

JOB SEARCH GUIDE FOR 50+

The Path to New Opportunities



NM-NEW
NEW ELDER WORLD

**Proactively Engaging
New Mexico's New Elders**

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"Do not grow old, no matter how long you live. Never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born." – Albert Einstein



This guide is designed to support and empower those job seekers who are aged 50+ navigating the dynamic and often challenging landscape of modern employment. As you embark on this journey, you'll find that your extensive experience and rich career history are invaluable assets. However, understanding how to effectively leverage these strengths, adapt to evolving job market trends, and maintain holistic wellbeing is crucial for success. This guide offers practical strategies and actionable insights to help you refine your job search approach, from defining your ideal role to harnessing your professional network and embracing new technologies.

The path to finding meaningful employment at this stage in life involves more than just searching for job openings; it requires a strategic approach to managing time, enhancing your qualifications, and cultivating a robust support system. By focusing on both personal and professional development, and by staying resilient and proactive, you can open doors to new opportunities that align with your goals and aspirations. With the right tools and mindset, this guide aims to make your job search a journey of growth and discovery, leading you to a fulfilling and rewarding career path.



SECTION 1

UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S JOB MARKET

The Modern Workplace

The world is a more dynamic place than it was even a few short years ago. Changes brought about by global competition, impacts of the pandemic, and rapid technology advancements are shifting the nature of work at a blinding speed.

By understanding today's jobs and the overall job market, as well as the factors specific to those aged 50+, you can better direct your job search efforts using proven methods for older employment seekers. These include focusing on specific opportunities and organizations and leveraging personal networks.

Finally, many of us are used to seeking security through traditional, full-time employment - benefits and all. The reality today is that long-term security can often be found through developing multiple revenue streams which can include part-time employment; side-gigs or even small side businesses which, if successful, may grow into the primary source of income.

Learn More About the Modern Workplace:

- Video: [The Future Of Work: 5 Biggest Workplace Trends](#)
- Video: [The Future Of Work: Is Your Job Safe?](#)
- Book: [BYOB: Build Your Own Business, Be Your Own Boss](#), by Brian Scudamore.
- Book: [Own Success: A Proven Method to Succeed in Business with a Franchise](#), by Dan Citrenbaum

Challenges for 50+ Job Seekers

Some employers avoid hiring older workers because they perceive them to be: slower mentally and resistant to new technologies; less flexible and adaptable and more resistant to change; less productive and possessing less endurance for hard work; less willing to travel; poorer investments for training and development because of shorter career horizons; more expensive due to higher salary expectations and having higher medical costs; quick to leave for higher salaries; and poor at working with younger workers, especially younger supervisors.

These perceptions overlook the immense value that older workers bring to the table. Individuals aged 50+ are typically seasoned professionals with a wealth of experience, a strong work ethic, and a proven track record of reliability. You bring a depth of industry knowledge and practical skills honed over decades, which can be invaluable in mentoring younger employees and providing a steady hand during times of change.

Learn More About Navigating the Challenges 50+ Job Seekers Encounter:

- Video: [Why More Older Workers are Finding Themselves Unemployed as Retirement Approaches](#)
- Book: [Fifty-Five, Unemployed and Faking Normal](#), by Elizabeth White
- [Age Friendly Employers Guide](#) by The Encore Network

Reflections:

- How comfortable are you with modern work practices? What steps can you take to improve your skills in these areas?
- Do you have a clear sense of the options available to you in addition to traditional employment, such as part-time work, side gigs or starting a small business?
- Are you prepared to address age-related perceptions that might affect your job search?

Trends in Technology

Embracing technology is essential for 50+ employment seekers to demonstrate their relevance and digital proficiency in today's workforce. Nothing makes you look more on top of things than a visible working knowledge of the technologies current to your field and the ability to function effectively like a digital native.

Foundational computer literacy is a must in today's world. While role-specific IT knowledge can be learned on the job, confidence in these basics is crucial for initial consideration. Additionally, having a working knowledge of social media, virtual working apps, and Artificial Intelligence as they pertain to your specific career can provide significant leverage in your job search.

Finally, virtual work and remote capabilities- the ability to work from anywhere and often at any time- represent a new lifestyle. These technological advancements offer increased job opportunities and personal flexibility, opening doors to a broader range of employment options.

Learn More About Modernizing Your Technology Knowledge and Skills:

- NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [Modernize Your Technology Knowledge, Skills & Apps](#)
- Video Classes: [Teeniors®:- Tech Support for Seniors](#)

Reflections:

- Are you comfortable with information technology? Do you understand how to use the standard Microsoft Office and mobile device applications?
- Do you have clear insight into which technologies should take priority in advancing your career and are you taking strategic action to learn what matters most?
- Are you open to embracing flexible work arrangements and mobility, or are you adhering to the traditional work-week mentality?



