YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM®

Launching an Effective Job Search

Facilitator Guide

FOR THOSE WHO SERVE AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT

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Launching an Effective Job Search

Facilitator Note:

The following two symbols are used as indicators:
💻 *(computer) indicates it is time to advance the slide on the associated PowerPoint;*
✋ *(hand) indicates there is an exercise associated with the content.*

Essential class content is noted in ***bold****.*

All class handouts are available for download on the YRRP website at www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/event-handout. Unless otherwise specified as online only in the Materials section below, all handouts should be printed for distribution to class participants.

Class Description:

This class teaches participants how to identify target jobs based on their transferable skills and discusses how participants can effectively search for jobs. Participants engage in self-reflection exercises to help clarify and solidify their interests, skills, and abilities relevant to target jobs.

Stage:

Pre-deployment, Post-deployment

DoDI:

1342.28 DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)

The content of this class has been developed for the Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State has reviewed the class and is responsible for content management.

Audience:

YRRP attendees

Time:

45 minutes

Equipment:

- Projector
- Laptop
- Pens
- Paper

Materials:

- Facilitator Guide
- Core Material Checklist
- PowerPoint Presentation
  1. Launching an Effective Job Search
  2. Objectives
  3. Satisfying Career Choices
  4. Transferable Skills
  5. Identifying Your Transferable Skills
  6. O*Net OnLine
  7. Your Job Target
  8. Using Your Skills
  9. Values Drive the Where
  10. Considering Job Targets
  11. Common Job-Search Strategies
  12. Hidden Job Market: Networking
  13. Hidden Job Market: Correspondence
  14. Hidden Job Market: Mass Mailing
  15. Open Job Market: Online Job Boards
  16. Open Job Market: Company Websites
  17. Open Job Market: Employment Agencies
  18. Open Job Market: Job Fairs
  19. Persevere
  20. Employment Trends
  21. My Job-Search Plan
  22. Review of Objectives
  23. Launching an Effective Job Search
- Handouts
  1. Self-Assessment: Interests, Skills, and Values
  2. Transferable Skills Exercise
  3. My Job Target
  4. My Job-Search Plan

Exercises:

1. Self-Assessment: Interests, Skills, and Values
2. Identifying and Ranking Your Transferable Skills
3. My Job Target
4. My Job-Search Plan

Objectives:

After completing this class, participants will be able to do the following:

1. Identify transferable job skills, career values, and target jobs.
2. Identify job-search strategies in hidden and open markets.
3. Identify how newer employment trends may impact a job-search plan.
4. Develop a personalized, strategic job-search plan.

Introduction

SHOW Slide 1: Launching an Effective Job Search

Facilitator Note:

Introduce yourself as the facilitator. State your name, military experience or affiliation, and perhaps one additional brief bit of relevant personal information that establishes your credibility (i.e., your professional training or experience).

Please limit your personal introduction to no more than 2 minutes to maximize the time attendees are able to engage with course content, practice skills, and participate in self-reflection activities.

Welcome to Launching an Effective Job Search. In this class, you will learn how to establish job targets based on your transferable skills and career values. You will engage in exercises that will help you clarify and solidify your job targets. You will learn about hidden and open job markets and newer employment trends that may impact your job search. You will also begin to develop a strategic, personalized job-search plan, which can help guide your job-search activity and help you find jobs that match your skills and interests.

SHOW Slide 2: Objectives

At the end of this class, you will be prepared to do the following:

1. **Identify transferable job skills, career values, and target jobs.**
2. **Identify job-search strategies in hidden and open markets.**
3. **Identify how newer employment trends may impact a job-search plan.**
4. **Develop a personalized, strategic job-search plan.**

Learn About Satisfying Career Choices

SHOW Slide 3: Satisfying Career Choices

EXERCISE 1: Self-Assessment: Interests, Skills, and Values

Facilitator Note:

Handout 1 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to identify their skills, interests, and values. This should take approximately 7 minutes.

You may have many career choices to consider if you are planning to transition to a different job. Many military members feel a sense of satisfaction and self-worth from their military career and seek a career in the civilian sector that is also satisfying (Robertson & Brott, 2014). **Job satisfaction is related to the congruence between individual and career-related factors, including the alignment of interests, skills, and values** (Vogel & Feldman, 2009).

Please take out **Handout 1: Self-Assessment: Interests, Skills, and Values**. Identify your career interests, skills, and values by completing the handout. Are there any questions?

STOP the exercise after 7 minutes. PAUSE for responses after each question.

