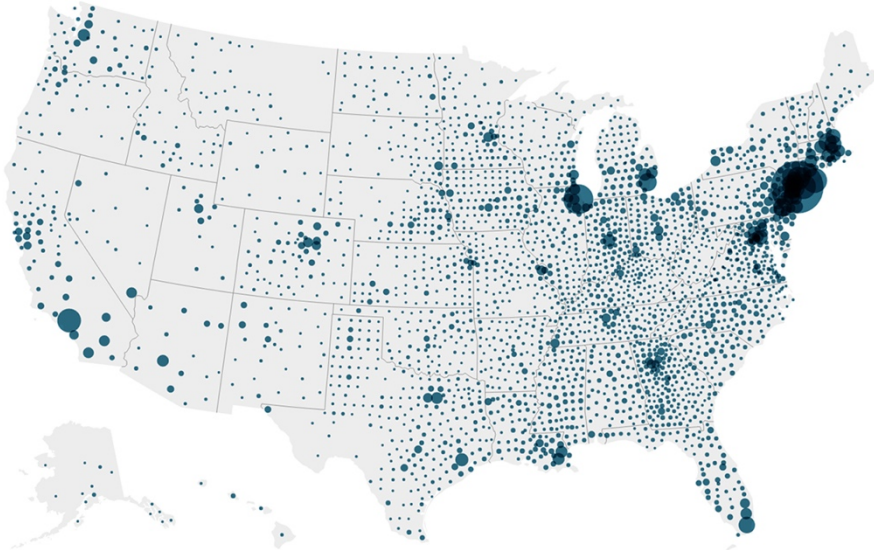


**A Comprehensive
Guide for
JobSeekers
During the Pandemic**



**WorkMonger's
Guidebook
For Education
Sector JobSeekers**



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A Guide for JobSeekers During the Pandemic

With education organizations largely telling their employees to work from home due to the coronavirus pandemic, job seekers are finding that potential employers are switching in-person interviews to video or are pausing the search process entirely. This guide is designed to help you navigate the never-before-charted waters of finding a job in the education sector during a global pandemic. We begin with general tips to guide you while you search for jobs online, followed by in-depth information about how you should approach video interviews during this time and tips about how to handle a pause in the hiring process of an organization.

Harness the Power of Online Networking

Even as some states are slowly reopening businesses, with still others beginning to do so in the coming days and weeks, you can expect face-to-face networking events to be canceled. This means you need to take your networking online. Some examples of things you can do to network online include:

- **LinkedIn Groups.** You can find a variety of [LinkedIn Groups](#) to connect with people in the education sector. Search keywords related to your non-teaching career goals, such as leadership, policy, and technology.
- **Engage with posts.** Whether on LinkedIn, Facebook, or other online outlets, be sure to engage with posts. When you like and comment on other's posts, you make yourself more visible.
- **Provide content.** You can also increase your visibility by posting regularly. You might even consider writing longer-form content about the education sector and publishing it on LinkedIn and LinkedIn Groups.
- **Make virtual coffee dates.** Connect with others by inviting them out for virtual coffee on Zoom, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, or WhatsApp.

Create an Enhanced Career Profile on WorkMonger

WorkMonger matches you with organizations in the education sector, including schools, non-profits, policy groups, and educational technology companies, who are looking for all levels of employees from entry to executive. Once you [create your profile](#), WorkMonger provides priority matching to new roles as they become available. WorkMonger offers a high-value opportunity for little effort because you have no additional work beyond completing your profile. Plus, job matches are completely confidential - employers can't see you or your matches without your permission.

Visit TrulyHired.com

[TrulyHired](#) is the nation's largest and ONLY non-teaching education job board, so visiting this site is crucial for your job search—pandemic or no pandemic. When you visit the site, enter your email to create a job alert for your target role. TrulyHired instantly notifies you of new positions that fit your role, so you don't miss out on opportunities to find your dream job. Also, [create a TrulyHired account](#) to keep track of your job search and applications. This will help you avoid the faux pas of applying twice to the same position.

Stay in Touch with the Hiring Team

The physical, emotional, and financial impact of COVID-19 has touched everyone across the nation in some way. Be thoughtful whenever you reach out to an organization's hiring team. This is also a difficult time for

them; and, some states and areas have been hit harder than others. Many companies are also working with reduced staff or reduced hours, so show your respect for their time by asking specific questions. This will help the hiring team support you throughout the application/hiring process.

Reflect and Hone Your Messaging

The coronavirus pandemic has prompted a lot of shifting between sectors and within sectors, including education. Reflect on your job search and how it aligns with your specific values and career goals. You might choose to make some adjustments. For example, consider looking at roles and career paths that are adjacent to your specific target, especially if shifting has created more job opportunities in an adjacent career.

