to proceed with your application, DO follow them carefully.
9. If you have a smartphone, use it to read email from employers, but DO NOT use it to send email to them. Most of us don't type very well with our thumbs, and it's important to avoid giving the impression that you don't care about making mistakes. Reply as soon as possible, but use a keyboard.
10. DO re-read your message — several times, and out loud if necessary — before you hit Send. Be sure that your message is clear, and that your spelling and grammar are correct. If someone else can also read through your message for you, that's usually a good idea.

11. DO always conclude your message by briefly expressing your appreciation to the employer — for example, "Thank you for your consideration."
12. If you are attaching your resume, references, or other Microsoft Word documents to your email, DO save them and then attach them as plain document format ("PDF") files. PDF files are less likely than Word files to be accidentally messed up.
13. DO NOT copy ("CC") more than one person on an email to an employer, unless you are sending information that will be helpful to two or three other people at the same employer. Don't send a blind copy ("BCC") to anyone. It might make you appear sneaky.
14. A day or two after you interview with an employer, DO send a short, separate thank-you email to each person you met during your visit (yes, including the receptionist or secretary). If they don't offer you their email addresses during the interview, ask for them before you leave.
15. If you don't hear from an employer within 2-3 weeks after an interview, DO NOT send an email asking why. Simply call the employer and politely ask if they need anything further to evaluate your application. Leave a short message if you cannot reach the person who interviewed you, and include your phone number. If you still don't hear back, just let it go.
16. If you learn that you are not being hired for a job you expected to get, you may feel angry or upset. DO NOT choose that moment to send an email (or any other communication) to the employer. Wait a while, then send the person who interviewed you a short email thanking them for considering your application, and expressing the hope that you may someday have a chance to work together.
17. If you already have a job and are trying to find a better one, DO NOT use your current work email account for your job search.
18. DO consider using your email as a handy place to store documents and information. For example, if you are at a public computer and find a good job posting, copy the link and send it to your email address so you can easily go back to it later. Or if you have just updated your resume or your job search record in Microsoft Word or Excel, email the updated version to yourself so you can open it from other locations. If you receive a call from an employer and can't make notes, send an email to yourself so you won't forget who the call was from or how you need to respond.
19. As with all usernames and passwords, DO keep a written record of your email password. But DO NOT keep it on a computer or other internet-connected device that can be hacked, and DO NOT carry it in your wallet, purse, or cell phone, where it can be lost or stolen. For some things, the best technology is still paper, pencil, and a drawer.

How Your Phone Can Help You — or Hurt You

Your phone is your most important link with employers. When an employer reads your application and decides to interview you, they will probably give you a phone call.

If you have a smartphone, you will also probably use it to do online searches, check your email, and use social media. It will be your main job search tool.

There are several very important rules for using your phone during your job search:

1. Use only one phone number. Make sure it is on your resume, and on every job application you file. Then don't change your phone number, or decide to carry more than one cell phone, or make other changes that could cause confusion.
2. Don't let your phone service get cut off. An employer who tries to call you but finds that your phone isn't working will not try again. If you have trouble paying your phone bill on time, call your service provider and work out a payment arrangement that will keep your phone from going dead.
3. When you begin your job search, record a new message for callers to hear if you are not available. It should not be casual or funny, and it should not contain music or other background noise. Instead, it should be professional — for example, "Hello, this is (first name and last name). I can't take your call right now, but please leave a message and I will call you back soon. Thank you."
4. You should also be professional when you answer the phone unless you are sure that the call is from a friend or family member — for example, "Hello, this is (first name and last name)."
5. Don't text employers unless you are returning texts you have received from them. Also, be careful of texts, pictures, and voice messages you send to others, or that you post online. You don't want a statement like "That guy who called me for an interview sounded like a jerk" to be floating around in cyberspace. (The same goes for any messages or pictures that you would not want your mother to see.)
6. Don't call employers to ask if they have job openings unless someone has told you about a possible opening AND you have already checked online to see if it has been posted. But if you have received a good tip and can't find the job posting online, it's okay to call the employer's Human Resources office or, for a small employer, the main phone number. You might say something like: "Hello, my name is (first name and last name). I'm looking for a position as a _____, and I heard that there might be one available at (name of employer). Could you please tell me who I should speak to about it?" If you have to leave a message, don't give the reason for your call. Just leave your name and phone number, and politely ask for a return call.
7. Don't call employers to ask about applications you have filed until at least two weeks after you have filed them. At that point, you might want to follow up to show how interested you are in the job. Try to be helpful — for example, "Hello, my name is (first name and last name). On (date of application) I applied for a position as a (job title). I just wanted to check with you to see if there is any further information you might need to evaluate my application." The answer will usually be "no thanks," but that's okay. You can follow up again in a couple of weeks to see if the position has been filled, but don't call more often than once every 2-3 weeks.

