

The summer job search: It's tricky but totally possible

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June 18, 2015

ELD — In the Berkshires, businesses need access to a pipeline of skilled workers so that they can stay competitive and continue to grow. Access to these employees is essential for the local economy to prosper.

One way to tap into this resource is through the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund, which offers several types of grants to support the training of state businesses. These resources are available to businesses of all sizes, but there's a major gap for small to medium-sized businesses. The Workforce Training Fund helps address this gap by providing resources to businesses for current and newly hired employees.

The Berkshire County alone, more than 100 companies have received more than \$1 million in resources from the Workforce Training Fund, which is used to train 9,322 workers. It's a way to learn more about

what the workforce-training fund can offer your business.

On July 12, the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and BerkshireWorks Career Center will host a Workforce Wednesday employer workshop to help companies learn more about these resources and how to learn the tricks of the trade to submit a quality application. The session will take place from 10 a.m. to noon at BerkshireWorks, 160 North St. in Pittsfield.

To register, visit WorkforceTrainingFund.org. This session will be geared to you and your business needs.

Having a trained workforce means your workers are learning new skills that can improve production, cut the time that is spent in creating your product or service, reduce production costs and mistakes, build confidence in your workforce, and create a better working environment. An investment in your employees' skill sets is an investment in your company.

SUMMER AND THE JOB OPPORTUNITY

The dog days of summer are almost here, but don't let that stop your job search. People do get hired in the summer; it's a myth

that they don't.

Sure, people are on vacation, so scheduling interviews may slow the process down a little.

But don't let that stand in your way. And, it's also a myth that there aren't any jobs out there.

Last week, Job Quest listed 1,609 job opportunities in Berkshire County with eager companies ready to fill vacant positions.

There are also hundreds of jobs posted on indeed.com; BerkshireJobs.com; BerkshireEagle.com, and others. These jobs range from highly skilled engineering positions to entry level sales/production jobs.

Conducting a job search during the summer can be tricky due to the vacations, but be patient and persistent and you might just find that perfect employment opportunity.

Here are some ways to tailor your job search activity for the summer:

- **Network Online:** Even if your summer may be jam-packed with fun activities, it's likely you'll have a half hour each week to spare. Make time each week to attend a virtual networking event for at least 30 minutes. It's not a major time commitment, and the

reward could be huge.

- **Unexpected networking opportunities:** Summer is a social season, so take advantage of activities like barbecues, playing golf or attending neighborhood get-togethers. Stay active in community events. Always carry a few business cards wherever you go.

- **Consider contract-to-hire positions:** Many organizations will hire contract employees during the summer to fill long leaves of absence. If the timing is right, these positions could turn into permanent employment.

- **Make a pitch for summer "internships":** Don't just focus on permanent, full-time jobs; consider adding internships or consulting services to your job search. Many off season opportunities and/or internships can lead to freelance jobs, temporary employment or even full-time positions. Providing vacation coverage could lead to a more permanent opportunity if you have the ability to showcase yourself. A company may also want to get a head start on a longer-term project during the lighter summer season and could use extra experienced hands to get started.

- **Take a vacation:** Finding a

new job is tough. It's stressful and confusing. It drains your energy. A vacation — no matter how small — is a great way to recharge your batteries and get a fresh perspective on things. Go out for a walk, head out to dinner with a friend, rent a movie, or participate in one of your favorite hobbies.

Taking a few hours to relax can help you refocus your job search efforts and bring back your sanity.

If you are just starting a job search, don't assume the summer is too slow to gain traction. Use the summer to research company targets, update your marketing material, and rekindle personal contacts so that when the busy fall season hits you're ready to move quickly.

While it's important to take some time for yourself and enjoy life outside the workplace, it's also important to stay on your game.

You never know when that life-changing opportunity will present itself.

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