Create a Professional Website

Moving your job search and marketing online means that you need to make sure employers can find you easily. Creating a professional website to showcase you and your work is one of the best ways to do that. Depending on your work experience and the type of non-teaching role you are seeking, your website will vary in its offerings. Three things you must include are:

- **Portfolio.** A strong portfolio allows you to stand apart from other job candidates by providing information to a potential employer about your professional compliments, skills, and abilities. Expand your portfolio from a simple copy of your resume by providing images, writing samples, videos, and audio files to provide relevant examples of your work. You can also include an "About Me" section in your online portfolio to provide some personal background information.
- **Contact Information.** Don't forget to provide multiple avenues on your website for hiring managers to reach out to you. At a minimum, provide your email, phone number, and link to your LinkedIn profile.
- **Content.** If you have published content related to education or your desired role in the education sector on LinkedIn or other networking sites, you should also provide links or PDF copies on your professional website.

Brush Off Your Skillset and Boost Your Skills

You may have skills that you haven't needed to use in your most recent position. As a jobseeker, now is a great time to refresh some of those skills and add new ones to your toolbox. One positive response to COVID-19 has been a drastic increase in the availability of free online courses from colleges and universities. Look for courses that align with your career goals. You can start by accessing the [WorkMonger database of free courses](#).

Gather Organizational Intelligence

It's important that you stay abreast of news in the education sector. Yet, you also need to set your sights on one or two organizations where you want to apply. Spend time learning about the organization and their history, but you also want to pay attention to how they are responding to the coronavirus pandemic. Watch for and read press releases and news from the organizations. Also, take the time to comment and share any news posted by company employees, especially hiring managers. This gets your name in front of them, which works to your advantage when they offer interviews or make hiring decisions.

Only Worry About the Things You Can Control

You can try your best to increase your online visibility, network online, and engage with organizations, but you have no control over how, if, or when they respond to you. The same goes for waiting for communication after an interview. Trying to change things you cannot control is frustrating, a waste of time, and can cause you to miss out on other opportunities. Focus your effort on the things you can control, such as polishing your online portfolio, creating content, searching for jobs, and engaging with other online content. You can [curb your post-interview anxiety](#) in these three ways.

Don't Play the Numbers Game

Some subscribe to the notion of applying to as many jobs as possible, no matter the fit. Not only is this a waste of your time, but it can also hurt you. Recruiters and hiring managers often post on multiple job boards or job sites. If they see your application multiple times, they might assume you are sending out multiple resumes. Instead, focus on roles that are tightly aligned or adjacent to your career goals in the education sector.

Demonstrate How You Can Solve an Employer's Problem

During your job search and the interview process, you need to demonstrate that each step of the way you can solve an employer's biggest challenges. Maybe the organization is struggling with a specific technology, or they are a non-profit educational organization that cannot find a grant writer. In any case, use your professional website to showcase a portfolio of your work for potential employers to review.

Focus on Your Personal Brand and Value Proposition

Identify the qualities, motivations, and skills that set you apart from others and build your personal reputation around these things, so that you are eventually known for them. While we often think of a value proposition when selling a product or service, this concept also applies when marketing yourself for employment. Your value proposition is the promise(s) you make to a potential employer about the type, quality, and amount of work you will deliver to their organization and serves as a foundation for personal branding.

Familiarize Yourself with Remote Working Tools and Resources

Stay-at-home, safer-at-home, and shelter-in-place orders from the coronavirus outbreak have forced many organizations to transition to remote work, which has been a struggle for some. It is especially challenging for organizations that work directly with K-12 students and now have to transition to online learning because of closed schools. Take the time to learn the most widely available and used remote working tools and resources, so you can join a remote team seamlessly when offered a position. You should also highlight any expertise you have on these tools and resources, which makes you an asset to organizations that have experienced difficulties facilitating the transition to remote work.

Organize Your Job Search

You can best utilize the time you spend searching for a job by making sure you're organized. Strong organization skills will also prevent you from applying to the same job on two or three different job boards,

which does not send good signals to recruiters and hiring managers. Some specific tips to help you stay organized during your job search include:

- Keep track of each organization where you submit applications, as well as the roles within an organization. It's typically not in your best interest to apply to multiple roles in one organization.
- Set-up keyword alerts that target the roles and type of educational organization you seek on websites like TrulyHired.com.
- Use the same keywords to set up [Google Alerts](#) for your target job roles.
- Use #hashtag searches on Twitter and LinkedIn to find and organize open positions in the role(s) you seek.

