



Opening Doors Job Fair: Guidelines for Participants

Register first: Ensure you get the job search assistance and support you'll need during and after the job fair. For registration go to: mnlct.org/openingdoors

Customize your resume: It is best to have resume versions targeted for different positions, not a one-version-fits-all style. Have your resume reviewed prior to the job fair. The day before the event, employment professionals will be available to have a one-on-one meeting to review your resume.

Practice your sales pitch: Rehearse a brief introduction (30 seconds to 2 minutes). Be able to tell the employer about your employment goal(s). Depending on the position of interest, include industry "buzz words". Do your homework and research employers. Visit employers' web sites to learn more about their mission, annual budget, and organizational structure. This will enable you to ask good questions.

Strategize: Make an "A" list (must meet) and "B" list (nice to meet, if time permits). Go to a few "B" list employers first to practice your introduction and questions. Then you'll be warmed up and feel more confident when you meet your "A" list musts.

Present a professional version of yourself: Dress conservatively, with minimal make-up or jewelry. Avoid perfume or cologne. Quality appearance means quality work for most employers. First impression matters. Smile.

Check your attitude: Be optimistic, but have realistic expectations. You will meet employers who are interested in hiring in your field. Vacancies may be ongoing or upcoming, not immediate, but when opportunities occur, the employer will remember you because of their first impression of you.

Make your rounds: Stop by at each exhibitor. Get as much information as you can. Pick up brochures, flyers and business cards. Do not leave out companies outside your field; take time to network with the recruiter and get the name of a hiring manager for your particular career field.

Avoid long lines: Check out the companies without long line-ups. Try to meet the recruiters during "down" times (especially in the morning or at lunch time). Think of the energy levels of the presenters – you'll get more and better information early in the event, not towards closing.

Interview exhibitors: Some important questions to ask: Why is this position available? What kind of skills and experience do you look for in the employees you hire? What is a typical day for this position? What is the recruitment and hiring process? Are there opportunities for career advancement in your company?

Exchange business cards: Gather information by requesting a business card from each employer or asking for their name and title. Pick up all company literature so you can review it after the job fair. Business cards are useful when you write thank you and follow up letters.

Mind your handshake: Is it a floppy fish or a bone-crunching experience? Practice a firm, confident handshake.

Follow up after the job fair: More important than the job fair is the follow up. Send a thank you letter within a week to each employer you meet. Show genuine interest in the company and try to make an appointment for a brief "getting to know more" visit.

Check out the workshops and other resources available at the Opening Doors Symposium to help you with your job search: mnlct.org/openingdoors

Hope to see you there!