The Granite State PARTNERS Guide to a Successful Healthcare Job Search

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The total funding of the Granite State PARTNERS Nursing Expansion Project is $3.75M with 80% funded through a U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training, Nursing Expansion Grant ($3M). Additional support of 20% is provided by non-Governmental resources.

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Introduction

What is This Guide for?

Congratulations! You may have just graduated, completed your education program, or completed your licensing exam and now you are ready to start your healthcare career. But how can you make sure to impress potential employers? What are they even looking for? How do you update your resume to get noticed? How can you strengthen your interviewing skills? While plenty of resources about the job search can be found online (and those should definitely be researched), this guide is specific to the healthcare industry and will provide advice and resources uniquely suited to the healthcare professions.

About the Granite PARTNERS grant

Elliot Hospital has been awarded the Department of Labor H1-B Nursing Expansion Grant to address the healthcare staffing shortage in the region. Together with 3 employer partners; Catholic Medical Center, Southern NH Health, and Catholic Charities of NH, along with numerous community and state agencies, Elliot will implement the grant under the umbrella of **Granite State PARTNERS** – '**P**eople **A**ligning **R**esources **T**owards **N**ursing **E**xpansion and **R**etention **S**trategies'.

There are three main goals to the Granite State PARTNERS grant.

- To expand and diversify the pipeline of nursing professionals to fill jobs and boost healthcare systems with an emphasis on growth.
- To improve diversity in the healthcare workforce, particularly within the middle-to-high-skilled nursing professions while removing barriers to participants who want to enter this pathway.
- To explore and expand the pool of nursing preceptors with a focus on incorporating a preceptor course in the nursing curriculum.

Participants in the grant program will be eligible to receive various types of funding and support services. These may include:

- Scholarships for tuition for various pathways: LNA, LPN, ASN, RN, BSN, MSN, and other possible roles.
- Support services which may include childcare, travel, certification/licensing fees, tutoring, etc.
- Access to free career advising and coaching services.

Find out more about the Granite PARTNERS Grant!
Visit us on the web by CLICKING HERE

Contact:
Sarah Vlasich BSN, RN, CMSRN
Workforce Development Specialist
Elliot Health System
sarah.vlasich@elliot-hs.org

QR Code:

Is a Health Career Right for You?[1]

You're inspired to care for and help others, but is a health career right for you? Here are a few questions to ask yourself to help you determine if you should enter this promising field.

Are You Excited by the Idea of Lifelong Learning?
The best health care practitioners are committed to giving their patients the best care possible. These health care practitioners prioritize keeping up with the latest developments in the field, continuing to study and learn long after their initial schooling ends. If you have a similar interest in lifelong learning, you might consider entering the health care field.

Are You Comfortable in a Fast-paced Health Care Setting?
In health care decisions are made almost every minute of every day. There is guidance and other people to rely on as you consider options for patient care. Are you comfortable working in a setting that has a lot of moving parts and that changes very quickly? Then health care might be right for you.

Are You Able to Manage Your Compassion?
One questions to consider among many is how you feel about being around sick individuals or facing life-and-death situations on a daily basis? In many health care settings, you'll spend much of your time in the company of sick, disabled, or dying people. Sometimes you might even lose a patient - the sad reality is that it happens in the field. Are you able to move beyond these tragic situations to see the amount of good you do for those who you help? If so, you're exactly the type of person this growing field needs!

Are You a Team Player?
Health care is increasingly focusing on team work as patients' recovery depends more and more on how well each member of the team performs his or her specific function and how well they communicate and collaborate with one another. When choosing a health care position, you'll want to consider the amount of teamwork it requires to ensure it's a good fit for you and your working style.

[1] https://explorehealthcareers.org/career-explorer/is-a-health-career-right-for-you/

If you want a rewarding and challenging career where your work impacts so many others, then a healthcare career – and particularly a nursing career – could be right for you!

Are you ok with these important parts of being a nurse aide and/or nurse? Some of the tasks you may be providing to patients include:

- Providing wound care; changing bandages; changing wound drains; working with blood; post-surgical incision care
- Giving injections; hanging IVs
- Helping feed patients
- Toileting patients; measuring output of liquids and solids
- Bathing patients; helping with personal care; helping patients (both male and female) get out of bed, walk, dress, etc.
- Educating patients on various subjects related to their health and care
- Being able to work with all ages of patients: Infants, children, teens, adults, elders
- Being able to work with patients who have physical disabilities and cognitive limitations
- Interacting with patients with severe mental illness, dementia, or who might be in altered mind states due to substance misuse
- Comforting patients and family members in difficult times
- Transporting deceased patients
- Interacting with difficult or angry patients or family members
- Handling difficult family dynamics with diplomacy
- Advocating for patients with the care team; being the voice of the patient
- Being physically able to be on your feet, bend, lift, walk, etc.
- Work with patients that have different values or belief systems
- Assist the patient to access benefits (medications, medical equipment, social services etc.)

Where do healthcare workers work?[2]

The medical field is very diverse, and there are a wide range of employers and work environments available to job-seekers. If you're hoping to find employment in the healthcare industry, you'll likely find a good fit for your personality and work style among the many medical organizations, companies, and employers looking for quality staff.

Hospitals
Hospitals are the most common work environment for healthcare professionals, and typically what most people think of first when considering a job in the medical field. It's important to understand, however, that there is great variety among hospitals. Like other kinds of employers, every hospital will have a unique atmosphere, culture, and environment. Before accepting a job at any hospital, it would be wise to learn as much as you can about its specific features, characteristics, and policies first.

There are many different kinds of hospitals. Hospitals are classified by their number of licensed beds, ranging from as little as 10 in a small community, to over 1,000 in a metropolitan area. Different hospitals provide different services, and many specialize in certain areas such as trauma or cardiac care. Hospitals also differ by financial status (non-profit vs. for-profit), and by their ownership (corporation- vs. government-owned). There are also academic hospitals, military hospitals, and more.