Is anyone willing to share what some of your interests were?

Is anyone willing to share skills or values that he or she rated very high?

Was it helpful to identify your career interests, skills, and values? Why or why not?

If you are not sure about your interests, skills, or values, you may want to consider taking a standardized interest inventory. You can locate free interest inventories online, such as the O*Net Interest Profiler on the My Next Move website at www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip. More resources are available on YRRP's Employment Resource Guide on the YRRP website at www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/employment-resource-guide.

Next, we will discuss transferable job skills.

Identify Transferable Job Skills

SHOW Slide 4: Transferable Skills

"Transferable skills are skills that are needed in any job and which enable people to participate in a flexible and adaptable workforce" (Bennett, 2002, p. 457). For example, you may have acquired skills in past jobs, which can be transferred and utilized in future jobs in a different industry. Taking time to reflect on past experiences and previous positions will help you identify your transferable skills and determine what type of position or tasks you would like to pursue in your next job. Understanding your skills and creating a clear concept of what your job interests are will help clarify your next career move and help you market your top skills to potential employers (van Vianen et al., 2009).

Some examples of transferable job skills include communication, critical thinking, self-management, and interpersonal skills. These are skills you would likely use with any occupation in addition to necessary job-specific skills (e.g., specific knowledge of procedures, technology, language abilities).

SHOW Slide 5: Identifying Your Transferable Skills

EXERCISE 2: Identifying and Ranking Your Transferable Skills

Facilitator Note:

Handout 2 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to identify the skills they have used to perform a duty or responsibility in a previous position or role. This should take approximately 5 minutes.

Please take out **Handout 2: Transferable Skills Exercise**. Look at the example of the completed exercise. After you have reviewed the example, identify one experience, position, or role you have had in the past. Then, in the Duty rows, list two of the main duties or responsibilities you had in that experience, position, or role. In the Skills Used column, list up to four of the most prevalent skills you used in order to perform that duty or to fulfill that responsibility. If you are having difficulty thinking of transferable skills, refer to the Skills section on Handout 1. Next, rate each skill from 1 to 5 on how effectively you feel you used that skill and how much you enjoyed using that skill. Are there any questions?

STOP the exercise after 5 minutes. PAUSE for responses after each question.

Is there anyone willing to share what some of his or her responses were?

How did you decide on the specific transferable skills for the experience, position, or role that you wrote down?

Were you surprised by what you discovered about yourself?

Was it helpful to think about transferable skills and write them down and, then, rate them? Why or why not?

I encourage you to repeat this process by adding a few additional experiences, positions, or roles and by completing the table for each. This exercise can help you recognize themes of transferable skills across multiple experiences.

SHOW Slide 6: O*Net OnLine

Facilitator Note:

*If you have internet access (or if your participants have devices with internet access), it can be helpful to demonstrate O*Net in real time. Go to the O*Net OnLine website at www.onetonline.org, and scroll to the Military Crosswalk near the bottom of the screen. Demonstrate using the crosswalk to search for a participant's Military Occupational Classification (MOC), and examine civilian careers associated with that MOC.*

Sometimes it can be difficult to identify which skills used in the military could be transferred to civilian jobs. **Many military members state that they would like help translating their military occupational skills to the civilian workplace** (Hayden et al., 2014).

One tool that can help you identify transferable skills and possibly target jobs is the O*Net OnLine website at www.onetonline.org. O*Net OnLine allows you to search for your Military Occupational Classification (MOC) by branch of service and, then, produces a list of civilian careers that utilize the skills from your MOC. From this list, you can click on specific occupations and learn about the tasks, technology skills, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform that job. You can also gain valuable information on how much education is required, average salary rates, job demand, and much more.

Identify a Target Job and/or Career Options

SHOW Slide 7: Your Job Target

In order to solidify your job targets, identify what skills you want to use on a regular, day-to-day basis and determine where you want to spend your days using those skills. Some people may know what they want to do but are not sure where they want to do it. For example, you might know that you want to use your strong communication skills and sell products, but you are not sure where you want to use those sales skills. Selling cars at a car dealership is different than selling pharmaceutical products in a doctor's office. Identifying your job target enables you to make informed decisions.

Does anyone else have other examples of the skills he or she would like to use in your next job?

PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: teaching; negotiating; recruiting)

SHOW Slide 8: Using Your Skills

Let's talk about the where. There are three key questions you should ask yourself while you are deciding where you want to use your transferable skills. The first is: **in what type of industry are you most interested and/or comfortable working?** Some examples of possible industries include healthcare, education, business/finance, and government.

