

 Targeted Job Search Strategies

## Searching for a Job in Human Services

There are a wide variety of employment opportunities in the Human Services career cluster, many of which represent a good fit for the knowledge and skills gained through your Arts and Sciences education. You are encouraged to explore career options in Human Services if you tend to make statements such as the following:

- I want a job that will make me feel good at the end of the day – something that will allow me to make a difference in another’s life.
- I’m not sure what type of job to look for – I just know I don’t want to work for Corporate America.

The following areas fall under the Human Services umbrella: Counseling and Mental Health, Early Childhood Development, Family and Community Services, Personal Care Services, and Consumer Services. More information about this career cluster is found at <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/careers/cclusters/student/clusters/humansvs.shtml>.

If you are just starting your job search, you’ll want to also review the General Job Search Strategies tip sheets as those documents cover “do’s and don’ts” applicable to all types of job searches.

## How Do I Start a Human Services Job Search?

You need to first identify the service areas that most interest you. Organizations within the Human Services cluster are categorized according to their missions. The following list of keywords is helpful to use when doing general online searches. Check out the Area of Focus menu at <http://www.idealists.org/if/as/Job> for a more complete listing of social sector keywords.

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Children’s Services  | Nutrition               |
| Community Services   | Mental Health           |
| Consumer Protection  | Men’s/Women’s Issues    |
| Disability Issues    | Minority Affairs        |
| Disaster Relief      | Peace/War               |
| Economic Development | Poverty/Hunger          |
| Family/Parenting     | Religion                |
| Housing              | Social Services         |
| Human Rights         | Veterans’ Affairs       |
| Immigration          | Victim Support Services |

List the keywords that most interest you: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Next Steps

Once you’ve identified the service areas in which you are most interested, you are encouraged to take the following steps:

1. Identify the organizations that align with your interest areas. At this point, the goal is to identify the organizations that have operations in the city you are planning to live in upon graduation—don’t limit your search to just those with posted job openings. When developing your list, make sure to search among nonprofit organizations (.org’s), as well as government agencies (.gov’s).

For example, if you are interested in working for organizations that focus on addressing issues of poverty/hunger, and want to work in Columbus, your list of job search targets might include Children’s Hunger Alliance, WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program), Mid-Ohio Foodbank, LifeCare Alliance, and the Social Security Administration, among others.

Helpful resources for completing this step are found in the Resources section on the last page of this document.

2. Research the entry-level positions that you might qualify for upon graduation. Each of the organizations on your target list employ people in a variety of positions, but do they fill positions with recent college graduates? And, if they do, do any of those positions:

- 1) fit with your qualifications (do you have the needed experiences, skills, and knowledge areas)?
- 2) involve day-to-day work that matches your interest areas?

You can gather the information needed to complete this step by

- setting up informational interviews with those who work, or previously worked, at your target organizations
- reviewing job postings for descriptions of duties and qualifications required
- using web sites that are geared toward educating college students about career options (see links at the end of this document)

The overall goal of this step is to decide if it's realistic to keep an organization on your target list. Sadly, it's possible that an organization that interests you might not have positions for which you would qualify.

Along with researching employment options at specific organizations, you may also find it helpful to review the occupational titles that are commonly regarded as entry-level positions within Human Services, some of which are:

Activity Leader  
Adoption Coordinator  
Case Worker  
Community Worker  
Fundraiser  
Mental Health Worker  
Residential Counselor  
Office Assistant  
Program Assistant  
Site Manager  
Victim Advocate  
Youth Minister/Leader

3. Determine which organizations among your job search targets recruit at Ohio State. When using FutureLink, you can search for postings that fall into the Human Services career cluster. You will also want to attend career fairs on campus, and do research before the fair to see which organizations will be in attendance. Many nonprofit organizations and government agencies attend career fairs to recruit for entry-level positions.

4. Get feedback on your resume. Aside from having someone check your resume for errors, you need to know if the content supports your goal to work in Human Services. Does it document your general workplace skills, especially those related to human relations, leadership, and valuing diversity? Does it communicate that you have the potential to succeed in Human Services? You'll stand out if your resume indicates you have worked in some capacity with the population(s) served by your target organization and/or researched the societal issues the organization focuses upon. It's also a good strategy to communicate the value you place upon community service and volunteerism.

5. Apply to postings. Many of your target organizations, especially those in the nonprofit sector, will post their job and internship

openings on their own web sites rather than paying to advertise on national job search sites like CareerBuilder, which tend to focus more on business fields. You can also search for postings on the job boards that are specific to the nonprofit and government sectors, or which directly target those working in Human Services (see Resources section).