There are many different kinds of professionals working at each hospital, both in clinical and non-clinical capacities. Some examples of clinical hospital jobs include: physicians (surgeons, ER doctors, etc.), nurses (CRNA, RN, CNS, LPN/LVN, etc.), technicians (radiology, ultrasound, surgical, etc.) therapists (physical, radiation, music, etc.), medical assistants, pharmacists, and more. Some examples of non-clinical hospital jobs include: social workers, accountants, executives, and administrative assistants.

Medical Offices
Many professionals want to work in healthcare, but find hospitals unappealing or intimidating. Often, these individuals feel more comfortable in a smaller, more intimate environment, and as such prefer working in a medical office. Another advantage of medical offices: they usually don't require as many evening or weekend hours as hospitals.

Medical offices may be run by hospitals as an external branch, or they may be owned and operated by a physician. As with other environments, every medical office is different, and will have a unique set of features and characteristics.

Federal and Government Organizations
A large number of medical professionals work for government organizations and agencies, in both clinical and non-clinical capacities. Many people who want to work in the medical field also feel a strong desire to give back to their country and help their fellow Americans. These individuals may find a medical role in a government agency to be a perfect fit.

Many federal agencies need qualified medical staff. Some examples of these agencies include: Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the National Institute of Health (NIH), Veterans Affairs, and State and County Health Departments.

[2] https://www.careerprofiles.info/medical-practice-environments.html

Non-Profit Organizations
There are a large number of non-profit organizations throughout the nation, all of which are founded to promote a certain cause. Of these organizations, hundreds specifically work towards solving health-related issues and advocating medical causes. Some well-known examples of such organizations include: American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and American Nurses Association, to name only a few.

Rather than working for profit, these organizations exist to achieve a mission or fight for a cause. Many healthcare professionals find it very rewarding to work for such an altruistic purpose. However, non-profit organizations may sometimes struggle to raise funds to support their operations, and workers may be affected by this struggle. Many well-established organizations don't experience this problem; it varies by the organization.

Educational Institutions
Medical professionals are needed in all sectors of the education system, from K12 schools to universities, teaching hospitals, health centers, and university medical centers. Some common medical jobs at educational institutions include: school nurse, behavior therapist, speech therapist, audiologist, mental health professionals, school counselors, and medical school professors.

Hospice Facilities
Hospice (also called palliative care) is the branch of healthcare servicing the most seriously ill of all patients. This includes terminally ill (near death) patients for whom all treatment options have been exhausted. The purpose of hospice is not to treat the illness itself--the illness cannot be treated. The purpose of hospice is to provide the patient with as much comfort, dignity, and independence as possible.

Hospice professionals must be very strong, emotionally, and very caring and sensitive. Hospice care usually takes place in the patients' homes, or on an inpatient basis. Examples of hospice jobs include: palliative care nurses, certified nursing assistants (CNA's), and physicians, as well as counselors, case managers, and social care.

Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities
Patients who are unable to care for themselves are placed in nursing homes or long-term care facilities. This may be the result of advanced age, serious illness, infirmity, or trauma.

Patients in these environments need assistance with most, if not all, aspects of their basic daily care, such as dressing, feeding, and bathing. These facilities therefore need a large number of assistants on hand to help with the many tasks of caregiving, many of which are quite labor-intensive. Nursing homes and long-term care facilities hire many different types of medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, administrators, pharmacists, and nursing aides, among others.

Healthcare Corporations and Companies ("Industry" Jobs)
"Industry" jobs refer to the many positions within companies and corporations which work with the medical industry, but which do not provide direct patient care. "Industry" jobs are almost exclusively non-clinical, and do not involve working with patients at all. Some examples of these kinds of corporations include: pharmaceutical distributors and manufacturers, healthcare consulting firms, healthcare information technology and software developers, and medical device and medical supply manufacturers.

These jobs support the healthcare industry, but are the same kinds of jobs found at any other kind of company: marketing, accounting and finance, supply chain, sales, human resources, engineering, and executives. These companies may provide services or products to the healthcare industry, such as consultation or equipment. These "industry" jobs are typically very consistent and reliable, even during periods of economic downturn.

What makes working in healthcare unique?

Working in healthcare requires attention to industry-specific requirements, skills, and values. Job seekers should be prepared to navigate these unique aspects of the healthcare field to find rewarding and fulfilling employment opportunities.

1. Regulatory Requirements: Healthcare roles often require specific certifications, licenses, or degrees mandated by regulatory bodies. For example, healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists must obtain state licensure to practice. This adds an extra layer of complexity to the job search process as candidates need to ensure they meet these requirements before applying for positions.
2. Specialized Skills and Knowledge: Healthcare positions often demand specialized skills and knowledge, particularly in clinical settings. Employers may seek candidates with experience in specific areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, surgery, or mental health. As a result, job seekers may need to tailor their resumes and cover letters to highlight relevant experience and expertise.
3. Patient Care Focus: Unlike many other industries, healthcare jobs typically involve direct interaction with patients and their families. Employers may prioritize candidates who demonstrate empathy, compassion, and excellent communication skills. Job seekers may need to showcase their ability to provide patient-centered care and work effectively in high-pressure environments.
4. Shift Work and Flexibility: Healthcare facilities operate 24/7, which means many healthcare professionals work non-traditional hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. Job seekers in healthcare should be prepared for the possibility of shift work and demonstrate flexibility in their availability.
5. Team Collaboration: Healthcare is a collaborative field where multidisciplinary teams work together to provide comprehensive care to patients. Employers often look for candidates who can effectively collaborate with colleagues from various disciplines, including physicians, nurses, therapists, and support staff. Job seekers may need to highlight their teamwork and communication skills during the job search process.
6. Patient Privacy and Confidentiality: Healthcare professionals are required to adhere to strict privacy regulations, such as HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), to protect patient confidentiality. Job seekers may need to demonstrate their understanding of these regulations and their commitment to maintaining patient privacy.
7. Emphasis on Continuing Education: Healthcare is a dynamic field that is constantly evolving with new research, technologies, and treatments. Employers may prioritize candidates who demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and continuing education. Job seekers may need to highlight their participation in professional development activities, such as workshops, conferences, and certifications.