Next, **what types of organizations would provide a good fit for you?** Some examples include large corporations, small companies, non-profits, and for-profits.

Finally, **what type of work environment do you value most?** Some examples include structured, flexible, informal, supportive, and competitive.

If you are struggling to answer questions about your skills and work environment, you may want to consider completing a career inventory, which we discussed earlier.

SHOW Slide 9: Values Drive the Where

Your values help determine what is important to you in a career (Savickas et al., 2009). A list of potential values could include making money, having an impact on others, enjoying what you do, and allowing for family time.

Remember, when it comes to values consider what is most important to you. Do not allow others to impose their values on you.

EXERCISE 3: My Job Target

Facilitator Note:

Handout 3 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to think about their skills, values, and job targets and to identify the type of organization where they might like to work. This should take approximately 5 minutes.

Turn to **Handout 3: My Job Target**. The handout is intended to help you identify what you are looking for in an organization.

Remember, as you spend time researching jobs and companies to identify the specific types of jobs you want to target, this list could change. For now, list, at least, your first choice under each category, and answer the four questions about the organization.

PAUSE for participants to write their choices on this handout.

STOP the exercise after 5 minutes. PAUSE for responses after each question.

Does anyone want to volunteer to share his or her job target?

Were you able to at least write down your first choice under each category for part 1?

Why is it important to think about what you want from an organization?

Will this type of exercise assist you as you narrow your search for a job?

Why or why not?

As we continue the class, you may want to make some changes to this list as you begin to develop your job search plan.

SHOW Slide 10: Considering Job Targets

It is important to have a target job and a goal in order to structure your job search. Yet, it is equally important to recognize that the job market will vary based on the economy, geographic region, and current events. Examples include the impact to the economy after the 2008 financial crisis (Baily & Elliott, 2009), the impact on the aviation industry after September 11, 2001 (Gittell et al., 2006), and the impact on hospitality and tourism in areas impacted by Hurricanes Sandy or Katrina (Sydnor-Bousso et al., 2011).

Life events may also impact one's target job. Family events, such as a pregnancy,

caring for a child, caring for an aging parent, or personal illness may cause us to reexamine the goals we set for our job search.

It's important to allow for some flexibility in your job search. You may need to alter, adapt, or postpone your true career goal in order to allow for these fluctuations. **If you are open to broadening your options pertaining to positions, geographic region, industries, and even salary – you may have more options. It's important to be reasonably flexible in your job search but also realistic in that you are not sacrificing what you would need to maintain a living.**

SHOW Slide 11: Common Job-Search Strategies

Let's explore what type of job-search strategies you are already familiar with.

What are some common ways that individuals search for jobs?

PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: online openings; networking; responding to advertisements; walk-in; employment agencies; headhunters)

Each of the job search methods may be classified as existing on either the hidden or open job market. Your goal will be to personalize your approach and maximize your job search outcomes.

Hidden and Open Job Markets

SHOW Slide 12: Hidden Job Market: Networking

You need to be strategic in how you spend your job search time. Focus on investigating the hidden job market through networking because **it is a good way to utilize the hidden job market** (Kaufman, 2011; Van Hoye et al., 2009).

Who are some of your networking contacts?

PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: family; friends; church members; community members; fellow alumni; and fellow military personnel)

Since **70–80% of jobs are found through networking**, you may find it beneficial to use existing online networking sites to help you achieve your networking goals.

If you are interested in learning more about this aspect of the hidden job market, you can find our class Networking for Employment on the YRRP website at www.yellowribbon.mil/courses.

SHOW Slide 13: Hidden Job Market: Correspondence

Another method to search for a job in the hidden market is targeted, tailored correspondence. In this method, **you must take the initiative and contact companies for whom you might like to work. Use of this method would include prioritizing and targeting prospective employers, researching targeted companies, tailoring correspondence through your resume, and initiating follow-up with the company or prospective employer**.

What sources list employers and companies of interest?

PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: Chamber of Commerce; online directories, like Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Monster; CareerBuilder; and USA Jobs)

SHOW Slide 14: Hidden Job Market: Mass Mailing

Another search method for the hidden job market is mass mailing. This method involves the **broad distribution of your resume. Use of this method would include distributing your resume widely to companies and including general correspondence. This method is an effort to put yourself in the right place at the right time**. Keep in mind that even when you are mass mailing your resume, your application materials will need to reflect a targeted job search. For example, **sending one email with your resume and cover letter to multiple employers can be a drawback in your job search process** (Green, 2012).

