



## Four Places to Seek Help From While Job Hunting

By AnnaMaria Andriotis  
September 9, 2008

**THE BAILOUT OF Fannie Mae** (FNM<sup>1</sup>) and **Freddie Mac** (FRE<sup>2</sup>) may make it easier to land an affordable mortgage<sup>3</sup>, but whether it can do anything to ease the pain in the job market is questionable.

The downward spiral of the housing and financial markets have taken a toll on the labor markets that the rescue plan alone can't undo, says Beth Ann Bovino, senior economist at Standard & Poor's.

According to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment rose to 6.1% in August 2008, a five-year peak. During the past year, the number of unemployed workers increased by 2.2 million.

Unfortunately, these dismal figures are expected to get worse before they get better, says Bovino. "We expect unemployment to continue to rise and to peak at the end of 2009 at about 6.6%," she says.

As layoffs continue, the competition for job openings grows increasingly heated. As a result, more people are turning to career coaches, government-funded centers and non-for-profit organizations for job training services.

"A year or so ago...there were so few people coming through here," says Dave Heffernan, spokesman for the nonprofit career assistance center, 40Plus of Greater Washington. "Now, we see new faces every week."

From career coaches to community programs, here are some resources aimed at helping the unemployed get back on their feet.

### Career Coaches

While using a career coach is no guarantee that a person will land a job, they can certainly provide a leg up, says Debbie Wise, career services manager at the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD).

Working with groups or individuals, career coaches help clients write resumes, put together work portfolios and practice interviewing and networking skills, says Ford Myers, president of Haverford, Pa.-based Career Potential, a career coaching and consulting firm.

Programs can cost a pretty penny, though. A one-on-one session runs anywhere from \$100 to \$250 per hour, says Laura DeCarlo, president of Career Directors International, a professional career association in Melbourne, Fla. Myers' six-month coaching program costs around \$7,000 per person. And, of course, results vary. While some individuals will find a job in two weeks, others may take several months, says Bonnie Monych, a Houston-based career coach.

Career coaches also need to be chosen wisely. The industry isn't licensed and therefore fraudsters do exist, says DeCarlo. Seek coaches who come recommended by family or friends, have practiced for several years, and are certified by an accredited association, like [Career Directors International](#) or [those recommended by the ASTD](#).

### Career Web Sites

For do-it-yourselfers who don't require the face-time and personalization that a career coach offers, web sites such as [Monster.com](#) and [Vault.com](#)<sup>4</sup> are helpful resources.

Beyond just job postings, these sites offer networking tips, as well as information on which industries are hiring and salary trends. There's also resume-writing help. Both sites feature resume advice (like readiness quizzes or sample

resumes) for specific industries including finance, law and nursing. And, at Vault.com, an "expert" can review and edit a resume and cover letter starting at \$129 and \$74, respectively. The site also offers career coaching and other services.

## Free Government-Backed Assistance

### One-Stop Career Centers

Can't afford a career coach or "expert" resume-reviewer? With a little patience, you can receive similar assistance for free.

Each state receives funding from the federal government for so-called one-stop career centers. Services vary by center, but can include access to personal computers and job databases, onsite childcare, interview preparation and training events.

"These centers give fairly comprehensive assistance," says Trudi Renwick, senior economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute. But there are some pitfalls. Among them, long waiting lists, she says. "They can't service all the needs of people."

To find a one-stop career center, visit [www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)<sup>5</sup>.

### Trade Adjustment Assistance program

Workers who lose jobs to outsourcing or because cheap imports put them out of work, may qualify for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Administered in part by the Employment & Training Administration (ETA), the program trains workers to rejoin the workforce and offers a job search allowance and/or a relocation allowance if employment is only available outside their commuting area.

Many hurdles exist to enter, however. Among them, the applicant must be part of a group that was laid off or that's being threatened with layoffs. With a workforce of fewer than 50 people, they must be one of at least three laid-off workers. With a larger staff, at least 5% of the employees must be affected.

To apply, a group of workers must file a petition with the U.S. Department of Labor's Division of Trade Adjustment Assistance requesting certification as a worker affected by foreign trade. Once certified, each unemployed worker can visit a local one-stop career center to sign up for the TAA's services.

## Nonprofits

Nonprofits not only exist for curing autism and helping victims of domestic violence; there are also some that help the unemployed re-enter the workforce.

One of the largest career-oriented nonprofits is 40Plus, which has independent chapters throughout the country including Washington, D.C., New York and Ohio. The D.C. chapter offers four-week training programs with no more than seven individuals per class, says Heffernan. The cost: \$595 for eight sessions.

Don't forget to look to community organizations for help as well. Many community colleges and churches offer job workshops, which help people with resumes and networking skills. As an added bonus: Career coaches often attend these church events and offer their services for free, says Monych who does just that at her church in The Woodlands, Texas.

Links in this article:

<sup>1</sup><http://www.smartmoney.com/cfscrips/director.cfm?searchstring=FNM>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.smartmoney.com/cfscrips/director.cfm?searchstring=FRE>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.smartmoney.com/deal-of-the-day/index.cfm?story=20080908-fannie-freddie>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.vault.com/>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.servicelocator.org>

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