

ABC's of Launching a Job Search by Cyndi Baldwin, Career Alliance Director, St. Jude Catholic Church

In the course of this past year there is hardly an organization, family or person that in one way or another has not been negatively impacted by the downturn in our economy. While we all await and hope we will soon see an economic recovery, there are many who are fearful, uncertain and anxious. It is in the face of times like these that the Church, and especially parishes, are called to respond with pastoral care and loving concern in whatever ways that it can. Below are a few tips if you, or a family member find yourself launching a new job search.

A – Apply for unemployment benefits ASAP! Doing so is easy; you can start the process on-line. To see if you qualify, go to:

<https://services.twc.state.tx.us/UBS/changeLocale.do?language=en&country=US&page=/security/logon.do>

You Will Need:

- Last employer's business name and address
- First and last dates (month, day and year) you worked for your last employer
- Number of hours worked and pay rate if you worked this week (including Sunday)
- Information related to your normal wage

B – Begin your job search immediately, don't wait to clean out the garage, clean the house or finish that "honey-do" list. If you don't have your resume ready, you will need to begin with updating or creating a new one. St. Jude's Career Alliance site has some information on creating a resume and cover letter, as well as putting together your 'success' stories. Our newly created site can be viewed at www.ntxcatholiccareers.org. This site also has a job bank and calendar of upcoming seminars or career fairs. **Our next St. Jude Career Alliance job search skills seminar is on Oct 31st at 9:30am.**

C – Create a new, professional email account on gmail.com and a LinkedIn profile. Creating a professional sounding email account on gmail.com is easy. It is important to stay away from personal email accounts with names like: hotmommaof3@aol.com or studrob@att.net – instead use your name and/or initials to create an account. Even if you have a professional sounding personal account, you will still want to create a new email account to use just for your job search. You don't want your family sharing this account (little Johnny might accidentally delete a very important email).

Job referrals constitute over 80% of job placements in the US. Using LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) to connect with current and past colleagues, community connections and friends from across the country is a great way to begin the referral process. Try and get as many 'recommendations' as you can – recruiters check LinkedIn too – so be careful what you put on your profile and be sure to read any recommendations before accepting them. The St. Jude Career Alliance has started an online group on LinkedIn to help you network. Once on LinkedIn, go to "Groups" and search for St. Jude Career Alliance and join.

D – Don't get down on yourself, or live in **denial**. Go to networking events, seminars, talks in your area, go to Mass and pray (a lot and often). You are not in this alone! St. Jude keeps a calendar of upcoming area events for the unemployed or underemployed at: http://stjudeparish.mhsoftware.com/ViewCal.html?calendar_id=44&approved=1&dropdown=0

E – Education and training – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has funds available for training & re-training. Go to <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/dirs/wdas/wdamap.html> for more information. For other job search tips and training, plan on attending our St. Jude **Brown Bag Networking Lunches** on the **1st and 3rd Thursday of the month** in the Parish Hall at 11:30.

F – Food stamps, and other federal help, are available if you need it. There is even a one-time TANIF check that almost all Americans qualify for during times of need. To find out if you might be able to get food stamps, go to <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/programs/FoodStamps/estimator/index.html>. This tool only gives estimates and does not take the place of the [HHSC application process](#). If the results of the estimator show that your family might be able to get food stamps, fill out an [application](#) and return it to a [HHSC benefits office](#) near you.

Last, but not least, contact Allen Community Outreach www.acocares.org to see what Local, State and Federal help you are qualified to receive. When in doubt as to where to turn for health and human service assistance, Allen Community Outreach's Information & Referral serves as a facilitator, broker and advocate. They can be reached at 972-727-9131.