SHOW Slide 15: Open Job Market: Online Job Boards

Now, we are going to take a look at the top job search methods in the open job market. You want to spend approximately 20% of your job search time using methods in the open job market (Kaufman, 2011; Kuhn & Mansour, 2014).

Online job boards are a popular way to tap into the open job market. **There are three main types of online job boards – general/global, military-related, and local/regional. The first type is the most generic. It consists of a comprehensive array of jobs across multiple industries located throughout the country and internationally. Two examples are Indeed and CareerBuilder.** You can search for jobs in your field of interest and/or geographical location of interest.

Government agencies also provide an online job board. **USA Jobs posts all jobs with the federal government nationwide.** Companies post positions to their state Department of Labor job boards. You can also search for Civil Service positions, which are managed by the state.

Another type of online job board focuses on the military-to-civilian transition. Sites, like **Hire a Hero list job openings within veteran-friendly companies and note jobs that value the skills and traits developed and stressed in the military**.

Local or regional online job boards contain job openings in certain geographic locations. **Almost every county or town/city has a Chamber of Commerce** that serves as a hub for companies and organizations in their area. These chambers often have online job boards for citizens to review. State, city, and county governments often post jobs with their government offices online. Finally, **college and university career centers have job postings that are made available to their students and, possibly, alumni**.

SHOW Slide 16: Open Job Market: Company Websites

Most company websites include a career opportunities section that lists typical job positions and current job openings. You can visit the websites of those companies of interest and explore online job postings (Kuhn & Mansour, 2014).

SHOW Slide 17: Open Job Market: Employment Agencies

Employment agencies help companies find candidates who have the skills and training to fill various jobs. **There are three types of employment agencies: local/county-based, industry-based, and executive search firms**.

Local, or county-based agencies help companies fill part- and full-time vacancies. You can register with a local employment agency and let them know the types of jobs you would consider. Please note that some employment agencies focus on temporary employment.

There are also industry-based employment agencies that help companies within one industry fill jobs.

Finally, **executive search firms, sometimes known as headhunters, work for larger corporations who are looking to fill positions**. Exploring relevant executive search firms can be helpful; it does not hurt to have someone else looking for relevant jobs for you. Just **make sure that the employment service fee is being paid by the employer - not you, the job seeker**. **When you are working with employment agencies, it's important to remember that employers are their customer, so they are often more focused on the employers' needs, than the job seekers' needs**.

SHOW Slide 18: Open Job Market: Job Fairs

There are **two types of job fairs: industry-based and location-based**. Most industries have national associations that have regional and local branches. Many

associations hold annual job fairs. Sometimes, these job fairs are coordinated by your local community college or your local career/employment center. **Research various associations, community colleges, and local government-related career centers to identify any job fairs in your area** (Yate, 2014). **If you are planning to attend a job fair, research the employers who will be attending the fair**. Target specific employers who have openings in your field, and use the fair as an opportunity to discuss these openings with the recruiter.

SHOW Slide 19: Persevere

The process of the job search goes something like this: no, no, no, no-way, no, no, not really, no, no, forget it, no, yes! That one yes is what you need. That is just the nature of the process. Think about softball or baseball hitters. One hit out of three times at bat is considered good. When the hitter has failed two out of three times (the majority of the time) how can he or she go home and feel good about the game? The answer: he or she has accepted the nature of the game. Getting a hit one out of three times is a .333 batting average, which is a very good average in both sports.

Do not take rejections personally. Almost everyone experiences numerous rejections in a job search (Wanberg et al., 1999). You must take your rejections in stride and keep searching!

Employment Trends

SHOW Slide 20: Employment Trends

There are a few newer employment trends that may impact your search; thus, it is important to address them.

The first is **technology.** While every job candidate understands that technology is important, some may not understand how technology may impact the job search.

- **Online recruiting.** We've already discussed online job boards. Indeed claims that 9.8 jobs are added per second, globally, and 250 million people visit their site monthly (https://www.indeed.com/about). While the majority of jobs are on the hidden market, do not overlook the power of technology in online postings.
- **Optical Character Recognition (OCR).** When you apply for a job through a company website, some companies are using OCR (Singh & Finn, 2003). OCR technology uses computer scanners to review resumes and sorts resumes based on qualifications. This is why it is important that you personalize cover letters and resumes to the individual qualifications of each position.
- **Interviewing:** The use of online interviewing is growing, such as Skype, Zoom, and other platforms (Blacksmith et al., 2016). Be sure you are comfortable with

this technology before you are asked to use it during an interview. It can also help with networking and informational interviews.

