

PREPPING FOR THE FUTURE A TIMELINE FOR RESIDENTS



Knowing what needs to be done to prepare for the job market and when each task should be completed can become overwhelming. For some residents, this is part of what keeps them pushing the process further away. With long, rigorous clinical hours, it is easy to lose sight of how quickly the end of training is approaching but allowing the job hunt to go sight unseen will only make the process more difficult.

Our timeline will not only give you an idea of where to start, but help guide you through the job search process. Knowing what to do and when will ease much of the unwanted stress as you get ready for life after residency.

JULY



EXPLORE LOCATIONS AND THE DIFFERENT TYPE OF JOBS.

Choosing a few places you want to live is one of the easiest ways to start your search. But, you don't have to stick to only these locations. Use them as a guide to get you started. The best way to learn about the job market is by casually looking in a few different areas or a specific region. From there, you can move forward with nailing down exactly where you want to be.

When scanning the job market by location, remember there are tons of other areas to search than online job boards. Yes, job boards are easy but part of the process is actually putting effort into the search. Other resources you might consider are conferences, association and society websites, recruiters, physician management groups, job fairs, medical journals, other residents and mentors, just to name a few.

It is also important to know what type of job you are looking for - independent contractor vs. employee. Start by doing a little bit of research on the different types. Compare the differences - IRS classifications, federal tax rates, working hours, compensation, benefits, incentives, etc. Making a "T" chart or side-by-side comparison table might help distinguish the differences between the two. Remember it is all about what works best for you when deciding what type of job to take. Once you've determined the type of job that is best for you, your search can be narrowed even further.



WRITE YOUR CV AND SET GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Your CV is one of the first things a potential employer will see from you, so make sure all of the information is accurate and informative. It should paint a clear picture of your education and experience up to this point.

Unlike some professions, the length and design of your CV is not something you should stress about. Focus on properly portraying all relevant information in a uniform, easy-to-read fashion. Use traditional font types, such as Arial, Times New Roman or Calibri, on a white page. Always check for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Also, share it with your spouse, friends, colleagues or mentors to give it a second look, just in case you've missed something or have any errors.

This is also a great time to define your goals and set priorities for your future job. Write down what is important to you and identify what you are looking for in a practice environment. Once you've got something on paper, go back to your CV and see if these items are clearly communicated.

Don't be afraid to change things around. If you are not communicating your goals and priorities in a concise manner, or your CV is not getting the attention you would like, make some edits. Once you write the first version of your CV, it's not set in stone. You can change the document as many times as you would like, focusing on keeping the content accurate.

A Few Topics To Include On Your CV

- **Contact Information**

First and last name, email and/or phone number, current address and/or city and state.

- **Education**

Name of your school, area of study and graduation date. Include a line of any academic honors or positions under the appropriate level of schooling.

- **Training**

List all internships, residencies, fellowships and any other training programs completed. Include the institution, name, location, dates and specialty. If leadership positions were held, be sure to list those.

- **Board certification, specialty and licenses**

List which specialty you are board certified and the states you are licensed in.

- **Volunteer experience**

List organizations, dates and a brief description of the work.

- **Clinical experience**

Order these with the most current first and include locations, dates, descriptions and responsibilities.

- **Publications/presentations**

Include anything you've presented at conferences, written or been a contributing author for.

- **Professional memberships**

Include all relevant societies and organizations.

- **Awards and honors**

All professional recognitions and academic recognitions.

- **Cultural activities, interest and hobbies**

Keep this section brief, but it is nice to see what candidates do outside of their clinical shifts.



WRITE A COVER LETTER AND START SENDING APPLICATIONS.

Writing your cover letter is a completely different process than your CV. Once you know where you are applying, customize the letter appropriately and send with your CV and application. Your cover letter should be tailored to the position you are applying for so you might have more than one version. You do not want to send a generic letter. Make sure the employer knows if you have any ties to the area or hospital and why you are interested in the hospital and position.