SECTION 2

GETTING READY FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

Step 1: Defining Your Ideal Job

Clarity around what matters most helps you target your job search efforts on the types of work and kinds of organizations that are most aligned with your own goals and objectives. This also leads to higher long-term satisfaction in your new role. Finally, defining your ideal job and clarifying your values gives you more confidence in saying no to the wrong opportunities.

Your Purpose & Mission

The more grounded you are in what matters most to you, the better you will present yourself to potential employers. And the more likely you are to find employment that makes you happy – and avoid jobs that compromise your values and wear you down.

How To Define Your Purpose & Mission:

- Video: [How to Ikigai](#)
- Article: [The Philosophy of Ikigai: 3 Examples About Finding Purpose](#)
- Online Tool: [FranklinCovey Personal Mission Statement Builder](#)
- NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [The "6-P's of Midlife Transition"](#) with Chip Conley

“[Older workers] have an invaluable role to play in a diverse and inclusive workplace. By offering decades of work experience and knowledge, seniors play a critical role in supporting organization culture, resiliency and success.”

– Michael Timmes, HR consultant with
Insperity

Your Long-Term Goals

The saying is – “If you don’t know where you are going, then any road will take you there.” (But you may not like the destination once you arrive.) Let’s face it, you’ve probably got less time in front of you than behind you. Can you really afford to just roll the dice and “see where it all goes?”

How To Set Your Long-Term Goals:

- Online Tool: [A Complete Guide to Goal Setting](#)
- Book: [Business Model You: A One-Page Method for Reinventing Your Career](#), by Tim Clark, in collaboration with Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur
- NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [Exploring the PATH for Your Future, Part 1](#), with Dr. Mary Lemmond and [Exploring the PATH for Your Future, Part 2](#), with Dr. Mary Lemmond

Reflections:

- Have you identified what matters most to you? Do you have a clear image of the kind of work you want to do and who you want to do it for?
- Are your personal goals well defined, and what are your strategies for achieving them?

Step 2: Leveraging Your Lifetime of Experience

Employment is about solving critical business or organization problems. The most effective approach for age 50+ candidates like yourself is to deliberately develop and highlight your uniquely valuable abilities to solve specific problems and then to become so visible in the marketplace that the opportunities seek you out. Ultimately, the goal is to become so good at what you do that you simply cannot be ignored.

You've collected a lifetime of experience that gives you the ability to deliver unique value for potential employers, clients and customers. By nature, there are certain things that you are especially good at and enjoy doing. And there are things you are either not good at doing, or simply don't enjoy anymore. This is your chance to align your new role with your previous experience, skills, and abilities, ensuring that you contribute meaningfully while finding personal fulfillment.

The challenges and desires of customers are what determine market demand. By focusing on your strengths and what you enjoy, you can clearly demonstrate how your expertise directly addresses these market demands, making you an indispensable asset to potential employers.

"The mentorship and knowledge-sharing [of older workers] have proven invaluable in nurturing talent and fostering innovation." – Joy Pittman, Founder and CEO of HR For the Culture

How To Craft Your Unique Value Proposition:

- Book: [So Good They Can't Ignore You](#), by Cal Newport
- Book: [Business Model You](#), by Tim Clark, Alexander Osterwalder, and Yves Pigneur
- Article: [6 Worksheets & Templates to Find Your Ikigai](#), by Jeremy Sutton, Ph.D.

Reflections:

- Do you know who you want to work with and what problems you are uniquely qualified to help them solve?
- What is it that people say you are a wizard at doing - the kinds of things others turn to you for when they want to accomplish certain things?
- What makes you uniquely suited and preferable as a solution for the problems they are trying to solve?

Step 3: Harnessing The Power of Your Professional Network

After the age of 50, most opportunities come to us not through online searches, but through networking and the interactions we have with others who can make us aware of employer needs and then act as referrals for us. Building and maintaining a robust professional network requires intentional effort and strategic thinking. By nurturing your existing connections and continuously seeking new ones, you can stay informed about industry trends, gain access to hidden job opportunities, and receive valuable endorsements.

How To Cultivate Connections:

- Book: The Start-up of You, by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha
- Video: Learning LinkedIn- Set Up a New LinkedIn Account
- Networking Groups: Join professional associations, attend industry events, and participate in online forums and local meetups

Reflections:

- Do you have an active professional network that you spend significant time on each week to keep it alive and expand it?
- Are you utilizing LinkedIn effectively to connect with professionals in your industry?
- Have you identified and joined relevant networking groups or associations to broaden your connections?