## Well Known National Nonprofits Focusing on Human Services

(check the organization's website for job opportunities)

American Cancer Society	Human Rights Campaign
American Heart Association	International Rescue Committee
American Red Cross	Salvation Army
AmeriCorps	Save the Children
Boy Scouts	United Jewish Communities
Catholic Charities	United Way of America
Girl Scouts	YMCA of the USA
Global Impact	YWCA of the USA
Habitat for Humanity	

## Top Human Services Organizations in Central Ohio

(check the organization's website for job opportunities)

American Red Cross	Maryhaven
Children's Hunger Alliance	Mid Ohio Foodbank
Columbus Jewish Foundation	Netcare Food.
Columbus Neighborhood Health Cntr.	North Central Mental Health
COSI	Salvation Army
Buckeye Ranch	Southeast Inc
Goodwill Columbus	St. Vincent Family Centers
HandsOn Central Ohio	United Way of Central Ohio
Heinzerling Foundation	Volunteers of America of Ohio
LifeCare Alliance	Wexner Heritage Village
Lutheran Social Services	YMCA of Central Ohio

6. Contact organizations directly.

Beginning your search with organizations in which you are interested is a good way to start any job search. While it's convenient to apply to job postings, your search cannot stop with that step! Many times, an organization will only post positions they haven't been able to fill through other means. Think of it this way: if an employer has your resume on file and knows you would bring value to their organization, they will likely choose to interview you before they post a job opening to the general population. Consider using the following strategies:

- 1) Leverage your volunteer experience. Contact the organizations where you have volunteered to see if they have any current or anticipated openings. Send your resume and a cover letter to the organizations that are hiring for positions that fit with your qualifications.
- 2) Tap into your network: do any of your network contacts work in Human Services? If so, can they refer you to people who work in areas that have entry-level positions?
- 3) Work for a staffing service that has clients in Human Services. Temporary job placements can lead to regular employment if you do an excellent job as a temp.

- 4) Volunteer for an organization that interests you and which has entry-level positions that you could see yourself doing should an opening become available. Focus on doing an excellent job and networking with those throughout that organization.

## Resources

### Job Posting Sites:

#### General

- FutureLink ([www.asccareerservices.osu.edu/futurelink/student](http://www.asccareerservices.osu.edu/futurelink/student)): postings directed toward Ohio State students
- Idealist ([www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)): database of internships, jobs, and volunteer positions
- Chronicle of Philanthropy ([www.philanthropy.com/jobs](http://www.philanthropy.com/jobs)): focuses on jobs in fundraising and philanthropy
- Opportunity Knocks ([www.opportunityknocks.org](http://www.opportunityknocks.org)): database of jobs; career advice articles; networking resources
- DotOrgJobs ([www.dotorgjobs.com](http://www.dotorgjobs.com)): option to search specifically for entry-level jobs
- InterAction Job Bank ([www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org)): focuses on jobs with international relief and development agencies
- Social Service Jobs ([www.socialservice.com](http://www.socialservice.com)): option to search on jobs by educational requirements
- Human Services Career Network ([www.hs-careers.com](http://www.hs-careers.com)): features job search advice specific to human services
- NPO.net ([www.npo.net](http://www.npo.net)): database of volunteer opportunities, internships and jobs in the nonprofit sector

#### Early Childhood Development

- Education America Network ([www.educationamerica.net](http://www.educationamerica.net)): teaching jobs from around the United States
- Care.com ([www.care.com](http://www.care.com)): search available nanny/child care provider positions
- American Camp Association ([www.acacamps.org/jobs](http://www.acacamps.org/jobs)): listing of summer camp and year-round camp jobs

#### Family & Community Services

- Religious Jobs Network ([www.religiousjobsnetwork.com](http://www.religiousjobsnetwork.com)): aggregated list of religious jobs
- Energize Inc (<http://www.energizeinc.com/jobs.html>): focuses on jobs in volunteer management

#### Personal Care Services

- Care.com ([www.care.com](http://www.care.com)): search available personal and home care aide positions
- Careers in Fitness ([www.exercisecareers.com](http://www.exercisecareers.com)): jobs in training, fitness, strength coaching, corporate fitness
- Jobs for Funeral Directors/Attendants ([www.funeraljobs.com](http://www.funeraljobs.com)): database of nation-wide listings

#### Human Services Jobs in the Government Sector

- USA Jobs ([www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)): online database of jobs within the federal government; students can search via the Occupational Series or with a keyword search (i.e. education, health care, counseling)
- State of Ohio Jobs (<http://careers.ohio.gov/>): online listing of jobs (categories include education, mental health, etc.)
- Go Government ([www.gogovernment.org](http://www.gogovernment.org)): find information on agencies and careers in the federal government

#### General Job Search Tips for the Human Services Sector:

In addition to searching the job boards listed at the sites above, students can learn more about organizations in the human services sector via the use of online directories. The directories listed below are a great way to identify organizations that align with your interest areas.

- GuideStar ([www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)): contains financial information about more than 850,000 nonprofits
- Idealist ([www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)): profiles organizations
- USA.gov (<http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml>): A-Z directory of U.S. government departments and agencies
- State and Local Government ([www.statelocalgov.net/](http://www.statelocalgov.net/)): directory of state, county, and city government websites