

Assisting Your Graduate with the Job Search

Graduation is near and the job search for your soon to be graduate is in full swing. The current job market is one of the toughest in years and you may be wondering, "How can I help my graduate land that first job?" Here are some suggestions:

Ask how you can help.

Your student may have ideas about how you can effectively help in their job search. Your managerial skills could be utilized as a mock interviewer, your editing skills could be used to make the final critique on a resume, or your networking skills might uncover a few new job leads. Think about how you can assume a role other than mom or dad to assist with the job search.

While your help will be appreciated, listen to your student and back off when they are feeling too much pressure or need to do things on their own.

Be a listener.

Sometimes the best help you can give is to listen to the frustrations, worries, and anxieties of your student. While your advice might not always be welcome, your student knows they can come to you to vent. A listening ear can be very helpful.

Be open to new ideas.

The idea of graduate school may come up. Your student, who has always wanted to go into teaching, may start thinking about sales. Be open to these new ideas and provide positive suggestions where appropriate. However, don't encourage graduate school just because you feel there may be no job prospects.

Help the job search move from online only.

While it is uncomfortable to visit an employer they don't know, it is important to help your student realize the necessity of it. Employers are inundated with hundreds of online applications. If your student can help them put a face with their name, they can get a leg up on the competition. While your student should make face-to-face contacts, they need to know when to quit and not become pushy in their job search.

Reassure your graduate that this bad job market is temporary.

The market ebbs and flows with the economy and it won't stay down forever. Reassuring your student that things will turn around and sharing your experience with the job market can be helpful.

Set achievable goals.

Help your student break down the search process into achievable goals. Encourage them to be organized and save several versions of cover letters, resumes, and thank you notes as well as a spreadsheet of contacts.

Give an early graduation present.

A new suit, briefcase, or portfolio can assist your student in their job search and getting it early will allow them to use it in the whole search, not just after graduation. Talk to your student about what will help the most in their search.

Encourage volunteer or part-time positions.

While you did not spend money on tuition for your student to volunteer upon graduation, it may help in the long run. Sometimes all it takes is getting a foot in the door and volunteers or temps are a great way for a company to test the fit of an employee with minimal investment. Paid temporary jobs can also be beneficial, so encourage your student to think outside the box with regard to positions they will accept.

Remind your student how PROUD you are of them.

The bad job market should not be a damper on the success of earning a college degree. Remind your student how proud you are of their achievement through a phone call or card. They may be discouraged about the job search and should know you are proud and supportive.

Refer your student to Career Services at Aquinas.

Career Services, located in the Lower Donnelly Center, has many resources for grads and students. They can assist with resume and cover letter development, mock interviews, and have many job postings. The services offered are free to AQ students and alumni, so make sure your student takes advantage of them!