Target Remote Roles

Most positions in educational organizations have transitioned to remote during the pandemic. This likely is temporary for many but might be permanent for some. The entire U.S. job market, as well as the specific education sector, continue to change. The spread of COVID-19 and the economic ramifications has plagued employers and employees with uncertainty. If you are currently searching for a job, make sure to visit the remote section of TrulyHired. With regard to your LinkedIn profile, website, or other job search-related sites, it's in your best interest to highlight any remote experience you have and position your skill sets to match remote work.

Be Patient, Be Kind, and Keep Applying

This is a difficult time for everyone, and you never know the specific challenges someone might be facing as a result of the spread of COVID-19. Any communication you have with hiring managers or recruiters needs to acknowledge the current situation. Organizations might have a hiring freeze or hold on a specific role. This doesn't mean you have to forget about the opportunity. In the coming weeks or months, organizations will lift hiring freezes or may reactivate roles. Orientate yourself towards providing solutions and results to be a positive force during a challenging time, and your patience might even be rewarded as the new normal approaches.

Video Interviews

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, you might have been asked to do a video interview for an open position in the education sector. Currently, you can expect that if you are offered an interview, it will be conducted over the internet using some type of video conferencing software or app. This means you have to present yourself in the best light, figuratively and literally. Below we provide tips for you to shine during your video interview.

Quiet Setting, Good Lighting, Neutral Background

- Avoid distractions like computer apps, cell phones, and pets, and reduce as much background noise as possible, so you have the best possible quality conversation. In the current situation, you might not be able to remove all distractions, but make sure to inform your interviewer. You can be straightforward and say, "With schools closed, my children are working on homework, so you might hear them in the background." OR "My roommate/partner/spouse is also working from home, and he is on a call, so I will do my best to minimize background noise."
- Log in early and test your surroundings with a phone, tablet, or different app on your laptop. Check for background noise and lighting and make any necessary adjustments.
- Help eliminate background noise by wearing headphones. You can also use noise-canceling tools like [Krisp](#) to ensure you have a quiet interview setting.
- If you are using Zoom and you do not have a neutral background, consider using one of their virtual options for your video interview.
- Create your own background by finding a solid or bright wall. Remove clutter, personal items, and alcohol. A busy background takes the focus away from you.
- If possible, position yourself away from high traffic areas in your home such as entryways and doors that can pull the focus from your face, expression, and message.

Ask About the Organization's COVID-19 Response

Currently, many organizations have developed contingency plans for operation and timelines for bringing on new talent. Requesting specific information about an organization's timeline and hiring plans does two things. First, it gives you an idea of their direction, so you know where you stand in the hiring process. Second, your eagerness to understand their timeline and move forward as a candidate within the constraints of their process demonstrates flexibility, a crucial attribute for jobseekers during this pandemic.

Convey Professionalism, Confidence, and Excitement During Your Interview

Video technology isn't ideal for those on both sides of an interview. Yet, it is the new norm and likely will be for some time. Your words and body language matter as much, if not more, during a video interview. Your interviewer can read professionalism, confidence, and excitement, so it's important that you are mindful of these things during your video interview.

- Wear the same interview outfit you would for an in-person interview with the organization. This demonstrates professionalism and a 'ready to work' attitude. Wearing casual clothes does not mean you're unprofessional, but it sends the wrong visual cue to your interviewer.

- Convey your true personality and excitement, but take time to breathe and pause. You want your interviewer to understand what you are saying.
- Keep a positive tone.
- Nonverbal communication and gestures are important, but too many movements can distract your interviewer. Instead, act naturally and don't force it.
- Maintain good posture by sitting up tall and squaring your shoulders.

Install Video Software or App Hours or Days Ahead of Time

Technology failure is one of the worst things that can happen during your video interview. You can avoid blunders and glitches and set yourself up for success by installing the video software you will be using far ahead of your interview. Even if you already have the software installed, you should fire it up and ensure everything is working correctly.

- Be sure to communicate any issues in advance to your interviewer. This also conveys professionalism.
- Installing and testing software in advance gets you back to the important task of [preparing for your interview](#).