What Skills are Healthcare Employers Looking For?[3]

What are healthcare skills?
Healthcare skills are those skills that are helpful for people working in a healthcare role. If you are looking for work in the healthcare field, you may want to show on your resume and cover letter that you have the necessary skills. While certain healthcare positions require specific skills, particularly if you have an area of specialization, many healthcare jobs need similar skills. If you are preparing a healthcare skills resume, you usually want to review the job you're applying for and what skills they are asking for.

Examples of healthcare skills:	**Healthcare skills in the workplace:**	**How to improve healthcare skills:**
While there are skills specific to each kind of healthcare role, such as Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioners (NPs), doctors of varying specialties, Nursing Assistants and administrative staff, there are also a wide range of skills that can benefit any healthcare professional. Here are some healthcare skills that can help a variety of healthcare professionals:	Here are some ways you might use these healthcare skills in the workplace:	If you want to improve your healthcare skills to increase your chances of getting a new job or to add value to your performance at your current job, there are ways to enhance all the above skills. You may also decide to improve your technical healthcare skills, which might require enrolling in continuing education or practicing at work. Here are some ways you can improve your healthcare skills:
1. Communication skills: Whether you are a nurse or a receptionist in a health clinic, you likely need to interact with patients and your coworkers. Communication skills are those that make communicating with your patients and colleagues easier, including active listening. You might need to explain test results to a patient or answer questions about scheduling an appointment, and communication skills can help with that.	1. You can use your communication skills to explain medical procedures and policies to patients.	1. Improve your communication skills. These skills can be improved through reading about advanced communication techniques, taking a class or doing other research on how to be an effective communicator. The best way to improve communication skills, however, is to practice regularly.

[3] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/healthcare-skills-resume

2. Positive attitude: A positive attitude can be very helpful when interacting with patients and coworkers. Emphasizing that this is one of your skills on a healthcare skills resume can show potential employers that you try to be easy to work with and positive when you're speaking with colleagues and patients.	2. You can use a positive attitude in all your interactions with other people.	2. Develop a positive attitude. Working on having a more positive attitude is a matter of rethinking your automatic responses to your environment, through practice and possibly even therapy if you decide that would be helpful. To start, if you react negatively, try to pause and consider a more positive reaction.
3. Time management: Healthcare facilities from hospitals to small clinics all have busy times, so it's helpful for healthcare professionals to have good time management skills. This may allow you to see patients more efficiently or handle insurance paperwork more quickly.	3. If you are using your time management skills at work, you can create to-do lists for your day.	3. Improve your time management. To improve time management, you may want to work on organizing your time more efficiently through methods like to-do lists. You may also find that reducing distractions throughout the day, whether that's chatting with coworkers or looking at your phone, can make your use of time more effectively.
4. Flexibility: The daily schedules of healthcare workers can vary depending on the needs of patients and the needs of the healthcare facility they work at. Flexibility shows an employer that you can adjust as needed to complete your work, and that you are willing to adapt to changing circumstances.	4. Your flexibility can be particularly helpful if your manager or coworkers ask you to take on a task you rarely do.	4. Practice your flexibility in the workplace. Becoming more flexible can be challenging if you are a more rigid person by nature, but it's not impossible with practice. Start with minor changes and see if you can increase your positive reaction to being asked to accommodate a last-minute change or anything else that requires flexibility on your part.
5. Knowledge of HIPAA: HIPAA, or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, is a federal law that protects the information of patients. HIPAA plays a big role in the daily work of healthcare employees, regardless of the type of work you are doing. Showing on your resume that you are knowledgeable about HIPAA indicates to potential employers that they can trust you with patient information, as you understand the legal protections in place.	5. Being knowledgeable about HIPAA helps you protect sensitive patient information.	5. Understand HIPAA. Increasing your knowledge of HIPAA is usually as simple as reading about the details of the law and gaining a firm understanding of what counts as protected information about patients that you should not reveal unless allowed.

6. Empathy: Empathy is an extremely important skill for healthcare workers, as you will probably encounter patients of all types with a variety of medical issues. If you can relate to the situations those patients are in and show them care, you are usually a more effective healthcare worker. Empathy can also be helpful in interacting with your coworkers, as you may find yourself more willing to help them if you consider their situation.	6. Your empathy can most often be effective when listening to the issues a patient is having.	6. Learn empathy. Growing your skills with empathy can be like increasing your positive attitude in that therapy may help, but you can also work on how you react to situations on your own. If you are interacting with someone, you can try considering their point of view and situation to see if you can empathize with what they are dealing with. If you practice this enough, it can become an automatic reaction.
7. Stress management: Even in quiet medical clinics, you may work through stressful times, and if you work in an emergency room or other fast-paced environment, stress is a common issue. Showing potential employers you are ready to manage your stress so that it doesn't affect your work can be appealing in many work environments, including healthcare.	7. Practicing stress management throughout your day can make your work day seem easier.	7. Improve your stress management techniques. Learning stress management usually involves increasing your knowledge of what reduces your stress, often through self-care. You can research ways you can manage your stress during the workday that don't take a great deal of time, so that you can de-stress and return to work.
8. Attention to detail: Whether you're scheduling patients or treating a patient's condition, having attention to detail can help ensure you get it right the first time. There are lots of details involved in working in healthcare, so emphasizing this healthcare skill on your resume can show potential employers that you won't have to make corrections to your work and won't miss important details.	8. Your attention to detail may help you find a diagnosis for a patient.	8. Focus on your attention to detail. Having more attention to detail often requires being fully present in each moment, so that you aren't distracted from noticing the details of what's going on around you. This might include blocking out all distractions as you speak with a patient or writing down what a coworker is saying to be sure you remember.