Step 4: Building on Your Current Expertise (Education, Credentials and Certifications)

You may already have the right degree or credential for a role, but if not, there are many ways to enhance your qualifications such as pursuing a new credential. Pursuing additional credentials or certifications can deepen your expertise and strengthen your professional profile.

A wealth of federal, state, and local resources are available to support you in enhancing your qualifications. Understanding where these resources are and how to access them can unlock significant opportunities for professional development and career advancement. By staying informed about the latest developments in your field and continually updating your qualifications, you position yourself as a competitive candidate and a lifelong learner.

The true value lies not just in obtaining a certification or credential but in the ongoing knowledge and expertise you gain from it. Keeping your qualifications current ensures you remain relevant and well-prepared for the evolving job market.

How To Enhance Your Professional Qualifications:

- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
- CNM Programs & Pathways
- CNM Ingenuity Training Programs including:
 - Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
 - Medical Coding and Billing
 - Real Estate Academy
 - Technology Training
- Silver Entrepreneurship Initiative
- StartNowNM

Reflections:

- Are you actively pursuing skills or education that aligns with your chosen market segment?
- What is the most recent credential you can offer a prospective employer or client, and how does what you learned help solve their problems?
- Do you know where to find the most cost-effective information, people, and resources to support your ongoing professional development?



SECTION 3

LAUNCHING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Step 5: Crafting Your Professional Image

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, is quoted as saying, “Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.” Finding employment is about connecting your value proposition with those in the market who need your help, and about building trust with them. Appearances and initial impressions open, or close, doors. A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov reveal that all it takes is a tenth of a second to form an impression of a stranger from their face, and that longer exposures don’t significantly alter those impressions.

How to Craft Your Professional Image:

- Video: [Learning LinkedIn- Set Up a New LinkedIn Account](#)
- Website: [Job Application Tools: Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interview Prep](#)

Reflections:

- How are you perceived by others?
- Do you wear strong fragrances, use offensive language, or have personal habits that may be off-putting to others?
- Do your personal business card, LinkedIn profile, resume, cover letters, or personal website if appropriate create an immediate connection for those who would benefit from your expertise?

Learn More About Age-Friendly Job Search Sites:

- [NM- NEW Engagement Connection Center](#)
- [AARP Job Board](#)
- [Workforce50 Job Board](#)

Reflections:

- How effectively are you utilizing online job search platforms and niche job boards in your job search strategy?
- Are you actively creating and managing job alerts to stay updated on new job postings that match your criteria?



Step 6: Strategic Time Management for Job Seekers

Conducting a job search requires dedicated time and effort, making effective time management crucial. Time is our most precious and limited asset. Success comes from daily actions guided by thoughtful weekly planning that aligns with your overall career and life goals.

Think of time as a “unit of possibility”—whether it's an hour, a day, a week, or even a lifetime, it represents the opportunity to advance towards your desired outcomes. To make the most of this time, it's important to focus on creating and seizing opportunities that bring you closer to your career aspirations. However, distractions can easily pull your attention away, making it essential to master time management to enhance productivity and achieve your goals effectively.

“I was about to take over the world, but then I saw something shiny.” – Anonymous

How to Improve Your Time Management:

- Video: [How to Plan Your Week Effectively](#)
- Book: [Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World](#), by Cal Newport
- Book: [Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less](#), by Greg McKeown
- Book: [Personal Kanban](#), by Jim Benson and Tonianne DeMaria

Step 7: Mastering the Art of Online Job Searches

Now that you are ready to begin your job search, where do you start? Leveraging your professional network, as well as connections made through your educational background, training experiences, and professional qualifications, is a great initial step. Today, the majority of jobs are posted online, making job search platforms essential tools for job seekers. Large clearinghouses like LinkedIn and Indeed host extensive job postings across various industries and roles. Keep in mind that larger online job search engines are not always curated to be age-friendly. Additionally, niche sites tailored to specific qualities of job seekers, such as The Mom Project, which helps women remain active in the workforce, and FlexJobs, which specializes in remote and work-from-home jobs, can be invaluable resources. Creating job alerts on these platforms for specific roles and companies can help you stay informed about new opportunities.

Step 8: Take Action

Employment seekers significantly improve their chances by focusing on priorities and establishing routines akin to those of active employees.

