

The Employment Search Strategy:

For Internships and Full-time Positions

Step 1. Focus your employment search. Identify what you want to do (professional field), for whom you want to work (type of organization) and where you want to live (geographical preferences).

- If you consider yourself a generalist, assess your skill set and determine what professions use those skills.
- If you have significant experience in a particular policy area, either through work or graduate school, identify the kinds of organizations whose work focuses on those fields. This may include a level of government, an area of non-profit work, or a type of private sector industry.
- If you plan to work for a non-profit organization, think about the specifics of the organization for which you hope to work: size, budget, served populations, and location.
- Identify professional associations for the fields in which you are interested and bookmark their sites. Most have free job bulletins that you may want to check regularly.
- If you have strong geographical preferences, this simplifies the identification of professional fields and organizations to those that operate in your chosen locale, but it does narrow your opportunities.
- Select your four or five most promising fields and target your search accordingly. For example, your career objective may be to work at the local level in management or planning, but you also realize your skills are suited to policy analysis. You may decide that a career in policy analysis is acceptable, but only at the municipal or county level.

Step 2. Make contacts.

- Identify La Follette School alumni and other key people in professional fields, organizations, and locations that you identified above.
- Schedule informational interviews or make another form of contact to meet alumni and other key people. The Career Development Coordinator can help you with this.

Step 3. Be prepared.

- Make sure your resume and reference list are current and in top form.
- Have available one copy of unofficial transcripts (make copies as needed) and three copies of official transcripts. You don't want to discover the perfect job only to find that the deadline for applying is day after tomorrow, and it requires official transcripts not in your possession.
- Complete a standard application form that requires you to provide any and all the information that any employer application will require.

Step 4. Search.

- Bookmark websites that have relevant job listings, including the organizations you selected above. Determine which of these you will check regularly; that is weekly or more often.
- Subscribe to the Sunday edition of the major newspapers in the areas where you hope to intern or work and review the classifieds weekly. This is also a great way to get to know the community in which you hope to live.
- Read the Career Development E-Update each week.
- Identify positions that look interesting and for which you think you are *reasonably* qualified. You do not have to possess each and every qualification listed in the job posting to be a viable candidate for the position.
- Identify internships that will provide you with the best experience to complement your graduate studies. Most organizations to which you apply do not expect you to be experienced or accomplished. Every La Follette School student who has completed one year of his or her graduate studies is capable of exceeding expectations of most employers.

Step 5. Apply for Positions

- It is unlikely that you will find a position that matches your qualifications precisely, so be able to articulate the relevance and transferability of your skills and experience.
- Include in the applications that you submit to prospective employers only those materials that have been requested—no more, no less.
- Proofread your cover letter and any supplemental materials. Have at least one other person review these materials for you, as well. Feel free to email your cover letters to the Career Development Coordinators.
- Make sure that your application reaches its destination on or before the closing date of the opening.

Step 6. Track your employment search.

- Document the positions for which you apply and indicate the closing date for the application process. A spreadsheet that includes all the relevant information about each position works well.
- Make copies of all materials you submit for each job application, including the cover letter and the formal application, and file them. A binder divided by professional field or geographic region works well.
- Document the outcome of each application process.
- If you are called for an interview, prepare carefully. After the interview assess your performance.

Step 7. Please keep the Career Development Coordinator apprised of your efforts, so that I can provide encouragement and assistance.