9. <u>Receptive attitude:</u> Healthcare positions often involve learning new skills regularly, whether that's a technical skill related to advancements in medical technology or a new billing method for patients. Having a receptive attitude and stating that on your resume shows you are willing to learn new skills and open to constructive criticism.	9. A receptive attitude can be most helpful if your manager or coworkers give you feedback on your performance.	9. <u>Accept feedback.</u> To increase your receptive attitude, you may want to prepare a list of things you can do if someone offers you constructive criticism that might help you understand their feedback and be receptive to what they're saying. This might include reminding yourself that they are trying to help, carefully considering the feedback they've given, avoiding defensive reactions and listening to feedback carefully.
10. <u>Patience:</u> Having patience with patients and colleagues often works with having empathy for them, as understanding their situation and needs may make you more patient while working with them. Emphasizing to a potential employer that you value patience as one of your skills shows them you are prepared to be patient with your coworkers, patients and employer	10. Your patience can help as you wait for others to complete tasks	10. <u>Become more patient.</u> You can learn patience by practicing a few habits, such as making yourself wait to get something you want, being mindful of why you feel impatient and relaxing when you are impatient. With enough practice, you may find that you react patiently when you previously might have been impatient.

Conducting Your Healthcare Job Search

Your resume[4] [5]

Having a good resume is the first step in starting your job search. While what makes a good resume is subjective, there are some common criteria they all should meet. There are literally millions of resources on the internet to help you write a resume. It's a lot to go through, but here are some basic tips for writing a good one. You should also do your own research to find formats that you like and will work for your particular situation. Learning how to showcase your credentials on a resume can help you impress potential employers to give you an interview. Here are 10 tips to write a great resume:

1. Look for keywords in the job posting

The best place to start when preparing to write a resume is to carefully read the job postings that interest you. As you apply for different jobs, study each job description for keywords that show what the employer is looking for in an ideal candidate. Include those keywords in your resume where relevant.

For example, if you're applying for a job as a medical billing coder, an employer might list keywords like "coding," "claims submission," "compliance" or "accounts receivable management" in the job description. Pay particular attention to anything listed in the "Requirements" or "Qualifications" sections. If you have the skills employers are looking for, you can add these terms to your resume in the experience or skills sections.

2. Review resume examples for your industry

When crafting your resume, you might study examples of resumes from your industry for inspiration and best practices. Samples are useful examples of high-quality resumes used in your industry and for your job title. While there are many ways you can use resume samples, there are three main takeaways to look for:

- *Simplicity.* Resume samples are straightforward because employers have minimal time to review your resume, so readability is key.
- *Brevity.* You may notice that each section of the resume sample is short and to the point, including the summary and experience descriptions. Including only the most key and relevant information means employers can consume more information about you and quickly understand your fitness for the role.
- *Numbers.* You might also notice that there are often metrics in the experience section of resume samples because employers are highly responsive to measurable proven value. For example, one bullet point under the experience description for an administrative assistant reads, Processed 100 vendor contracts and implemented a standardized process, reducing contract discrepancies by 90%.

3. Use a professional font

Use a basic, clean font like Arial or Times New Roman. Keep your font size between 10 and 12 points. Selecting a clear, readable font can help make your resume appear more professional. Reduce or eliminate any extraneous white space. You make it easier for the resume reader to focus only on the content of your resume instead of the white spaces. You can reduce white space by increasing your font size to 12 points and possibly adding optional sections like "Career Highlights," "Skills" or "Awards and Achievements."

[4] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips

[5] https://www.healthecareers.com/career-resources/resumes/customizing-your-resume-why-it-matters-and-where-to-start

4. Include only relevant information

While you might have extensive work or educational experience, it's important to keep your resume as brief as possible without leaving out key information. If your resume includes old or irrelevant information, such as jobs held more than 10 years ago or minor degrees and achievements, it may distract from key information. An example to leave off would be a GPA of 3.2 or a certification in an unrelated field.

Try to include only work experience, achievements, education and skills most relevant to the employer. You can find the most relevant attributes by closely reading the job posting. Prioritize important information on your resume to highlight key skills and achievements. This may mean creating a functional rather than a chronological resume, focusing on how prior roles have given you the skills and experience needed for this role.

5. Use active language

Write your resume using active language without extraneous words. This means using power words, such as "achieved," "earned," "completed" or "accomplished." If your resume is too long or seems hard to read, you might consider making sentences shorter or ideas more concise.

For example, you may have a job description that reads: "During my time at Freedom Inc., I ran multiple team-based projects and helped each team member with various tasks associated with each project." You can shorten and strengthen this example in the following way: "Led 10 team-based projects, including the implementation of a new point-of-service system, and helped five team members meet project requirements and deadlines with 95% accuracy." The revised version communicates the same ideas about your accomplishments while including more active language and further quantifying your results.

6. Call attention to important achievements

Instead of listing your job duties under the experience section, select your top three or four most important achievements in each role you've held. Where possible, include numbers that measure your success for that particular goal or achievement. You might also consider including a separate "Achievements" or "Skills" section to highlight relevant achievements in your education, career, volunteer work or other experiences.

7. Only include subheadings and sections you need

Whether you're using a resume template or creating your own, you may find there are some recommended sections you don't need. For example, if you're graduating from college or high school and have not yet held a professional position, you might replace the experience section with relevant coursework, academic achievements and other experiences like internships or extracurricular projects. You may also find it useful to combine sections if you're having trouble filling a section with more than two bullet points.

8. Choose appropriate margins

Typically, you can use a one-inch margin size on all sides of your resume with single spaces between the lines. If you have too much white space, consider spacing your lines by 1.15 or 1.5. You can also increase your margins if you find it difficult to fill your resume but make sure they stay below two inches.

9. Proofread

Before sending your resume, undergo several rounds of proofreading to ensure there are no spelling or grammar errors. While you can use several proofreading programs and tools, it's also helpful to ask trusted friends or colleagues to review your resume. It's helpful for an objective third party to look at your resume as an employer might to find ways you can correct or improve it.

10. Make multiple versions of your resume
Before applying, you ask yourself, "Have I made it as easy as possible for this employer to see that I'm qualified?" If you're applying for a job with unique requirements, you may need another version of your resume to demonstrate your qualifications fully. Decide on a case-by-case basis which resume to use. Once you finalize your resume, it can help you get more callbacks, interviews and job offers.

