Are you considering entering the academic job market? It’s never too early to start preparation. Remember — you should start looking at least one year in advance of a position’s start date. In this column, we will offer you some resources and tips to get you started on the process. Next month’s column will focus on non-academic jobs and relevant resources.

Resources

Agework: www.agework.com
GSA hosts this online database specific to gerontology careers. Once you navigate to the job search engine, you can search by keyword, location, and job type. Relevant to the academic job search, you will find listings under the job type heading such as assistant professor, research, etc.

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE): www.aghe.org
AGHE is GSA’s educational branch. Its website lists gerontology-specific academic positions within its “Resources” tab.

American Society on Aging (ASA): careers.asaging.org/jobseeker/search/
ASA also sponsors a career search engine focused on the field of aging. You can filter your search using subcategories such as job function, industry, and state. You can also use keywords. Try starting your search by selecting “academic” within “job function.”

Chronicle of Higher Education: chronicle.com/jobCategory/Faculty-research/1
This news source is published every workday and offers access to thousands of academic job posting through its search engine. You will need to search by discipline. For example, once you arrive at the website above, you can choose to continue further by clicking on “health/medicine,” “science/technology/engineering,” “social/behavioral sciences,” or under “professional fields,” you will find “social work/human services.”

Academic Jobs Wiki at Wikia: academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Academic_Jobs_Wiki
This wiki (a collaborative website where content can be edited by its users) shows listings of academic jobs by discipline. Once you access this website, you will have to scroll quite a ways down to arrive at the listings, which are organized first by year (the most current application year is for 2012-2013) and then by discipline. Disciplines available include biology, nursing, psychology, public health, social work, etc.

Professional Societies

Another way to find academic positions is to visit websites of professional associations that are specific to your discipline (e.g., the American Nurses Association). In addition to having job listings online, some of these organizations also sponsor job fairs or interviewing opportunities at conferences.

Individual Universities

You have the option to target specific universities by going to their “careers” link (other labels for such a link might be “human resources,” “jobs,” or “employment) or by going to a particular department’s webpage. Some universities offer diversity postdoc positions for minority students; you can usually find these by contacting university provost offices.
Personal Tips on Navigating the Job Market
By Linda S. Park, MSSW, MSMHR, doctoral candidate in human development and family studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

1. Organize
   a. Determine from whom you want letters of recommendation and talk to them as early as possible — you may want more than three depending on the type of position you seek.
   b. Check your job listing sources often and set up job alerts whenever possible.
   c. Create a spreadsheet or some system to organize job postings, deadlines, submission requirements, and your materials. Check and update this system often.
   d. Prepare your portfolio — teaching philosophy, research statement, CV, writing sample, cover letter, sample syllabi, teaching evaluations, transcripts, and business cards.
   e. Build a professional website, register with LinkedIn, and delete inappropriate materials on social media.
   f. Get feedback and proofread everything! You don’t want a typo to eliminate your chances.

2. Cast your net wide
   a. Professors are a great resource, especially because of their networks.
   b. Friends from other departments are another great resource.
   c. Request face-to-face meetings with potential contacts at any upcoming annual meetings or conferences — this can result in screening interviews.

3. Your job talk
   a. Practice live; not in front of a mirror.
   b. Arrange practice job talks in your department and practice in front of your friends.
   c. Seek feedback — language, style, speech, posture and body language.
   d. Memorize as much as possible to limit reading your notes or slides.

4. Publish papers
   a. Build your CV and portfolio — higher volume increases your odds for getting noticed.
   b. Remember the order of priority from the employer’s view — published, revised and resubmitted, submitted, in progress.
   c. Start as early as possible in generating your publishing record.

5. Psychological preparation
   a. Create a social support system — the wait, the rejections, the opportunities for initial telephone or SKYPE interview, and an invitation for a campus visit are stressful.
   b. Keep a positive perspective — the market is very competitive and the search is not just about a “qualified” candidate but also on whether the candidate is a “good fit” with the department (in terms of research agenda and personality).
   c. Insight — stop thinking of yourself as a graduate student and begin to see yourself as a potential colleague and in the role of being a professional academic.