

SENIOR LIVING SECTION

Searching for a job in all the right places

by Nancy Hudec

Teenagers looking for good-paying jobs can be hampered by their age and lack of experience. After years of additional education and workplace experience that situation may not be much different. Today's mature workers, loosely defined as those over age 50, struggle to continue to fit into, or reenter, a younger, rapidly advancing workforce. There are resources for mature job seekers; one needs only to know where to look.

Cyndi Rossi, Director of Advocacy & Community Relations for the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging, suggested seniors contact Mature Services online.

"They have a Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), which is a job training and work experience program for older workers," she said.

SCSEP is a paid job training and work experience program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and administered by the Ohio Department of Aging. The program helps low-income adults age 55 and older to obtain skills that will benefit them in the workplace.

SCSEP provides part-time paid training for older workers through community placements. This helps older workers upgrade skills and gain practical experience, while providing valuable support services to community agencies. SCSEP workers work an average of 20 hours per week, are paid the prevailing minimum wage and can improve their current skills while learning new ones.

"The program is 50 years old and is an excellent means for providing work experience for those that have been out of the workforce for many years. It is similar to an internship but there are federal income-based guidelines," said Paul Magnus, Vice President for Work-

force Development at Mature Services.

"Ohio.Job.com is another good resource for available open positions," he added. "With AARP estimating 10,000 people are retiring everyday, there is a lot of competition for jobs."

Not only competition, but Magnus said challenges in the application process are also often hard for someone either re-entering the work force or struggling to continue to work as they age.

"Online applications can be long and involved and many older workers shy away from them. Plus mature workers sometimes fail to realize that looking for a job on their own can take twice as long," Magnus said.

"We offer networking programs and skill training programs. We work with older adults to prepare them for the interview process and sponsor job fairs. Our next job fair is April 16 at the Akron Hilton on Market Street. The job fair is an excellent way for mature applicants to see what is out there," he said.

"Remember you have valuable soft-sell experience. Use it to show perspective employers how you can help solve problems. You have to think like the employer by marketing yourself to them and their business," Magnus advised. ∞