Your Cover Letter[6]

While cover letters are not always required, many hiring managers still rely on them to gauge an applicant's skills, experience and background. **Basically, it's better to include a cover letter and not need it, than to not include one and have a hiring manager expect one.**

The key to writing an effective cover letter is to clearly show how your professional experience fits the needs of the open role and the culture of the hiring company.

What is a cover letter?
A cover letter, also known as an application letter, is a three- to four-paragraph memo to employers explaining your interest in the job and company and your fitness for the role. It's typically submitted along with your resume in a job application. This letter should highlight your skills, experience and achievements concerning the position you seek. Unlike your resume, cover letters allow you to go into more detail about your professional career and explain why you're a good fit for the role and company. A well-written cover letter has the potential to impress employers and set you apart from other applicants. To avoid a generic cover letter, you should conduct in-depth research on the company and role for which you're applying to in-depth before writing your cover letter.

What to consider before you write
Before you craft your cover letter, gather all the information you may need. Here are some things to consider before you write a cover letter:

- Think about your experiences and how you would like to relate these experiences to a hiring employer. What talents, skills or accomplishments would you like the company to know?
- Think about how you learned about the job opportunity. If it's a personal contact, jot down the person's name and title. If it was an ad or job board, write down where and when you saw it and list any specific instructions noted in the job description.
- Think about the company you're writing to and what drew you to it. Do you admire its culture or brand? Are its reviews positive or negative? Research the company to see if you agree with its mission statement and vision.
- Think about who you are writing to. If it's a specific person, address them by name and title. If not, consider addressing the cover letter to "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Human Resources."

"Your cover letter is your chance to share your story, personality and strengths. Don't forego a cover letter in your rush to submit an application. Taking time to write a cover letter is an indication that you're interested in the position and organization and are willing to go above and beyond for a great opportunity."
—Genevieve Northup, MBA, SHRM-CP, HCI-SPTD

Cover letter format
A cover letter should be formatted like a business letter with these sections:

- Header with date and contact information

[6] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter

- Salutation or greeting
- Opening paragraph
- Middle paragraph(s)
- Closing paragraph
- Letter ending and signature

Your cover letter should be one page long and use a simple, professional font, such as Arial or Helvetica, 10 to 12 points in size. Your letter should be left-aligned with single spacing and one-inch margins.

How to write a cover letter in 6 steps

Here are six simple steps to writing a great cover letter. In the sections below, we'll offer detailed information about what to include in each area with examples.

1. Start with your header: As with any standard business letter header, you should include a few pieces of personal and role-specific information at the top of your cover letter to make it easier for a hiring manager or recruiter to follow up with you. If you'd like, you can center your name and address at the top of the page, mirroring how it looks on your resume.
2. Include a greeting: In your research, try to find the name of the person reviewing applications for the job. Address your letter to this person with a common business greeting, such as "Dear [first and last name]" or "Dear [position title]." Avoid using "To whom it may concern."
3. Write an opening paragraph: In the first paragraph, mention the job title you're applying for and where you saw the position posting. Explain your interest in the role and company to show you've done your research. The first section of your cover letter is also the first impression the reader will have of you, so it's important to appeal to that person quickly and succinctly.
4. Add a second paragraph: Your second paragraph should be a brief overview of your background as it relates to the position. Include key achievements, skills and specialties that make you particularly suited to the position. Focus on one or two and provide specific details about your success, including measurable impacts you made. Pay close attention to keywords listed in the job description and include those you identify with in the body of your cover letter. You should only include information about your most recent professional experiences.
5. Finish with a closing paragraph: The closing paragraph should focus on another key achievement or skill relevant to the position. Instead of repeating details from your resume, summarize a specific story or anecdote that displays you're right for the role. If you're changing careers, this is a good opportunity to talk about transferable skills or relatable experiences from your career.
6. End with a professional signoff: You should end your cover letter with a paragraph summarizing why you are applying for the role and why you would be a great fit. Keep the cover letter conclusion brief and explain that you look forward to the employer's response about possible next steps. End with your signature at the bottom.

Cover letter samples: https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/cover-letter-samples

The Importance of Networking[7] [8]

Networking is an essential component of a successful job search and career development. Building and maintaining professional connections can open doors to new opportunities and provide valuable insights into your industry. Whether you're actively seeking a job or looking to advance your career, here are some tips for effective networking:

1. Set Clear Goals: Before you start networking, define your goals. Are you looking for job leads, career advice, or mentorship? Having clear objectives will help you focus your networking efforts and make meaningful connections.
2. Utilize Online Platforms: Online networking platforms, such as LinkedIn, offer powerful tools for connecting with professionals in your field. Create a strong LinkedIn profile that highlights your skills, experiences, and career goals. Join industry-specific groups and participate in discussions to expand your network.
3. Attend Networking Events: Industry conferences, seminars, and networking events provide opportunities to meet new people and exchange ideas. Prepare a brief elevator pitch that introduces yourself and highlights your skills and interests. Be proactive in approaching people and initiating conversations.
4. Build Genuine Relationships: Networking is about building authentic relationships, not just collecting business cards. Take the time to get to know people on a personal level and show genuine interest in their experiences and perspectives. Follow up with contacts after networking events to maintain connections.
5. Offer Value: Networking is a two-way street. Look for ways to offer value to your connections, whether it's sharing relevant resources, providing insights on industry trends, or offering assistance with their projects. Being helpful and generous will make you memorable and strengthen your relationships.
6. Seek Informational Interviews: Informational interviews are valuable opportunities to learn more about a particular industry, company, or role. Reach out to professionals in your network and request informational interviews to gain insights and advice. Prepare thoughtful questions and be respectful of their time.
7. Follow Up and Stay Connected: After meeting new contacts, be sure to follow up with a personalized thank-you email or message. Stay connected with your network by regularly reaching out, sharing updates, and offering support. Building long-term relationships requires consistent effort and communication.
8. Be Patient and Persistent: Networking is a long-term investment in your career, and results may not happen overnight. Be patient and persistent in your networking efforts, and don't get discouraged by setbacks or rejections. Stay focused on your goals and continue to expand and nurture your network over time.

