

FINDING A TERRIFIC SUMMER JOB



DREW HALL, NORTHAMPTON, MA 01063 413.585.2582 CDO@SMITH.EDU
WWW.SMITH.EDU/CDO

Need to earn money this summer? Use the following tips to find a summer job that will build your bank account as well as your resume. Begin by browsing the resources on the CDO website and in our library, and feel free to discuss your search with a CDO advisor at any time.

Before You Start...

- √ **Define your priorities.** With good planning, you can put your summer together creatively to accomplish multiple goals including earning money in a job and gaining experience in an internship. Strategies for finding or creating internships are in our handout [All About Internships](#).
- √ **Assess what you offer potential employers.** Coursework, extracurricular activities, and other positions you've held all add up to skills and interests employers need.
- √ **Review your finances.** Determine how much money you need to earn this summer.
- √ **Target a geographic area.** This might be in or near your hometown, someplace where you have friends or family to help with housing, or a new place where you'll need to find housing.
- √ **Clean up your Facebook profile** and content on similar sites. Google yourself. Employers do this, and may base hiring decisions on what they see.
- √ **Plan it out.** Some summer job programs have fall deadlines, but many employers hire closer to the summer. Use J-term and school breaks to research prospective employers and to arrange informational interviews with alums and others in your field of interest. If you intern or shadow at an organization during a break, you may be invited back for a paid summer position.

Resources for Your Job Search

- Search the *CDO website*, especially *E-Access*, the *summer links*, and *Vault.com*.
- Look at the *summer job directories* in our library. Ask for assistance at our Help Desk.
- Check the *websites of interesting organizations* to see if they have openings listed. Follow up by phone after you've applied to set up an in-person or phone interview.
- Use the *CareerSearch* database in *Career Field Research* on our website to search for potential employers by career field, geographic location, and keyword.
- *Spotlight on Careers*, also in *Career Field Research*, features field-specific links to job/ internship sites and related professional associations whose websites may list internship and summer job programs.
- Use *your favorite search engine*. Keyword "summer jobs New York City," for example, or "human services agencies Seattle."
- Read the *online newspaper classified ads* in your target city.
- Use a variety of approaches and don't rely on just one or two applications.

Tools for Your Summer Job Search

- √ **Tell people about your job search** such as family, friends, contacts from your hometown, former supervisors, and Smith faculty. Describe what you're seeking and where. Get their ideas.
- √ **Arrange informational interviews with alumnae and others in your fields of interest.** Ask them about their work, how they got started, and whether they have suggestions about your

summer job search. J-term and other breaks are good opportunities for this process. While it's not appropriate to ask an alum for a job, she may be able to offer helpful leads or advice. Consult our AlumNet binders for potential contacts and be sure to follow the guidelines in *Informational Interviewing and the Art of Networking* for proper networking protocol.

- √ **Write a resume and cover letter that market your skills and interests.** To get started, consult the CDO handout *Resumes and Cover Letters*. Bring your drafts to a drop-in.
- √ **Practice a 30-second summary of your skills and interests.** Always have your personal introduction ready to go, wherever you go. A summer job lead may result!
- √ **Consider making a networking card (aka business card)** with your name and contact information. Ask for other people's cards or contact information as well.
- √ **Practice your interview skills.** Read our handout *Interviews* and schedule a practice interview with an advisor. Send a thank you note or email within two days of the interview.

Applying for Summer Jobs

IMPORTANT: While many summer jobs are listed in databases, in print, or on organization websites, **unlisted** opportunities are best discovered through networking and directly contacting organizations that interest you. **Use a variety of approaches and resources as you search.**

- √ **Target a range of organizations.** For example, if you're interested in psychology, you can look for summer jobs in hospitals, mental health clinics, human services agencies, research centers, special-focus schools, or camps, to name a few. Get help from the CDO.
- √ **Research an organization before making contact.** Browse its website, search online for recent news items, and speak to alums or others in the field about it. This will help you decide whether you want to apply and if so, impress the people you contact.
- √ **Try to send your resume and cover letter to a person by name**, not "To Whom it May Concern." Phone or email for the name and title if it's not on the organization's website.
- √ **No job listed?** Email, write, or phone the person who heads up your *specific* interest area to ask about a summer position. Describe your skills and experience and explain why the organization attracts you. If you can't get a name in a specific department, contact the college relations or human resources directors. **Alternate approach:** Email/write the person in charge of your interest area to request an in-person or phone informational meeting. The better researched your inquiry, the more likely the person will be to give you some time. Go for it!
- √ **Go beyond the obvious.** If you're interested in public relations, for example, don't assume PR firms are the only potential employers. Most organizations have PR/communications departments as well as finance, research, marketing, and IT. Dig deeply! You may find a job.
- √ **When in doubt, apply anyway.** If your major, class year, or level of experience don't exactly match an employer's requirements, but you think you're a strong candidate, apply anyway. Stress the skills and experience you do have, rather than what you lack.
- √ **Follow up.** No matter how your first contact is made follow up by phone to reiterate your interest and find out the next step. While you don't want to overdo it, you do want to keep your application active. Exception: When an ad says, "No calls, please," phoning is not advisable.