8. If a job posting says "no phone calls," then don't call unless the employer calls you first. Otherwise, the first message you will communicate to the employer is that you don't care much about the employer's rules.
9. When talking with an employer or leaving a message, speak clearly, and don't speak too fast. When giving your phone number, speak slowly enough to allow someone to write it down as you are speaking.
10. When leaving a message with a person or on voice mail, always give your phone number. Don't ever say, "You have (or he or she has) my number." If you find yourself playing phone tag with an employer — if you and the employer keep returning each other's calls but can't connect — end your message by saying, for example, "I'm sorry that we're having a hard time catching up with one another. I'm looking forward to talking with you. Please call me back at your earliest convenience. If you would like to schedule our conversation, please let me know of a day and time that works well for you, and I will call you then. Thank you."
11. Check your phone messages at least once each day, and return calls promptly. Remember that the person who called you may not be the same person who answers the phone. Always be professional when returning calls — for example, "Hello, my name is (first name and last name). I'm returning a call from (Mr. or Ms.) _____."
12. When an employer calls you to arrange an interview, be sure to thank them for the call. If you are in a noisy place, go somewhere quiet. If you are driving, ask for a moment so you can pull over and talk more safely. In addition to any other information that you receive from the caller, be sure to get: 1) the name of the person who is calling you, 2) the name and position of the person (or people) who will interview you, 3) the date, time, and place of the interview, and 4) a phone number to call if you have any trouble getting to the interview. Repeat the information back to the caller to make sure you heard it correctly. Write all of the information down immediately, and put it in a safe place.

But what if you don't have a phone? You need to get one.

If you can't afford a phone, please look into the federal Lifeline Program at www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-affordable-telephone-service-income-eligible-subscribers, or call the Universal Service Administrative Company at 888-641-8722. This program may help you to get a free cell phone, or a discount on either a cell phone or a traditional "wireline" phone service.

Finally, you can learn more about smartphones and other digital mobile devices at www.gcflearnfree.org/devices.

How Social Media Can Help You — or Hurt You

Social media is very popular, and very useful.

People especially like to use Facebook to stay in touch with friends and family, and Twitter to share news and opinions. They also share videos on YouTube, hobbies on Pinterest, professional updates on LinkedIn, pictures on Instagram and Flickr, and many other things on many other social websites.

Social media can be helpful for gathering employment leads, and for passing some of them along as favors to others who may also be in the job market. You can also share your successes and discouragements, and support others as they share theirs.

But be very careful about what you post. Above all, remember that everything you post on the internet will be out there forever, and you can't do much to control it. It could potentially be viewed anytime by anyone, including people you want to get hired by, people who you work with (or for), people who may be considering you for a raise or promotion, people who are among your employer's partners or customers — maybe even someday by your grandchildren.

Employers know all about social media, and they often check the posts of people they hire, or are thinking about hiring.

Always think at least twice before you post anything that involves:

- Illegal activity
- Alcohol or drug use, even if it's legal
- Sexual activity or sexually oriented remarks
- Irresponsible behavior of any kind
- Racist, sexist, or other discriminatory remarks
- Criticism, complaints, or gossip about other people

It's a free country, and you are free to post whatever you want within the safeguards set by law against libel, slander, threats, and other harmful behavior. But other people are also free to respond to your posts in ways that may be unwelcome to you or your employer.

If you can delete any posts that you regret, do so at the start of your job search. They are still out there, but will probably be harder to find. Also, pay attention to the privacy filters that are available on most social media.

P.S. If you have internet access at your new job, remember to wait until you get home to check Facebook.

15. I'd probably just end up getting fired. NO BIG DEAL.

Finding a job doesn't mean you will be happy and secure forever after.

When you hear "You're hired!" you will probably be very happy. But ten minutes later you may be worrying about whether you will fit in, or whether you will be able to do the work, or whether you will get along with your boss and coworkers.

Well, you probably will have problems. Everyone does. You may even fail. Everyone does that too, often in their jobs.

But so what?

Losing a job is no fun. But if you don't have a job right now, then getting fired means you are just breaking even.

Except you're really ahead, because you have already proven that you can find a job. If you can find one job, you can find another.

Here's the bottom line: You only live one day at a time. Every opportunity involves some risk and discomfort. That doesn't mean you shouldn't try to make the most of your opportunities.

If you're afraid of being fired, then feel the fear and move forward anyway.

16. I don't have much job experience. NO BIG DEAL.

Job experience is a good thing. But it's far from the only thing that employers want.

Try this experiment. Do you know people who supervise other employees? Ask them which type of employee they would prefer: An employee with lots of job experience, but who is undependable, dishonest, and hard to get along with? Or an employee without much job experience, but who is reliable, trustworthy, and ready to work as part of a team?

No matter how many supervisors you ask, you will always hear the same answer.