By leveraging online platforms, attending networking events, building genuine relationships, offering value, seeking informational interviews, and staying connected, you can effectively network for job opportunities and career advancement. Remember that networking is about building mutually beneficial relationships and supporting each other's professional growth.

[7] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/networking
[8] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/how-to-network-for-a-job

Acing the Interview[9] [10]

Interviewing can be nerve-wracking because it's hard to know what to expect. The best way to ace an interview and do it in a relaxed way is to over-prepare. What's more is remembering that interviewing **is a two way street.** Yes, the interviewer is trying to get to know you to see if you are someone they want to hire, but you also have to make sure that it's someplace you want to work and people you want to work with and for.

There are many, many guides for interviewing on the web. Here are some basic guidelines, but we encourage you to learn more by doing your own search too.

1. Research the Company: Start by researching the company to gain a better understanding of its mission, values, products, services, and culture. Visit the company's website, read recent news articles, and explore its social media profiles to gather relevant information.
2. Review the Job Description: Carefully review the job description to identify key qualifications, responsibilities, and skills required for the role. Tailor your responses to highlight your relevant experiences and abilities that align with the job requirements.
3. Practice Common Interview Questions: Prepare responses to common interview questions, such as "Tell me about yourself," "Why are you interested in this position?" and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" Practice articulating your answers concisely and confidently to demonstrate your qualifications and suitability for the role.

   Understanding interview questions:
   There are two different types of interview questions - *Traditional* interview questions and *behavioral* interview questions. Traditional interview questions focus on gathering general information about the candidate, behavioral interview questions delve deeper into past experiences to assess specific skills, competencies, and behaviors. Behavioral questions provide interviewers with more tangible evidence of a candidate's capabilities and suitability for the role. These both serve different purposes and elicit different types of responses. Here are the key differences between the two:

	Traditional Interview Questions	Behavioral Interview Questions
Nature of Questions	Often open-ended and focus on gathering general information about the candidate, such as their background, skills, qualifications, and career goals. Examples include "Tell me about yourself" and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"	More specific and ask candidates to provide examples of past experiences or behaviors in certain situations. These questions aim to assess how candidates have demonstrated specific skills or competencies in real-life scenarios. Examples include "Tell me about a time when you faced a challenging situation at work and how you handled it" and "Can you give me an example of a time when you worked effectively in a team?"

[9] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-prepare-for-an-interview
[10] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/job-interview-tips-how-to-make-a-great-impression

Focus	Traditional questions focus on assessing the candidate's qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role based on their past achievements and general attributes.	Behavioral questions focus on evaluating the candidate's behavioral patterns, problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, and interpersonal competencies based on their past actions and experiences.
Response Format	Responses to traditional questions are typically narrative-based and may vary in length. Candidates may provide more general responses that highlight their skills and qualifications without necessarily providing specific examples.	Behavioral Interview Questions**: Responses to behavioral questions follow a structured format known as the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Candidates are expected to provide specific examples of past experiences, outlining the situation or task they faced, the actions they took to address it, and the results or outcomes of their actions.
Assessment Criteria	Traditional questions may assess a candidate's overall fit for the role based on their qualifications, experience, personality, and cultural fit. Responses are evaluated based on the candidate's ability to articulate their skills and attributes effectively.	Behavioral questions assess specific competencies or behaviors relevant to the role, such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and conflict resolution. Responses are evaluated based on the candidate's ability to provide concrete examples and demonstrate their proficiency in these areas.

Here are the ten most common interview questions, along with tips on how to prepare for them and make a great impression:

- *Tell me about yourself*: This open-ended question allows the interviewer to learn more about your background, experience, and qualifications. Prepare a brief overview of your professional journey, focusing on relevant skills and achievements.
- *Why do you want this job?*: Demonstrate your enthusiasm and interest in the position by highlighting what excites you about the role, company culture, and opportunities for growth. Tailor your response to align with the organization's values and goals.
- *What are your strengths?*: Highlight your key strengths and skills that are relevant to the job you're applying for. Provide specific examples of how you've utilized these strengths to achieve success in previous roles.
- *What are your weaknesses?:* Be honest about areas where you have room for improvement but frame them in a positive light. Focus on how you've worked to overcome these weaknesses or turn them into strengths.
- *Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge at work and how you handled it*: Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your response. Describe a specific challenge you encountered, the actions you took to address it, and the positive outcome or lessons learned.
- *Why should we hire you?*: Highlight your unique qualifications, experiences, and achievements that make you the best fit for the role. Emphasize how your skills and expertise align with the company's needs and objectives.

- *Where do you see yourself in five years?:* Demonstrate your long-term career goals and ambition while also showing that you're realistic and adaptable. Discuss how the position aligns with your career path and how you plan to grow and contribute to the organization.
- *Tell me about a time when you worked in a team:* Provide an example of a successful collaboration experience, highlighting your communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. Discuss how you contributed to the team's goals and achieved positive results.
- *What do you know about our company?:* Conduct research on the company's history, mission, products or services, industry position, and recent news or developments. Demonstrate your knowledge and enthusiasm for the organization during the interview.
- *Do you have any questions for us?*: Prepare thoughtful questions that demonstrate your interest in the role, company culture, team dynamics, and opportunities for growth. Asking insightful questions shows that you're engaged and serious about the opportunity.