This is your chance to set yourself apart from the competition and provides a great opportunity to do so. Just like your CV, make sure you use traditional fonts, white paper and have a second, and possibly third, set of eyes to proof it before you send. Lastly, keep the letter to a one page minimum. Your potential employer will likely have several other CVs to look through and letters to read, so keep it brief, informative and interesting.

SEPTEMBER



PREPARE FOR AND START INTERVIEWS.

Preparing for your interview is extremely important. If you have a bunch of opportunities, go back and look at the list of goals and priorities you defined, locations and the type of job and narrow down your interviews to those that fit within the parameters you have set. Preparing to answer questions should not be your primary focus. Be sure you are asking all of the right questions for your personal goals. Use our guide found in the Beyond the Salary blog post as a resource.

Multiple stages of interviews will be held, but with each stage remember to be confident in yourself and your abilities. Make sure nerves don't get the best of you, but to also remain humble in the process. It is possible to come across someone you interviewed with later down the road, so remain positive and open

mindful during the interview process. Show that you are a good listener by asking questions and taking notes that you can refer to later when you start receiving offers.

OCTOBER



GET REFERENCES.

References are a great way for your potential employer to find out more about you through the eyes of another professional. Ask two to four physicians who know you professionally and personally for their permission to be used as a reference. Include their name and contact information – telephone and/or email address.

Mentors and program leaders are great options for choosing references. Be sure to ask the person ahead of time before ever sending their name and contact information to a potential employer. Share the places where you are applying, the type of job you are looking for and cities and states you are interested in. Your reference may have another connection that can help you along the way.

If you are requesting a written letter, give your reference at least five weeks to complete the letter, any waivers signed and the letter mailed. If you need a written reference, make sure you supply all instructions for the letter and any mailing costs associated. To be sure all of your references know you are appreciative of their time and the gesture, send a thank you note or small gift. While this is not required, it is a good way to say you are thankful for their help.



COMPARE YOUR OFFERS, THEN ACCEPT THE BEST POSITION FOR YOU.

Now that you have completed your interviews and offers are starting to roll in, compare each of the offers before making a decision. In doing so, you may find you have additional questions and this is the perfect time to ask.

A great way to compare offers is to weigh your priorities. Know what you require and what you can live without. Then, make a side-by-side comparison chart of each major element of the job and your top priorities. You can also make a pros and cons list. Ultimately, you should be able to answer two simple questions confidently when making your decision, “can I live here?” and “can I work here?” Just because the compensation is great, doesn’t mean the job is, so put the work into evaluating the offers and accept the perfect position for you.



NEGOTIATE YOUR CONTRACT.

Congratulations on accepting an offer! Before you can jump into work, you have a few more things to do and negotiating your contract is a big one. While yes, you can get an idea of what the contract says and any limitations, it is best to have an attorney review it.

Don't be afraid to give your attorney a deadline for reviewing the contract. The last thing you want is the process to take longer than necessary. Use your attorney to help suggest any counters to the contract and other options. You don't want any surprises in the future!

JANUARY



FINALIZE YOUR EMPLOYMENT.

Finalizing your employment can take a good bit of time. You will need to complete all of the necessary paperwork, start the licensing and credentialing processes, get insurance obligations in order and more. In some states, acquiring a license can take at least six months, so prepare for the situation ahead of time.

The job hunting process is long and demanding, but don't lose sight on the end result. It will all be worth it in the end. Download the full version of Prepping for the Future – A Residents Timeline to get even more information about the process.



***Erica Breeden** serves as the **Resident Development Liaison at ApolloMD**, one of the fastest growing multi-specialty groups in the country, and provides residents with job search tips and information regarding the business of medicine. If you have any questions, please email [**ebreeden@apollomd.com**](mailto:ebreeden@apollomd.com).*

For upcoming residency dinners in your area, visit our events calendar.