Besides, job experience isn't the only kind of experience that employers value. Have you accomplished things for your family, school, church, or volunteer organization? Have you developed skills in an activity that interests you, and that may relate to a particular type of job? Do you know other people who might be helpful to the employer?

Don't sell yourself short. You probably have more to offer than you realize. If you are interested in opportunities to gain experience, demonstrate your skills, and make job search contacts, a good place to start is the PITTworks Project at the Department of Social Services, www.pittcountync.gov/PITTworks (252-902-1151).

17. I want to be my own boss. NO BIG DEAL.

You already are. So congratulations.

You — and only you — are responsible for everything you do, everything you say, and every decision you make. You will also enjoy (or suffer) the consequences.

But when you think about being your own boss, you might mean setting up your own business. That's different. Even someone who has his own business isn't really his own boss. All bosses have bosses, and if you're the top boss, then your bosses are your customers.

Most small businesses are owned by one or two people who either founded the business themselves, inherited it from a family member, or bought it from a previous owner or a large franchiser. But every small business was set up by someone who wanted to be their own boss.

They probably wanted to be independent, and to enjoy the results of their hard work. But they probably also possessed skills earned through many years of education — like doctors and lawyers who set up their own practices — or other training and experience, like electricians and plumbers who set up their own shops.

They probably also needed to invest their own money, or to borrow money from others. If their businesses failed — as businesses often do — the money would be gone, but the debts would usually stick around.

People who are out of work or who need extra income are understandably eager to find opportunities that promise security and freedom. This can make them vulnerable to fraud. Many fraudulent schemes target people who are unemployed or underemployed but who have savings, or have received an inheritance or cash payment, or have assets or family relationships that enable them to borrow money.

In many cases, these schemes promise easy money with little or no training or experience. They often claim to possess "secrets" about vague strategies like "making money online." Instead of describing specific types of work, they appeal to dreams of wealth. They may also pressure you to make a commitment quickly.

Sometimes the schemes aren't even illegal. For example, millions of Americans have lost money in multi-level marketing (also known as network marketing, referral marketing, or direct selling). The companies that promote multi-level marketing sell participants products or services that their "independent distributors" are supposed to re-sell to others. Participants are also encouraged to recruit more people, with the promise that these new recruits will form a "downline" who will share profits with the "upline" people who recruited them.

Some multi-level marketing companies are very large, and you might hear testimonials from friends, family, or neighbors. But please remember this: More than 99% of the people who join multi-level marketing schemes lose money, and most abandon it within a few months.

For more information about multi-level marketing, check www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/multilevel-marketing.

18. I don't think I could work with people I don't like. BIG DEAL.

Think of all the people you have ever met. You have liked some of them. You have not liked others. Some of them have liked you. Others have not liked you. That's natural.

Having a job means working with other people you have not chosen. You will get along better with some of them than with others.

Being friends with people at work is a good thing. But your job is not to be friends with people. Your job is to work with them. You will almost certainly have to work with some people you don't like.

If you remember a few simple tips, you may find there are very few people you can't work with:

- Treat everyone with respect, and if possible with kindness.
- Don't be too quick to be offended. Everyone has bad days.
- If you find yourself getting mad regularly, or if someone gets mad at you regularly or treats you badly, try to talk it out with them respectfully and privately. Don't complain about them to others. Be willing to listen and to compromise.
- If you can't talk it out directly, ask for help from your boss or your employer's Human Resources Department.

It all comes down to respect, honesty, clarity, and staying focused on getting work done as a team.

19. I hate following rules. BIG DEAL.

A rule has to be followed even when people don't want to. Otherwise it would be called a suggestion.

Every workplace depends on rules. Rules define how everyone's jobs fit together. Not following the rules is the quickest and surest way to fail.

But what if the boss who makes the rules is a jerk? Well, some bosses are.

Most of us have acted like jerks at some point, so maybe we should try to get along with others when they act like jerks too. After all, it doesn't make much sense to say "I'll show them: I'll fail!"

What if the rules are stupid or pointless? One characteristic of good employees is their willingness to suggest improvements, so maybe you could tactfully propose a rule change.

But if the rule doesn't change, remember this: The reason your employer pays you money is because you are NOT doing things that you would happily do for free.

If you have a hard time taking rules seriously, that's something you should work on.

20. I can't stand being rejected or ignored. NO BIG DEAL.

Nobody likes to be rejected or ignored. But it is guaranteed to happen — probably a lot, but probably politely — during the weeks or months that it usually takes to find a job.

You will almost certainly apply for many jobs, and hear “no” many times, or get no response at all, before you finally get to “yes.” But that one “yes” is all that matters.

Accept rejection as a normal part of the process. Deal with it by spending time with other people who will encourage you. Encourage yourself too.

Rejection is unpleasant. But it is only a problem if you let discouragement derail your job search.