- **Social media:** Speaking of interviewing, employers may search for candidate information online, including social media (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Make sure that whatever you post is appropriate. Remove posts that are damaging or could be negatively viewed by potential employers.
- **Computer literacy:** Employers expect employees to have computer skills. Studies indicate that computer skills impact employment outcomes, an individual's ability to search for jobs, and an individual's ability to be reemployed after job loss (Peng, 2017). Your computer skills must be solid as you enter the job market. If they are not, consider taking classes through the local library or Department of Labor OneStop. These classes are often free.

Closely tied to technology is **personal branding.** Sometimes, this is called your "digital footprint" or your "online brand." **All online activity leaves a digital footprint**. Everything you do online can be tracked, analyzed, evaluated, and shared. **You can build up your online brand by posting content that is professional and demonstrates your expertise in the area of employment you are seeking**. You can use LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media accounts to publicly post or share information about your expertise, professional goals, and values (Vallas & Christin, 2018).

The world of work is changing and **non-traditional employment patterns** are emerging. While these work patterns may not be part of your job-search plan, you should understand how they provide flexibility and financial resources for some.

- Some individuals use **short-term or gap employment** to fill the space between full-time jobs or between full-time work and retirement (Bidwell, 2013; Ulrich & Brott, 2005).
- At the same time, many individuals work in on demand services, also known as **"gig" employment.** Examples include Uber drivers, delivery drivers, dog walkers, and home cleaners (Donovan et al., 2016).
- For individuals with special skills, employers may use **consultants, contract employees, fee-for-service workers, or temporary workers** (Cappelli & Keller, 2013; Kalleberg, 2000). These positions may have varying hours/stability and often provide primary or supplemental income.
- Finally, some individuals engage in **telecommuting** or working from home, and some research indicates that 26% of individuals have telecommuted at least 5 hours per week or more (Glass & Noonan, 2016). Depending on the work setting, telecommuters may spend a portion of their hours at a worksite and a portion working from home. Others telecommute every day.

It is important for you to consider **geographic mobility** in your job search process. This includes where you are willing to relocate to and how often you are willing to

relocate/travel for an employer. Research demonstrates that various factors impact employee satisfaction upon relocation (Noe & Barber, 1993) and that preparing for relocation can ease these transitions (Martin, 1999). There are important factors when considering geographic location and travel, such as needs of family members. Be sure that you consider these in your job-search plan.

Begin to Develop a Job-Search Plan

SHOW Slide 21: My Job-Search Plan

EXERCISE 4: My Job-Search Plan

Facilitator Note:

Handout 4 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to begin to construct their own job-search plans. This should take approximately 5 minutes.

Now, you are going to begin to design your own job-search plan. We want you to start creating an outline to guide your job-search activity.

Please turn to **Handout 4: My Job-Search Plan**. Look through the handout, and make notations in any areas where you may need to concentrate your time and search. Feel free to use any other handouts provided during this class to assist you.

Are there any questions before you begin?

PAUSE for responses.

STOP the exercise after 5 minutes. PAUSE for responses after each question.

How did that go?

What are some areas that you need to work on?

What is your plan for accomplishing those tasks?

What are your questions concerning your job search?

Summary

SHOW Slide 22: Review of Objectives

Let's see if we met our objectives:

1. **What are your transferable job skills?** *PAUSE for responses.*
   (Possible answers: organizing; planning; delegating; negotiating; teaching; leading; building)

2. **What are your career values*?*** *PAUSE for responses.*
   (Possible answers: making money; helping others; enjoyment; flexibility that allows for family time)

3. **What are your job targets*?*** *PAUSE for responses.*
   (Possible answers: doctor; teacher; engineer; contractor; business owner)

4. **What are job-search strategies in the hidden and open markets?** *PAUSE for responses.*
   (Possible answers: [hidden] networking; targeted; tailored correspondence; [open] online job boards; company websites; employment agencies; job fairs)

5. **What are some of the newer employment trends that may impact your job search?** *PAUSE for responses.*
   (Possible answers: technology, personal branding, nontraditional employment patterns, and geographic mobility.)

6. **Did you start developing a personalized, strategic job-search plan?** *PAUSE for responses.*

SHOW Slide 23: Launching an Effective Job Search

Thank you, and please complete your evaluation for this class.

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