“There is no path, the path is made by walking.” –Antonio Machado

Action is the key word - your action. The most successful individuals in later-life career pursuits act on every idea presented. When someone offers advice, it's because they see a link between your skills and market opportunities. Each action brings new knowledge, enhances job-seeking skills, and cultivates connections that lead to better opportunities. To maximize your success in finding age-friendly employment, leverage the insights from The Encore Network's 10 Tips for Spotting Age-Friendly Employers. These tips are designed to guide you towards companies that not only respect but also value the depth of experience and maturity that senior professionals bring to the table.

The Encore Network's 10 Tips for Spotting Age-Friendly Employers

They don't ask for graduation dates or anything else that might reveal your age.

They don't ask for salary history because they know experience matters & money isn't everything.

They don't use ageist words like “digital native” because they give everyone a fair chance at a job.

Their diversity, equity & inclusion policy includes age. They are serious about hiring people 50+.

They feature pictures of people that look like you in their ads, website and recruiting materials.

People of all ages work there and they are included equally in teams, projects and decisions.

They offer learning and skill building opportunities to everyone regardless of age.

They design jobs with flexibility so you can fit work into your life and not the other way around.

They encourage two-way mentoring to help you share knowledge and learn from co-workers.

They have retirement options to make it easy for you to scale back or step down on your terms.

Brought to you by



Reflections:

- Are you actively exploring and pursuing opportunities, rather than waiting for the perfect one to appear?
- Are you engaging in a variety of job search activities, including those that go beyond simple online searches, to maximize your chances of success?
- Are you embracing each idea, suggestion, and inspiration with enthusiasm, using them as opportunities to advance your career?



SECTION 4

CREATING A VILLAGE OF SUPPORT

Finding a new job takes a village. The single most valuable step the 50+ employment seeker can take is to set about building a robust set of social connections. Even the act of doing so will build networking skills, increase knowledge, and open more opportunities. There are a number of great support systems you can tap into on your journey.



Family and Friends

Later life career transition is not a solo journey. Everyone in the family is involved and has a part to play. Building a “home team” approach benefits everyone and lessens the stress for all through open communication and the sharing of life lessons.



Employment Groups

You are not alone in your career transition challenges. Most communities have a number of job-search support and education groups - some hosted by municipal organizations and public libraries, others by volunteers who have walked in your shoes and want to help others. The vast majority of these resources are no, or low cost. These are the places where you will find non-judgmental support and learn the ins and outs of the employment search jungle. It is also where you can meet others who may act as referrals to opportunities.



Faith Based Organization

Later life career transition is, in many respects, a spiritual journey where we may find ourselves probing deeper questions related to life’s meaning, purpose, and core values. Faith groups often offer job-search support groups that encourage us to go beyond the simple challenge of getting a job. Facilitators of these groups may provide compassionate support that brings comfort and ease to those navigating this journey.



Advisors and Mentors

One of the best strategies we can use to speed our way to a more satisfying career is to proactively build a group of advisors where we can test our thoughts and receive candid feedback and suggestions.

Professional Networks

Building relationships with other professionals can open new opportunities. But it doesn't happen on its own. It takes effort to meet new people and nurture reciprocal relationships. If you know what you want to do, or are exploring new options, one of the best things you can do for yourself is to start getting face-to-face with other professionals in your field of interest. A feeling that you don't fit in may be a signal that you're headed in the wrong direction. If you do fit, chances are good that you will find help to connect you with the opportunities you seek.

One-on-One Coaching and Counseling

Direct one-on-one support from a trained professional can be worth the investment to help you assess your situation, identify new options, and develop a plan of action that can be regularly evaluated. This type of assistance is also widely available online through personalized virtual sessions.



How To Build Your Village of Support:

- Article: [Mastermind Groups](#)
- Coming Soon- Coaching for New Elders through NM-NEW

Reflections:

- Do you know what local employment group resources are available for you?
- Are you interested in seeking out a local faith group that can offer support for the spirit, as well as the job search?
- Who do you go to when you want to test your ideas? Who can you count on to offer ideas and tell you the truths you need to hear?
- What professional associations exist in your area of interest? Which ones appeal to you? What is the next opportunity to attend one of their events?
- Would you benefit from the support of working with a career or job search coach?



SECTION 5

HOLISTIC WELLBEING FOR CAREER SUCCESS

Financial Stability

Securing and maintaining financial stability is typically paramount when seeking employment. Being in a precarious financial situation can put job seekers at a disadvantage, potentially leading to accepting suboptimal offers out of necessity rather than choice. The aim of this guide is to help you prioritize finding higher quality employment that aligns with both your personal and financial goals. Adopting a long-term mindset, bolstered by improved financial acumen, empowers you to work towards financial independence, offering greater personal freedom and reducing later-life stress.

