Job Search Strategy

**Step One: Create/Refine Your List of Goals**

1) Create a list of short-term and long-term career goals.

2) Use resources like *The Pathfinder* and *What Color Is My Parachute* to determine what you're good at and/or passionate about.

3) Determine what the range of salaries is for each type of job in which you are interested.

4) Determine what your ideal, realistic salary goal is.

**Step Two: Create/Refine Resumes, Cover Letters, and Follow-up Letters**

1) See your paralegal studies professors for tips on writing resumes and cover letters.

2) Create/refine your resume.

3) Create/refine generic
   a) Cover letters;
   b) Follow-up letters.

4) Have someone proofread and review the documents generated in item #s 1 & 2.

5) Make any necessary revisions.

**Step Three: Make Three Master Lists of Potential Jobs**

1) Look for both advertised and unadvertised jobs. Many of the jobs available in the law are never advertised.

2) Look for advertised jobs and job search tips in the following places:
   a) American Association of Paralegal Education (AAfPE): [www.aafpe.org](http://www.aafpe.org);
   b) American Bar Association (ABA): [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org);
   c) Boston Bar Association (BBA): [www.bostonbar.org](http://www.bostonbar.org);
   g) Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA): [www.massbar.org](http://www.massbar.org);
   h) Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly: [www.msslaw.com](http://www.msslaw.com);
   i) Massachusetts Paralegal Association (MPA): [www.massparalegal.org](http://www.massparalegal.org);
   j) National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA): [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org);
   k) National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL): [www.abanet.org/nawl](http://www.abanet.org/nawl);
   l) National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA): [www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org);
   m) Local/regional newspapers.
n) Look at advertisements from and web sites for any institution that is likely to have a legal department:
   i) Corporations;
   ii) Hospitals;
   iii) Schools;
   iv) Federal, state, and local government.

3) Look for unadvertised jobs and map the legal world in your area by looking at Martindale Hubbell on-line at www.martindalehubbell.com (Martindale Hubbell lists law firms and other legal entities by area of practice and location):
   a) Make a list of places by location (look at any locations you can get to by car, T, commuter rail, etc.) and area of practice (divide these areas of practice into litigation and non-litigation areas).
   b) Use this list to make calls for informational interviews.

4) Make three master lists: one for advertised jobs, one for unadvertised jobs, one for contacts obtained via networking.

**Step Four: Apply for Advertised Jobs, Set Up Informational Interviews, and Network**

1) Systematically apply for advertised jobs and continue to check the sources listed above so that you can be aware of newly advertised jobs posted since your initial check of these sources.

2) Follow up on networking leads by setting up informational interviews and continue to network.

3) Use your master list of unadvertised jobs obtained from Martindale Hubbell and other sources to begin setting up informational interviews.

4) How to set up an informational interview:
   a) Initial call: "Hi, my name is ________________, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Who would I speak to in order to set up an informational interview (or May I speak to the person in your firm/agency who hires paralegals to set up an informational interview)"
   b) Speaking with specific person: "Hi, my name is ________________, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Would it be possible for me to set up such an informational interview at a mutually convenient time?"

5) How to set up an informational interview from a networked contact:
   a) Initial call: "Hi, my name is ________________, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. ______________
suggested I contact you. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Who would I speak to in order to set up an informational interview (or May I speak to the person in your firm/agency who hires paralegals to set up an informational interview)?"

b) Speaking with specific person: "Hi, my name is __________________, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. ______________ suggested I contact you. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Would it be possible for me to set up such an informational interview at a mutually convenient time?"

6) Treat each informational interview like a job interview:
   a) Dress as you would for a job interview.
   b) Bring copies of your resume, a writing sample, references, etc.

7) At the end of each informational interview,
   a) Thank the person for his/her time.
   b) Say something like the following: "I'm really interested in the kind of work you do! Please keep my resume on file, and if a suitable job opens up here, please contact me! It would be an honor to work with you all!"
   c) Then say something like: "I'm interested in finding out all I can about this area of the law. Do you know anyone else in the area who practices this type of law?"
   d) If they give you a name, be sure to get contact info. for the person, and then say something like: "When I contact __________, may I say that you suggested I contact him/her?"
   e) End by thanking the person once more for his/her time.

**Step Five: Interview & Follow-up**

1) See your professors for tips on interviewing.

2) Follow up with a thank you note.

3) Call the person after a reasonable amount of time.

**Other Resources**

*Setting Goals/Finding Your Passion*


**Paralegal Careers**

**Paralegal Job Searches**

**Paralegal Internships**

**Resumes & Cover Letters**

**Networking**

**Interviewing**