

# 20 TIPS FOR JOB HUNTING IN A TOUGH ECONOMY

*Presented by the CDO Advisory Taskforce*

1. **Be Aggressive in Your Job Search** – Open doors for yourself and *step away from the computer!* There are jobs available – but you cannot afford to be a passive job-seeker sitting behind a computer and hoping a job will be posted just for you. Generate a list of contacts, pick up the phone, meet people for lunch, and tell everyone you know about your job search. Solicit information from them on potential contact persons related to the jobs you are pursuing.
2. **Look for Opportunities to Explore a Variety of Practice Areas While in Law School** – If you have not chosen a specific area of law, don't be afraid to explore a variety of practice areas. A varied resume provides an opportunity to demonstrate your familiarity in a variety of practice areas and types of law. Versatility is key! It also gives you an opportunity to develop variety of skills that can help you as a lawyer.
3. **Tap Into Your Interests** – What was it that made you come to law school? What are your professional interests? Answer these questions and seek positions related to the answers. Employers seek job candidates who convey enthusiastic interest and commitment to their areas of work.
4. **Reach out to Solo Practitioners, Smaller & Mid-Sized Law Firms** – Just because corporate America and the larger law firms that may handle their legal matters are in an economic crisis does not mean that the world stops turning for local businesses and individuals. Some solo, smaller and mid-sized law firm practices are booming! Use [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com), Legal Times Directory (MD/DC/VA), and bar association directories to generate a list of these employers to contact. Ask how: [careerdv@law.umaryland.edu](mailto:careerdv@law.umaryland.edu).
5. **Network, Network, Network** – People you know can often help get your resume noticed. You already have a host of contacts – law school professors and administrators, undergraduate professors, previous employers, former classmates, friends, relatives, gym buddies, neighbors, and so forth – people who may know lawyers. Talk to them about their careers and who they know, have them review your list of contacts, send them your resume for future forwarding and follow up with them regularly.
6. **Attend EVERY LAW-RELATED EVENT** – Go to every bar meeting, CLE, conference, school event, networking reception, panel discussion and pro bono training possible. Don't just attend but actively participate by engaging other attendees in conversation. The legal profession is a social profession, especially on a local level. Take the initiative to develop a network of contacts, thus demonstrating to prospective employers that you have business development skills!
7. **Volunteer** – Is there a legal conference coming into town? Volunteer to work the event. A legal charity event? Volunteer to fundraise and gain access to well-connected individuals. Love animals? Volunteer at the local SPCA to walk dogs. ALL of these are resume-builders and ways to meet new people who know attorneys.
8. **Rethink Your Idea of the 'Ideal' Job** – Few, if any, jobs are perfect. As you start your career, look for jobs that help you develop solid lawyering skills. Research, writing, public speaking, analysis, problem-solving – all are transferable legal skills. Consider training opportunities, the type of work assigned to new attorneys, and the method of work distribution. Don't limit your search only to jobs in your "exact" area of interest but also consider jobs in related and different areas that help you gain transferable legal skills.

9. **Knowledge is Power** –Research the “hot” areas of the law that offer the most opportunities and be in the know about emerging areas of practice. The change in the presidential administration and federal stimulus legislation will bring a host of opportunities in regulatory and health law, among others. Bankruptcy, foreclosure litigation, intellectual property, foreign corrupt practices, and insurance defense are some other booming areas of practice.
10. **Brush up on Your Language Skills** – Language skills are very attractive to many types of private and public sector employers. Use your free time to learn or re-learn a foreign language – it’s a great resume builder!
11. **Don’t Neglect Your Relationships** – Personal relationships are worthy investments for personal and professional reasons. Make time for your spouse, partner, friends, parents, and those who care for your welfare. Connect with your professors and classmates. Get to know your classmates; share your experiences and goals. Become interested in other’s careers. You will be colleagues in the profession and it’ll pay off in the long run.
12. **Use Online Social Networking Cautiously** – Employers “Google” potential hires and interviewees. They find Facebook page and judge you by the pictures and comments displayed. If you choose to participate in these websites, make sure your privacy settings are high and the content is clean. To be safe, stick to professional networking sites such as “LinkedIn” (which has led to job opportunities!).
13. **Tailor Your Application Materials** – Your cover letter should speak to the specific reasons you are well suited for the position to which you are applying. Review your resume for emphasis on the experiences that most qualify you for the position. All your materials must be error-free: ask a career counselor to review them.
14. **Make the Most of Interviews (including informational interviews)** – Always be positive and avoid any negative comments. Research the job and talk to a people who work there. Show your enthusiasm and demonstrate your ability to be through by acquiring more than a cursory knowledge of the position.
15. **Be Mindful That We Are All in This Together** – Employers, students, alumni, law schools – everyone is dealing with problems stemming from the current economic climate (layoffs, budget cuts, lack of resources, anxiety about the uncertainties). Be aware when you speak with others that the economy is affecting them too.
16. **Consider a Change of Scenery** – Not tied to any one geographic location? Consider how moving to another geographic location that may provide more opportunities. In Maryland, areas such as Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore have vibrant legal communities. Conduct informational interviews with alumni and local practitioners to get on the radar for future job openings.
17. **Find a New Hobby** – Always wanted to try jujitsu? Been dying to learn to cook? Now is the time to try new things and meet interesting people (back to the networking thing again!).
18. **Consider Temporary Work** – Temporary and short-term work can sometimes lead to a permanent job. If you do an excellent job, the employer may consider you for permanent employment or recommend you to another promising employer. At minimum, you will earn income and establish new contacts that may lead to a new job.
19. **Recognize That Results Take Time** – Don’t be discouraged if your initial efforts do not produce immediate results. You are investing in your career, not just any job. Effective job-hunting takes time.
20. **Keep in Mind - Your First Job is Not Your Last Job** - You are not likely to retire from your first job. As you consider job opportunities, think about where a given job might lead you. For instance, if you are pursuing a private practice law firm job, but ultimately want to work in public service, look for a job that credits you for time spent on *pro bono* activities or where there is a strong network of attorneys working in public service.

Questions? Contact the CDO: 410-706-2080, [careerdv@law.umaryland.edu](mailto:careerdv@law.umaryland.edu)