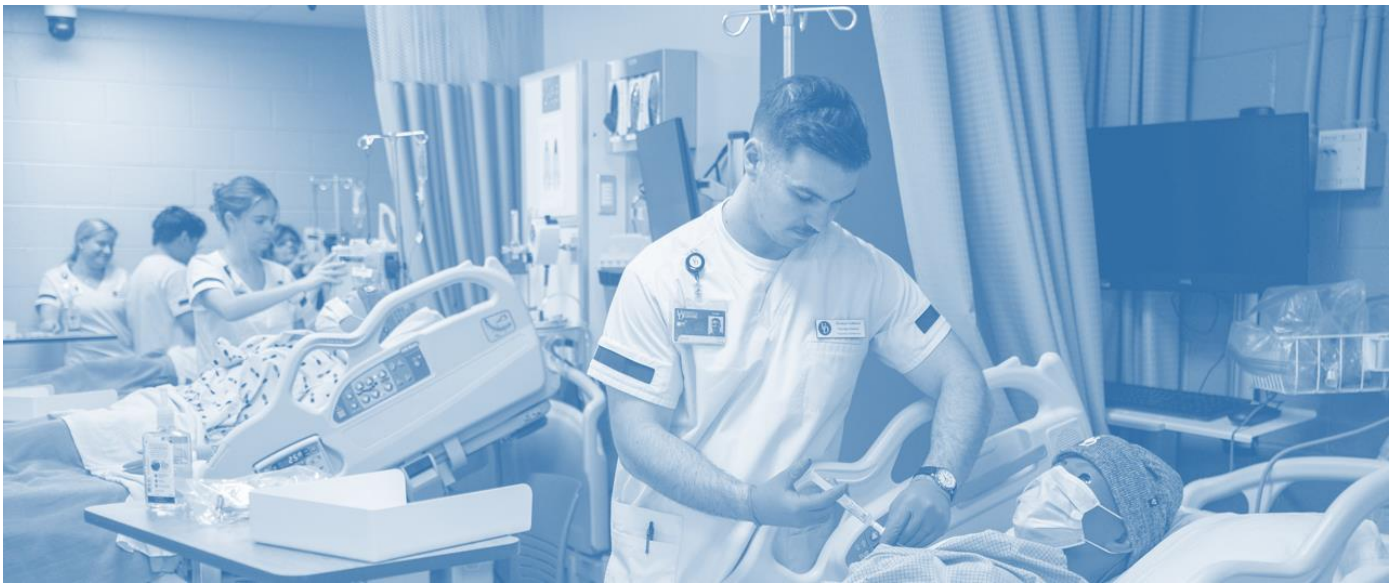
4. Prepare Examples: Prepare specific examples from your past experiences that illustrate your skills, accomplishments, and problem-solving abilities. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your responses and provide context for your achievements.
5. Dress Appropriately: Choose professional attire that reflects the company's dress code and culture. Dressing appropriately shows respect for the interviewer and demonstrates your professionalism and attention to detail.
6. Arrive Early: Plan to arrive at the interview location early to allow time for unexpected delays. Aim to arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview time to complete any necessary paperwork and compose yourself before the interview.
7. Bring Necessary Documents: Bring multiple copies of your resume, a list of references, and any other relevant documents or portfolios to the interview. Organize them neatly in a professional folder or briefcase for easy access during the interview.
8. Practice Good Body Language: During the interview, maintain good posture, make eye contact, and offer a firm handshake to convey confidence and professionalism. Be attentive and engaged throughout the interview, nodding and smiling to show your interest and enthusiasm.
9. Ask Questions:[11] Prepare thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer about the company, the team, and the role. Asking questions demonstrates your genuine interest in the position and allows you to gather valuable information to assess if the job is the right fit for you. Here are some questions to ask during an interview that can help gather valuable information about the company, the role, and whether it aligns with your career goals and aspirations:
   - *Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this role?* This question helps you gain a deeper understanding of what you'll be doing on a daily basis and whether it aligns with your skills and interests.
   - *What are the company's short-term and long-term goals, and how does this role contribute to achieving them?* This question shows your interest in the company's objectives and how your role fits into the bigger picture.
   - *How would you describe the company culture?* Understanding the company culture can help you determine if you'll be a good fit and thrive in the organization.
   - *What opportunities are there for professional development and growth within the company?* This question demonstrates your interest in advancing your career and shows that you're committed to continuous learning and improvement.
   - *Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?* Learning about your potential teammates can give you insights into the dynamics of the team and whether you'll enjoy working with them.

[11] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/questions-to-ask-in-an-interview

- *How does the company support work-life balance for its employees?* Achieving a healthy work-life balance is important for many professionals, so it's essential to understand how the company supports its employees in this regard.
- *What are the biggest challenges facing the team or department right now?* This question shows that you're proactive and interested in problem-solving. It also gives you an idea of what you might be dealing with if you join the company.
- *How is success measured in this role?* Understanding how your performance will be evaluated can help you set expectations and ensure you're aligned with the company's goals.
- *Can you provide examples of how the company recognizes and rewards employee contributions?* Learning about the company's recognition and rewards programs can give you insights into its values and how it values employee contributions.
- *What do you enjoy most about working for this company?* What do you enjoy most about your job? This question can provide valuable insights into the interviewer's personal experiences with the company and what they find fulfilling about their role.

Remember to tailor these questions to the specific context of the interview and to ask follow-up questions based on the interviewer's responses. Asking thoughtful questions can help you demonstrate your interest in the role and make a positive impression during the interview process.

10. Follow Up:[12] Send a thank-you email or note to the interviewer within 24 hours of the interview to express your appreciation for the opportunity and reiterate your interest in the position. Use this opportunity to briefly recap key points from the interview and reaffirm your qualifications.



[12] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/guide-to-thank-you-notes

Your Journey From Candidate to Employee

Congratulations!!! You've been hired and accepted an offer. All your references checked out and you've done all of your pre-employment vaccines, tests, forms and other thing and are ready to start your job. Here are some tips on what to expect.

Your first day - Orientation[13]

For most employees of healthcare employers, their first day will begin with an orientation. While orientations differ from work environment to work environment and employer to employer, this list gives some idea of the things your orientation may contain.

Why Is the Onboarding Process Important?

For many employees, the start of orientation is exciting and represents a new stage in their career. This is the first interaction they will have with company administration, and familiarizing them with the unique culture and mission of the company is important.

The first step in assisting a new employee is helping them complete their healthcare onboarding checklist. This is usually performed in multiple sittings at different stages of orientation. Some tasks, including drug screens, must be done prior to starting work. Other tasks, like reviewing patient care procedures, are completed during the first few weeks on the job.

Healthcare facilities hire many different types of employees, and it's difficult to know what to include in a healthcare onboarding checklist. For nurses in hospitals, it might start with administrative paperwork and transition to department assessments. A home health onboarding checklist might focus more on verifying safe driving records and reviewing chain-of-command.

