



Senator Luann Ridgeway – Serving Clay County

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[Finding a Job in a Difficult Economy](#)

With a state unemployment rate of approximately 8 percent, many Missourians are trying to find a job in what is one of the worst economic slumps in recent history—not an easy task. Recently, I've been asked by some constituents my advice for looking for work, and I thought devoting a capitol report to job-searching ideas and resources would be beneficial to any job seeker. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this information, please pass it along. Finding a job is difficult as it is, and we can all use a little extra help.

The first thing to remember is that finding a job is an active, not passive, activity—especially in this economy. For most people these days, whether they find a job will depend on their initiative and hard work, not on an employer recruiting them or the “perfect” job falling into their lap. Consider finding a job a full-time job; your success depends on what you are willing to put into it. Expecting to land a great job with minimal effort is probably unrealistic.

The website and/or contact information for the resources mentioned below is listed at the end of this capitol report.

Before you begin your job search, consult the 2009–2010 Missouri Career Guide. This guide, produced by the Department of Economic Development (DED) is an excellent resource for tips and advice on looking for a job, beginning a new career, going back to school, handling your finances and interviewing. The guide also points to additional resources that may be helpful in a job search.

Also, consider visiting the local Missouri Career Center for assistance. The staff at Missouri Career Centers, which are located throughout the state, provides personalized career assistance to job seekers at no cost. The center can help you create or update your résumé, complete job applications, practice and improve interviewing skills, and learn to use office equipment, such as

computers, telephones and copiers. In Clay County, a center is located at the Maple Woods Community College.

For actual job listings, the consummate site for available jobs in Missouri is MissouriCareerSource.com (operated by the DED). The site currently has more than 10,000 openings across the state, and provides customizable search options by location, job title and minimum wage or salary.

For all open state positions, a must-visit is the State of Missouri employment website. Here you will find a listing of all available state jobs, including openings within individual agencies and the various departments. All public colleges and universities across the state are listed on the site with a clickable link that takes you to their employment opportunities; there is also a link to federal government jobs available in Missouri. Through the state employment site, you can also access a comprehensive listing of Kansas City-area employers that post job opportunities online.

Using wide-ranging job websites such as Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com (the *Kansas City Star's* online job search is powered by Careerbuilder.com) that allow you to search for jobs anywhere in the country is one of the most convenient ways to look for employment. On these sites, you can tailor your search to your exact specifications. You can also create a profile and post a résumé for potential employers. Craigslist.com is another great source for online job listings; it tends to attract smaller companies and businesses that are looking to hire.

Traditional newspaper help-wanted ads are another source not to be overlooked. Many times you will find a job listing there that will not be anywhere else, so it's well worth checking the classifieds a few times a week. Job fairs are also an excellent source of employment leads. These events are a convenient way to meet several potential employers at the same time. WorkSmart Missouri, which is maintained by the DED, provides a listing of upcoming job fairs on its website.

I do know of one specific opportunity in the financial field. For those with basic experience and/or a bachelor's degree in accounting, the Internal Revenue Service is actively looking to hire permanent, full-time employees—particularly revenue agents. Anyone with a bachelor's degree in accounting would be eligible; however, those with work experience in accounting would be more qualified. The IRS also has a variety of different positions available in addition to revenue agents. For more information, visit the [IRS career website](#).

It's often said it's not what you know, but who you know. With job opportunities fewer and farther between, your contacts could make the difference between you finding a job in your field and having to settle for something less. To increase your chances of finding a good job, one of the best things to do is meet new people, especially in your industry. If you have an established career, perhaps consider joining a professional organization. The Internet Public Library (www.ipl.org) has a comprehensive listing of associations and organizations on its website, as does the American Society of Association Executives.

Social media is another often-overlooked job searching and networking tool. Online professional networking sites, such as [LinkedIn](#), are a great way to stay connected to people in your industry and to foster new business contacts. LinkedIn helps you keep in touch or reconnect with former and current colleagues and classmates, perhaps giving you job leads or suggestions for where to look in your area of expertise. [Facebook](#) can also be a good way to meet people with common interests, which may tip you off to a potential job opening.

For high school and college students and recent grads who are looking for a temporary summer job,

the Next-Generation Jobs Team was assembled to help young adults ages 16 to 24 gain work experience in growing fields, such as technology and health care. This program provides a great opportunity for students and new grads to learn new skills, get real-world experience, make useful contacts and earn extra money. It runs from May 1 to September 30.

Another option for young adults is to consider joining the military. All of the branches of the U.S. military and their Reserve and Guard units provide training and educational opportunities across numerous career fields. By committing to serve your country, you can also have access to higher education tuition benefits down the road. Though this path may not be for everyone, it is certainly a great alternative for those who are interested.

In closing, looking for a job, especially when you have been out of work, or you are a new graduate with limited experience, can be a very frustrating process. Promising leads often go nowhere and interviews may seem impossible to get. Still, it's important to stay positive and keep persevering. The right job will come along and your hard work and diligence will pay off, even if it takes some time.

Resources

- [Missouri Career Guide 2009–2010](#)
- [Missouri Career Center - Kansas City North](#) (located at Maple Woods Community College), 3100 N.E. 83rd, Suite 1201, Kansas City, MO 64119-4465; phone: 816-437-3635; fax: 816-468-1943
- Job Fair Listings – [WorkSmart Missouri](#)
- Professional Associations Listings – [Internet Public Library](#) or [ASAE Gateway to Associations Directory](#)

Job Listings

- Missouri Career Source – www.missouricareersource.com
- Missouri State Jobs – www.mo.gov/mo/stjobs.htm
- Kansas City-area Employers – www.motrav.com/business
- Federal Government Jobs – <http://usajobs.opm.gov>
- Careerbuilder.com – www.careerbuilder.com
- Monster.com – www.monster.com
- Jobster.com – www.jobster.com
- Craigslist.com – www.craigslist.com

Youth Resources

- Next-Generation Jobs Team – <http://transform.mo.gov/summerjobs> or call 1-800-592-6020 to apply.
- U.S. Military – <http://www.todaysmilitary.com/>

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