For many people, the long-term goal is financial independence - the condition where you can continue with your chosen lifestyle without working. Most people are not there yet. Financial independence does not happen on its own. It results from thousands of choices that we make with our money on an ongoing basis. In addition to investing time and effort to develop our own knowledge in good personal financial management, we may wish to partner with experts in the field. Finally, for some, long-term security may lie in developing multiple revenue streams which may include investment income, social security, side-gigs, part-time jobs, or even a small home-based business in addition to your regular job earnings.

How To Enhance Your Financial Health:

- Book: The New Frugality, by Chris Farrell
- Book: The Simple Path to Wealth, by J.L. Collins
- Video: The Untethered Life: Wealth Redefined with Seth Streeter, TEDxSantaBarbara
- Articles: Personal Finance Series by Richard Reis
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: Financial Wellness - Part 1: Build & Maintain Your Retirement Lifestyle and Financial Wellness - Part 2: Financing Your Retirement
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: Are You Financially Wedged Between Generations?
- Book: Your Encore: Retirement Planning Guide - How to Balance Time, Money and Joy by Glenn Frank

Reflections:

- How long can you support yourself without working? Is your housing and transportation secure? What strategies and actions will help you extend that runway?
- What would you like your life to look like ten, twenty, maybe even fifty years from now? What do you need to do to make sure that the financial resources are in place to support your long-term aspirations?
- Are you comfortable with your ability to manage your earnings well on your own, or is that something that should be done for you by the experts?
- Do you rely solely on one source of income? How can you multiply and diversify your revenue streams to gain better long-term security?

Health and Vitality

A focused, carefully designed and supported self-care program can help to mitigate risks to our general health and assist us through the mental and emotional challenges of later life career transition.

No one plans on having health problems. Yet, as we age, they become more likely. Maintaining physical health and mental well-being is not only about preventing health problems but also about enhancing your performance and confidence throughout the job search process. By prioritizing self-care, you position yourself as a more resilient, capable, and attractive candidate to potential employers.

- Book: Young Forever, by Mark Hyman, MD
- Book: Breaking the Age Code, by Becca Levy
- Fitness Program: SilverSneakers
- Weight Loss Program: WW (Weight Watchers)
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: Listen to the Wisdom of Your Body: Guided Movement with Julieann Neely

Reflections:

- How is your overall health (e.g. weight, blood pressure)?
- What do you do to stay active?
- Are you happy with your diet?



Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

Navigating a career transition after the age of 50 can be an emotional rollercoaster, characterized by hopeful highs as promising job opportunities emerge and disheartening lows when progress seems to stall. This period can challenge our self-worth and lead to feelings of isolation and discouragement, making us less appealing to potential employers.

Managing these strong emotional reactions is crucial. While it is natural to feel justified by our experiences, unchecked emotions can signal instability to employers. Emotional maturity involves developing self-awareness and mastering the skills needed to handle our emotions effectively, which in turn helps us collaborate productively with others, even in challenging situations.

How To Navigate Emotional Challenges in Career Transitions:

- Video: [You CAN Reinvent Yourself](#) with Joanne Lipman
- Video: [The Secret to Mastering Life's Biggest Transitions](#)
- Article: [Improving Emotional Intelligence \(EQ\)](#)
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [Triumph: How to Win the Day with Meditation](#) with Heather Robertson
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [Happiness & the Art of Flourishing](#)
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [Flourishing as the Foundation for Greater Resilience](#)
- Video: NM-NEW YouTube Channel: [NM-NEW Presents: More Years In Your Life, More Life In Your Years](#)

Reflections:

- How do you sustain positive motivation throughout your job search?
- Are there self-sabotaging behaviors you need to address to move forward effectively?
- Do you have access to counseling or support resources to help you navigate particularly tough moments?
- Are you actively working on managing your emotions to avoid alienating others and build a reputation as a collaborative and constructive team member?

In Closing

As you embark on your job search journey, know that success often comes from a combination of strategic planning, leveraging your strengths, and maintaining your holistic wellbeing. By focusing on tailored job search strategies and nurturing your physical, financial, and emotional health, you position yourself for not just any job, but the right job. Remember that your experience is a powerful asset and that the path to new opportunities is paved with perseverance, adaptability, and a proactive approach. Embrace the opportunities that come your way with a proactive mindset and a supportive network, and let this guide serve as a roadmap to finding a new and fulfilling role.

Please help us keep this guide up to date. If you find a good resource along your journey that you believe would be good to share in one of the sections, please email us at:

nmnew@cnm.edu.