An orientation at a healthcare facility typically involves several components designed to familiarize new employees with the organization, its policies, procedures, and expectations. Here's what you can expect during a healthcare facility orientation:

1. Welcome and Introductions: The orientation typically begins with a warm welcome from management or human resources staff. New employees may be introduced to key personnel, including supervisors, department heads, and colleagues.
2. Overview of the Facility: There will likely be an overview of the healthcare facility, including its mission, values, organizational structure, and history. This may include a tour of the facility to familiarize new employees with different departments, units, and important locations.
3. Policies and Procedures: New employees will receive information about the facility's policies and procedures, including those related to safety, security, infection control, confidentiality, and compliance with regulatory standards such as HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). They may also learn about specific protocols related to patient care, documentation, and emergency procedures.
4. Training and Education: Depending on the role, new employees may undergo training sessions on specific skills, technologies, or equipment used in their job. This could include training on electronic health records (EHR) systems, medical equipment, patient care protocols, and any specialized procedures relevant to their position.

[13] https://www.intelycare.com/facilities/resources/healthcare-onboarding-checklist-template-for-facilities/

5. Benefits and Administrative Details: Human resources staff may provide information about employee benefits, including healthcare coverage, retirement plans, paid time off, and other perks. New employees may also complete paperwork related to employment eligibility, payroll, and insurance enrollment.
6. Culture and Expectations: The orientation may include discussions about the facility's culture, values, and expectations for professionalism and teamwork. New employees may learn about communication norms, conflict resolution strategies, and ways to contribute positively to the workplace environment.
7. Compliance Training: Employees may undergo training on regulatory requirements and standards relevant to their role, such as OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) regulations, infection control practices, and patient rights.
8. Evaluation and Feedback: Some orientations may include opportunities for new employees to provide feedback on the orientation process and ask questions. Supervisors or mentors may also set expectations for ongoing performance evaluation and provide guidance on professional development opportunities.

Overall, a healthcare employer orientation aims to equip new employees with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed in their roles and contribute effectively to the organization's mission of providing high-quality patient care.

How to make your first year successful [14] [15]

Navigating the first weeks, months, and year in a new job is crucial for setting a positive impression and establishing yourself as a valuable team member. Here's a breakdown of what you can focus on during each phase:

First Week:

1. Get Oriented: Familiarize yourself with the workplace layout, facilities, and key locations such as restrooms, break areas, and meeting rooms.
2. Meet Colleagues: Introduce yourself to your coworkers, supervisors, and other team members. Establishing rapport early on can help build positive relationships.
3. Learn Procedures: Understand the basic procedures and protocols of your role. Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.
4. Absorb Information: Pay attention during training sessions and absorb as much information as possible about your job responsibilities, company culture, and expectations.
5. Set Up Tools: Ensure you have access to necessary tools, such as computer systems, software, and equipment required for your role.

First Month:

1. Clarify Expectations: Schedule a meeting with your supervisor to clarify expectations, set goals, and discuss performance metrics.
2. Seek Feedback: Actively seek feedback on your performance from colleagues and supervisors. Use this feedback to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.
3. Build Relationships: Continue building relationships with your coworkers and supervisors. Participate in team meetings, social events, and networking opportunities to strengthen connections.
4. Focus on Learning: Dive deeper into your role by exploring advanced training opportunities, shadowing experienced colleagues, and staying updated on industry trends and best practices.

[14] https://elearningindustry.com/winning-tactics-to-ace-your-first-90-days-on-the-job
[15] https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/starting-new-job/new-job-guide

5. Contribute Positively: Look for opportunities to contribute positively to projects, initiatives, and team goals. Offer your ideas, insights, and expertise to demonstrate your value to the organization.

First 90 Days:

1. Set Goals: Set short-term and long-term goals for your role aligned with the organization's objectives. Regularly assess your progress and make adjustments as needed.
2. Take Initiative: Take on additional responsibilities or projects to demonstrate your initiative and proactive approach.
3. Seek Development Opportunities: Identify areas for professional development and seek out opportunities for training, mentorship, or skill-building activities.
4. Communicate Effectively: Practice effective communication with colleagues, supervisors, and stakeholders. Be proactive in providing updates, sharing ideas, and addressing any challenges or concerns.
5. Reflect and Adjust: Reflect on your experiences during the first 90 days and identify areas where you can improve or make changes to enhance your performance and contribution to the organization.

First Year:

1. Evaluate Progress: Conduct a self-assessment to evaluate your progress and achievements over the past year. Celebrate successes and identify areas for further growth and development.
2. Set New Goals: Set new goals for the upcoming year based on your experiences and feedback received from colleagues and supervisors.
3. Expand Your Skills: Continue to expand your skills and knowledge through ongoing learning opportunities, certifications, and professional development activities.
4. Build Leadership Skills: Look for opportunities to take on leadership roles or mentorship responsibilities within your team or organization.
5. Stay Engaged: Stay engaged and committed to your role by maintaining a positive attitude, seeking new challenges, and actively contributing to the success of the organization.

By following these steps and remaining proactive and adaptable, you can successfully navigate the first weeks, months, and year in your new job, positioning yourself for long-term success and career advancement.

Compiled by:

Geoff Vercauteren
Director of Workforce Development
Network4Health / Catholic Medical Center

Special thanks and gratitude to guide committee:
Marcy Doyle – Director, New Hampshire Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW), University of New Hampshire; President, New Hampshire Nurses Association
Joe Gilbert – Associate Director of ESOL, International Institute of New England
Hannah Jean – Education Manager, International Institute of New England
Mary Peters – Director of External Partnerships, MY TURN
Vanessa Rashid – Workforce Retention Specialist, Elliot Health System
Sara Sacco - Director of Workforce Development, Southern NH Services
Diane Uzarski – Dean and Professor of Practice, Jean School of Nursing, St Anselm's College
Sarah Vlasich – Workforce Development Specialist, Elliot Health System
James Ziegra – Senior Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Center - NH

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Bachelor's and Master's Programs: Franklin Pierce University; New England College

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Worker Organization Partner: NH Nurses Association