Practice Chat

If you've never participated in a video interview, practice chatting with a friend on Zoom until you are comfortable using the same device that you will use for your actual interview. As you use Zoom, you will also become comfortable speaking through a computer microphone and listening for background noise. Talking to someone on video is different from face-to-face communication. Here are some things to focus on during your practice chat:

- **Make a noticeable effort to speak slowly** if you tend to speak too quickly when you are nervous or excited.
- Always **let the other person finish their sentences** and avoid speaking at the same time. Even when you have strong WiFi, too many sounds or motions can confuse the software and lead to an unstable connection. You can also mute your mic when you are not speaking.
- **Get used to nonverbal feedback.** When we interact with someone in-person, we rely on casual small talk to warm up and relate to each other. It's more difficult to convey relatability through a video interview because the format tends to naturally make the interaction more official.
- **Check your camera** to make sure it's working properly. Place your device on your desk, a table, or on some books, so your camera is not looking up at you. This will make it difficult for your interviewer to see you head-on. The best view will be from the chest up but think about keeping it at headshot range. Also, an elevated laptop or other device gets you closer to the microphone, which leads to better sound quality. You should make sure your background looks the way you want it, and no stray or distracting objects are in the frame.
- **Keep family members and/or roommates from hogging all the bandwidth** while you are engaged in a video call. This means no video games, streaming Netflix or Hulu, or playing YouTube or Facebook videos. This can help you avoid an unstable connection, too. You can let your housemates know what you need and come up with a schedule or alternative activities. For example, have your kids go for a bike ride or walk the dog during your interview, or have your partner make a trip for essential items or go for their daily run.
- **Learn how to control the software, so you aren't fumbling** around during your interview. Adjusting the volume and positioning on the phone is different from a tablet or laptop. You likely will need to know how to use the 'share' button, perhaps to share a document or presentation with your interviewer. On most video programs, this is a small button at the bottom of the screen. You can check out tutorials on

YouTube of the most important features you need to use, but make sure you watch the most recent posts, so you have updated information.

Preparing and Attending Your Video Interview

- **Collect any notes** you have about using the video software and reminding yourself to speak slowly and smile on occasion. Keep these nearby, but you should also have some notes to guide you through the conversation.

PRO TIP: Create a quick snapshot or cheat sheet for your interview by dividing a sheet of paper into four quadrants and fill each part with bulleted lists of phrases or words that align with these section headers:

- *Their Ideal Candidate*
- *Questions I Have*
- *Information About the School or Organization*
- *My Top Skills, Qualifications, or Accomplishments*

You can refer to these notes easily anytime throughout the interview.

- **'Arrive' on-time, but a few minutes early is better.** Confirm the date, time, and time zone prior to your interview and plan to sign onto the software two to four minutes early. Quickly run through the speaker, volume, microphone, and camera tests. Everything should be working properly as long as you installed your software and practiced in advance. Some software programs require the host to start the call for you to enter, so arriving online early allows you to start as soon as possible.
- **Keep an eye on your email** for last-minute communication about a delay or postponement, but **do not panic** if they are not exactly on time.
- **Watch and listen for affirmation from your interviewer.** Nods, smiles, and "uh-huhs" each provide evidence that your interviewer is validating your responses. You should also give nonverbal feedback as the candidate. This means smiling and nodding when your interviewer speaks and using hand gestures when appropriate.
- Watch for negative signs such as stern looks, distracted eye movements, and other things that suggest you should shift the conversation. You need to pay attention, but do not be too sensitive because your interviewer might simply be writing or typing notes from your conversation.

When Organizations Pause The Hiring Process

When you learn the education organization you want to work for has paused their hiring process, it can be disappointing. Remember that pausing a hiring process does not mean the organization has canceled its search for talent. Here are some things you can do to stay in the loop and go after your dream role when hiring resumes:

- **Stay in touch** during the pause and provide information about yourself. The organization might tell you when you will hear from them. If they do not, check-in every two or three weeks to show continued interest in the role. Elevate your check in and make yourself a more interesting candidate by sharing recent activities such as research, study, skill-building, reading, and writing.
- **Make yourself available** for formal and informal virtual interviews. Block time during business hours for your job search, and you can also schedule informational or formal interviews during this time.
- **Use remote work to your advantage.** Working from home provides a great deal of flexibility, if only for the fact that you don't have the morning rush or travel to work. This saves you time and lets you start earlier, so you have more time to focus on career advancement.
- Keep updated on COVID-19 responses. This situation is new to everyone. Be flexible and understanding, but also keep tabs on how the educational organization you want to work for is responding. This way, you can be at the front of the line when hiring resumes.

While these challenging times are forcing hiring organizations and JobSeekers to adapt, remember that at its core, the jobseeking process has not changed. This is still your chance to make a strong first impression, communicate the value you will bring to the work, and to highlight your teamwork and leadership skills. Don't forget, however, that an equal part of the process is you as the JobSeeker vetting the employer to make sure it is the right organization and role for you. Don't allow the pandemic to push you to skip that part and join the first organization that makes you an offer without ensuring both the organization and the role are the right match for you. Follow the guidance above, and you'll be well on your way to finding the right next job for you despite the pandemic.