Some Additional Techniques

√ **Doing a long distance job search?** If you have college friends in your target city, ask them to check their career office databases for local job and internship listings. Browse their schools' websites and use resources such as *CareerSearch*.

√ **Temping.** Most cities have temp agencies—listed online—for short-term jobs. Some specialize in particular fields. Registering with a few may lead to exposure to new fields and a longer-term job. If there's an employer you'd like to work for contact their HR department to ask where they hire their temps.

√ **Going door-to-door,** appropriately dressed, with copies of your resume can be an effective way to meet potential employers. Be polite, patient, and prepared to talk with anyone from the boss on down. This approach is especially helpful in customer service fields such as retail, restaurants, and tourism.

√ **Attending job fairs in your target field and city** can introduce you to potential summer employers, even if the job fair is for full-time jobs. Go professionally dressed, with copies of your resume, prepared to talk about your skills and interests. Collect business cards and make a plan for following up. Job fairs are often listed in the newspaper (hard copy or online).

√ **Start your own business.** Can you teach senior citizens to use a computer or sell items on eBay? Photograph special events? House sit? Design websites? Do home repairs?

Finding Summer Housing

- Look at the *CDO Housing Board* on our website and other online housing resources.
- Contact housing offices at colleges in your target city regarding dorm space.
- Email the Smith Club in your target area, listed on the Alumnae Association website, to ask for advice. **Note:** Some clubs don't have the resources to help with housing.
- Read the online newspaper housing ads in your target city.
- Search online—keyword “summer sublets Boston,” for example.
- Craigslist.org lists apartments and sublets in major cities.
- Need a roommate? Give roommates.com a try.
- Try the Daily Jolt at colleges in your desired location; post a “housing wanted” ad.

Keep in Mind...

Every job can build marketable skills and expand your network. Food service, retail, camp counseling, life guarding, and other traditional summer jobs build marketable skills. If you describe these positions effectively on paper and in person, they can serve you well in the future. Example: A major retailer seeking candidates for its buyer's training program cited food service as excellent background. Whatever position you land, look for an opportunity to make a difference and to show your initiative.

The CDO is happy to help you with your summer plans! Come for a drop-in appointment or visit our resource library, and we'll help you get started.

Suggested Summer Job Search Timetable

The following is a **possible** timetable for making summer plans. Deadlines for highly competitive summer job programs and internships may be in the fall. Keep in mind that many organizations hire summer staff closer to the summer, while others make decisions much earlier.

Go at your own pace and feel free to discuss your summer plans with a CDO advisor at any time.

September – October

- It's not too early to start thinking about your goals for next summer. Do you want to earn a certain amount of money? Test out a career interest? Live in a particular location? Work in a more relaxed setting than during the school year? Build your network? Some combination?
- Consider the skills you offer a potential employer and any issues or organizations that interest you.
- Become familiar with CDO resources: our website, E-Access database, handouts, summer job links, Internship Center, and library resources such as Smith students' Summer Activity Reports.
- Get into the habit of reading our weekly e-news, "What's Happening @ the CDO." It lists some of the positions received that week, our workshops, and employer information sessions.
- No resume? No problem! Read our resume guide and bring a draft to a drop-in. Keep tweaking it.

November – December

- Begin to narrow down what you want to do and where. Consult our online field-specific links.
- A small number summer job programs have deadlines during this period. Examples: some journalism/media internships, summer science fellowships, finance programs. The majority of positions have later deadlines.
- Networking is an important part of any search. Ask Smith faculty to suggest people and organizations. Find out the names of alums to contact. Re-connect with past supervisors. Develop contacts at organizations that interest you. Try to arrange informational interviews over a school break or during J-term. Connections developed over J-term may position you for the summer.

J-Term

- Many students return to their previous summer jobs to earn money. In addition, you can...
- Try to create an internship. It can be one week to the entire month in length.
- Shadow someone for a day to get a feel for their work and work environment.
- Arrange informational interviews with alums and others. (Be sure to keep in touch with them.)
- Just starting to think about the summer? Haven't started your resume? We can help!

February – March

- Many organizations are hiring summer staff now. Get help from the CDO.
- The summer opportunities coming to the CDO increase now, as employers firm up their needs. Browse our e-news and E-Access regularly. Follow other ideas in this guide.
- Just starting your planning and networking? That's OK! Many do this over spring break.
- Apply for several positions, not just one or two. Use a variety of resources and techniques. Follow up!

April – May

- Most organizations know their needs for the summer. If you've made prior contact, you'll be in a better position to secure an opportunity. Keep at it and follow up on previous leads and contacts.
- As the semester ends, consider phoning organizations to ask about employment. Some students may even land summer jobs once they get to their target location.