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Retool and Get Back to Work

Unemployed professionals can use government funding to acquire additional credentials. Not everyone qualifies for funds or finds a job, but here's what you can do to improve your chances for success.

Troy, MI, March 30 – With Michigan unemployment still hovering around 15%, many unemployed professionals are returning to school using government funding available through the No Worker Left Behind (NWLB), National Emergency Grant (NEG) or Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Attaining new and meaningful credentials gives people a way to stand out from the crowd, but it isn't a guarantee you'll land a new job. The Center for Professional Studies (CPS), a state licensed proprietary school, offers three tips to increase your success.

Before selecting a curriculum and school, decide what credentials are in high demand. Then evaluate which institution best delivers those credentials including completing certifications and offering job placement services. "To date, 82% of our graduates have been hired in relevant multi industry positions. We constantly upgrade our curriculum to ensure this key metric keeps growing," says Daryl Patrishkoff, CEO of CPS. "We've been successful because our service to students doesn't stop in the classroom. We are not done until they are employed in a meaningful career."

1. Show Me the Money

If returning to school means applying for government funds to pay for it, then get help preparing the application. Seek out all of the information you can to complete the process correctly. Keep record of your correspondence with your caseworker. Consult with people who have received funding for advice on how to complete the process. Expect to respond quickly and thoroughly when information is requested of you.

"Case workers are overwhelmed with the volume of applicants, so you want to be a low maintenance customer by organizing your paperwork correctly," advises Dennis Cavitt, Managing Director for CPS. "We act as liaison between the applicants and the case workers. We've been helping students acquire funding successfully for years, and know how to assemble an error free application that gets approved quickly. Many people have delayed or lost funding because of a mistake they made during the application process."

One third of student referrals CPS receives are from caseworkers, which Cavitt believes is because CPS helps people prepare documentation correctly. Another third of our referrals come from graduates and existing students, who believe in the success of our ability to help students get back into the workforce.



2. On the Job Application Experience

Technical certifications are in high demand today, such as Designing Engineer, Simulation Test Engineer, Program Management (PMP) or Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. These certifications require students to complete an “on the job” assignment before getting certified. Most schools hold the student responsible for locating and recruiting the company with which to perform the work. If you’re unemployed, finding a company that will give you the required experience can be a lengthy and time consuming process that delays certification.

CPS is the only state licensed institution with established business partnerships with companies in various industries ready to have students come in and practice the skills they’ve learned in the classroom. “This is truly a win-win situation,” says Patrishkoff. “The partnering companies benefit from the improvements we identify, and the students get the project experience they need to graduate. The program has been so successful, all of our partnering companies have hired at least one CPS student.”

3. Network Off Line as well as On

The old adage that it’s not what you know, but who you know has never proven truer. When hundreds of people are vying for a single position, your relationship with those making or influencing the decision can be the difference between getting an interview or the job. Today’s technologies offer many opportunities to network with people all over the world, but getting out, meeting and shaking hands with people are equally important activities.

CPS offers its students several opportunities to network amongst each other both in and out of the classroom, such as CPS sponsored networking events where students meet other graduates, recruiters, and representatives from local companies.

“It’s a real morale booster for everyone,” says Steve Alessandri, Vice President of Sales and Student Development for CPS. “Your self confidence is rattled after a lay off, and getting out of the house, and away from the computer to meet new people gets a person feeling confident about what they have to offer an employer again.”

The networking often continues after program completion. Many of our students continue to meet with one another after they graduate to practice their interviewing skills and share leads.

About CPS

The Center for Professional Studies is a Michigan licensed proprietary school founded in 1993 to provide world class industry specific technical education that is developed and facilitated by industry experts. CPS has provided hands-on technical training to more than 7,000 students and 400 corporations.

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