

[Tips for New Nurses Seeking Work](#)

Taken from: <http://www.nurse-power.com/blog/>

In case you're not already aware of this, the job market for *ALL* nurses across the country is very tight right now with a few exceptions such as Texas, New Mexico, Phoenix area and a few others. Some new nurses think this challenge exists only in their home state. And some seasoned nurses think new grads are having trouble finding work because they're being too picky. Neither of these perspectives is accurate. We all, new and seasoned nurses alike, must face the reality of the current job market and do what we can to support one another, especially our new nurses. New graduate nurses are being affected most profoundly, as many cannot find nursing jobs. Some are still looking for work a year or more after graduation.

Before I continue, let me be clear that this situation *will* reverse itself any time as economic conditions improve *and* older nurses start to retire. Of course that provides no solace to those currently unemployed, underemployed, or those about to graduate. But take heart that the situation will improve.

That being said, new nurses must change their mind-set and their job finding strategies in order to move forward in their careers. While many of us come out of nursing school having been groomed primarily for traditional hospital positions, those jobs simply aren't plentiful right now, especially for new nurses. That doesn't mean it's impossible to get a hospital job. It does mean that you have to go beyond submitting applications online and sending out resumes by mail. It also means that many new nurses will need to explore other employment settings and non-traditional specialties. And since care is continuously shifting out of the hospital into alternate care settings, out-patient treatment centers, and the community, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Some experts predict that hospitals will eventually be just one big ICU where only the sickest patients go for treatment. So why not get on the bandwagon and explore other options beyond the hospital walls now?

OK new grads, fill out those online applications if you want and send in your resumes and cover letters to the human resource department of area hospitals if you must. But understand that this is the least effective way to land a job, especially in today's tight job market. So what *should* you be doing? Read on.

Networking is well known to be the most effective way to find and get a job so here's what you need to do:

Get yourself a conservative business suit – preferably skirted for a women and a traditional suit for a man. Looking top notch will make you feel more confident and make the best possible impression.

Have simple business cards made for yourself with your contact information on it. Carry them with you wherever you go.

Start attending local chapter meetings of professional associations such as the Association of Nurses Executives (AONE), your state chapter of the American Nurses Association, and any specialty association that interests you (e.g. Emergency Nurses Association). Here's where you'll meet the department managers that you've been trying to get to. You can attend as a guest if you don't belong. When there's something you want to do, it makes sense to rub elbows with those already doing that thing.

And since face to face networking is so effective, you should also be attending nursing career fairs, conferences and conventions when you can. It's important for you to stay visible and well connected.

When meeting new people, use a full firm handshake, make direct eye contact and smile!

Obtain business cards from those you meet and offer yours to them. Make follow-up phone calls when you get home and stay in touch with these folks. In other words, take the time to develop relationships. It's all about relationship building. You may not want to do this but it is essential.

Do some informational interviewing (<http://www.dcardillo.com/articles/thescoop.html>) with nurses who work in specialties you might want to work in or that you want to learn more about.

Start volunteering somewhere healthcare-related to get a foot in the door. You'll gain experience, make contacts, and have something to put on your resume. And volunteering often leads to paid employment.

Send thank you notes to anyone who helps you, refers you, interviews you, or spends time on the phone with you. Enclose your business card. Many people ask for help but few take time to say thank you.

So if hospital jobs are scarce, where else can new nurses look? Consider some of the following options: Out-patient hemodialysis with a private company (as opposed to hospital-owned), cancer care facilities, birthing centers, psychiatric facilities, pediatric rehab, long-term acute care (LTAC), adult rehab – both acute and long term, long-term care, sub-acute care, and home care.

Other options include school and public health nursing, hospice and palliative care, and correctional health (prisons & juvenile detention centers) to name a few.

If you are willing to relocate to obtain a hospital job, you'll find opportunities for new nurses more plentiful in parts of Texas, Arizona, Missouri, New Mexico, and some Midwest states. Use the search feature at <http://www.nurse.com/jobs/> and enter "new graduate" in the keyword box. Although all opportunities that come up will not be right for you, you may find some that are.

Consider joining the military – even the reserves – as a way to launch your nursing career.

Look for civilian jobs in hospitals and healthcare facilities on military bases.

Apply to the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corp if you qualify
<http://www.usphs.gov/>

Apply for loan repayment programs where you will be required to work in underserved areas
<http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/repayment/nursing/>

Contact the Indian Health Service for
opportunities <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Nursing/>

Consider starting your own business. Some innovative new nurses who couldn't find
employment started a sick-child daycare service!

Remember – you need to look in new directions for employment but you also need to utilize new
ways of finding and getting those jobs.