



RESEARCHING/TARGETING ORGANIZATIONS

How to identify openings (before other candidates)

Knowledge is power, and being informed of organizations operating in your field of interest will make you a savvy and informed candidate. It will also save you time during the search process and enhance your ability to find a congruent match for what you value in a work setting.

REASONS TO RESEARCH

- The ability to articulate your interest in an organization will help you to stand out in all parts of the application process.
- Empowers the applicant to create a target list of organizations (e.g. to speak with at career fairs, attend events, set up job alerts) that possess the culture or work with the population of interest.
- Provides the applicant insights that can be displayed within application materials and during the interview.

CONSIDERATIONS: FACTORS TO RESEARCH

What is important to you in a work environment? Start your list by reviewing the factors below.

Mission statement

- Is the statement congruent with your values and interests?
- Does it reflect and promote an inclusive environment?

Stability

- The length that an organization has been around may provide insight to its stability. If you are seeking a reliable environment, you might consider targeting organizations who are established (20+ years) and are known in the field.
- Conversely, if you are interested in building and growing something new within an organization, you might be interested in working at a start-up, defined as being in business for five years or less.

Clients, products or population served

- Are you passionate about working with a certain population (e.g. women, children, youth with incarcerated parents)?
- Is social justice one of your top values? Consider focusing on organizations who are making an impact on the community, state or federal government policies.
- Does the organization publicly lean one way on politics, religion, etc.? Is that a match with your values?

Products and/or services

- Is the organization selling a product? Do you believe in that product?
- Is the location of where the product is being developed (e.g., internationally vs. in the U.S.) a factor for you?
- Has the organization been sued or has it had poor consumer ratings?



WHO SHOULD I RESEARCH?

Identify the type of organizations of interest first, then use the links below to create a list of organizations in the geographical area you are interested in pursuing.

- [Maryland's top-ranked employers](#), Check out why they are popular.
- [Maryland's fastest growing](#) companies. These organizations will probably have a high hiring quota if they are growing.
- [Great places to work in DC](#)
- ["Best Places to Work"](#), Employees' Choice by Glassdoor.
- [LinkedIn Top Companies 2024](#): The 50 best large workplaces to grow your career in the U.S.
- List of [Think Tanks](#) in the Washington, D.C. area.
- [Nonprofit Organizations](#) in Greater D.C.
- [LinkedIn groups](#), search for groups related to your area of interest and join the groups of interest. As a group member, you can review the profile of all of the members and review which organizations they have worked with.
- Use [google maps](#) to locate organizations in a particular area.
- Consider using an aggregate job/internship board (e.g. [Indeed](#), [Simply Hired](#)) to narrow the search to organizations in your location who work with the people, places or topics you are interested in pursuing.
- [Volunteering and nonprofit directory](#) contains a list of organizations and programs in the nonprofit field to review.
- [Professional associations](#) are usually industry specific and provide a list of member organizations.
- [Federal agencies](#) are listed in "go government's" career guides to jump start your research related to career paths
- [Vault](#) lists organizations operating within a geographical location (access through Handshake).
- [Employer Directory in Handshake](#) allows students to search for organizations (e.g. key words, industry, location).

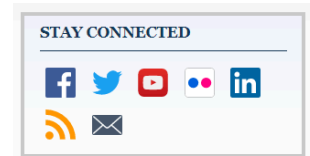


RESEARCH TOOLS: WHERE SHOULD I START?

[4 Tips for Searching for Companies that Focus on Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Website: Most organizations have an “about me” section on their website that provides an overview of their history. Depending on the type of organization you are interested in, you may also look for recent press releases linked to their website. Review the latest press releases to gain insights on the current trends within the organization.

Google Search: Search the top links related to that organization online. Make sure you look beyond the first page, as the first couple of pages will most likely contain links portraying the organizations in a positive PR light. [Google News](#): expand your search across the country with google news. It aggregates headlines from news sources worldwide, groups similar stories together and displays them according to each reader's keyword search.



Company's Social Media Pages: Many organizations have active social media websites where they engage with their clients and post accomplishments. “Follow” organizations to display your interest, and you might just get alerted of job and internship openings.

Consumer Rating/Professional Associations: Organizations who sell products to consumers can usually be found on the [Better Business Bureau](#) (BBB) which rates organizations by the number of complaints they receive, client attentiveness, etc. A poor BBB rating might shed light on issues the organization is going through or give you insights into the level of ethics the organization's leadership has.

Ask the employees: Gain insights from current workers by reading their reviews or requesting informational interviews. The links below provide opportunities to connect with 1,000's of organizations.

- [Terrapins Connect](#): allows students' virtual access to UMD alumni who have volunteered to share the scoop on how they broke into their field (plus they offer resume reviews, etc.).
- [Career Events for BSOS majors](#): visit an organization for half a day with a small group of UMD students or attend virtual information sessions.
- [Intern for a Day program](#): connects undergraduate students with organizations for one a day shadowing experience.
- [Glassdoor reviews](#): search ratings and reviews of over 600,000 companies worldwide from anonymous employees.
- [UMD's LinkedIn Alumni tool](#): search UMD's alumni profile to locate where they are working. Request an informational interview through messaging or review their job duties to gain insights.

INCORPORATING YOUR RESEARCH

Now that you have the inside scoop on an organization, you can use it within the application process. Review the sample wording below to gain ideas.

Resume

Use the information you obtained through the “ask the employee” section to provide concrete skill examples on your resume related to the position. You may also have obtained inside information about the preferred resume format or particular technical skills in demand that you could include.

Cover Letter



- “I have been following your organization for the past year and I have been especially impressed with how much emphasis your organization puts on celebrating cultural diversity through the ____ program.”
- “I met with Recruiter Sally at the UMD Fair and the ____ program she shared with me sounds like a perfect fit with my educational background in international affairs and research experience. She encouraged me to follow-up with you.”
- Email follow-up post fair: “You mentioned that you expected to have an opening in April. I wanted to confirm that I will get back in touch with you then to continue our conversation”.

Interview

Include questions about a project you learned about, their work culture or incorporate how your demonstrated personal qualities/skills match the position and their mission and values (i.e. for the “why me question”).

- “Based on my research of your work culture, I have been so impressed to learn about ____, can you tell me more about that?”
- “I was amazed to learn that you have been recognized by ____ for the past three years. What projects do you think most accounted for that win?”
- “Your organization really piqued my interest after reviewing the article, ____, I found on your Twitter feed (I have been following it for the last couple of months). It rang true to me because ____.”
- “I believe that I am uniquely qualified for this position because of my integrity, commitment to service (*e.g. one of the organization’s values*), communication skills and analytical abilities.”