

A Student's Guide to Interviewing with Third-Party Recruiters

As you conduct your job search you will find that some employers hire third-party organizations to assist them in identifying and hiring college students. An employer can hire a third-party organization to do on-campus recruiting, represent the company at a job fair, screen job candidates who apply through an Internet web site, or other hiring activities. Many college career centers allow third-party recruiters to work with students through their offices. Some have special policies that apply to how, when, and where third-party recruiters can work with students. *The Career Development Center at Bowie State University* recommends that you be aware of issues that are pertinent to working with these organizations.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines third-party recruiters as “agencies, organizations, or individuals recruiting candidates for temporary, part-time, or full-time employment opportunities other than for their own needs.” Categories of third-party recruiters include:

Employment Agencies: Employment agencies list positions for a number of organizations and receive payment when a referred candidate is hired. The fee for listing a position is paid either by the firm listing the opening or by the candidate who is hired. If the job listing does not include the phrase “fee paid,” be sure to ask who pays the fee before signing any papers.

Search Firms: A search firm contracts with employers to find and screen qualified persons to fill specific positions. The fee is paid by the employer. Search firm representatives will identify the employer they represent.

Contract Recruiters: Employers hire contract recruiters to represent them in the recruiting and employment function.

Resume Referral Firms: A resume referral firm collects information on job seekers and forwards it to prospective employers. Data can be contained in resumes or on data forms (either paper or electronic). The employer, job seeker, or both may pay fees. You must give the firm written permission to pass your resume to employers. Your permission should include a statement that expressly states to whom and for what purpose the information can be used.

Questions to Ask

A third-party recruiter may be helpful to you in your job search, but be a wise consumer. Read all materials carefully. Ask questions. Ask your career services office staff for information. Ask a lawyer to read any contacts you are asked to sign. Here are some general questions you may want to ask:

How many job openings are there for someone in my field? If you have the opportunity, inquire about the positions being filled or the number of openings related to your field. These are important questions because, in some instances, recruiters may not really have the type or number of openings they advertise. They may be more interested in adding your name to their candidate pool as a means of attracting more employers or clients to their services. Or they may be collecting resumes from students for potential job opportunities. Bowie State University does not allow third-party recruiters to interview students unless they are trying to fill actual job openings.

How is this information being used? A third-party recruiter is allowed legally to share your resume with the contract employer for positions that you are actually seeking. The recruiter must tell you, in clear terms, that your materials and information will not be shared outside the organization or used for any purpose other than with the company they represent at the time they interview you. The third-party recruiter cannot sell your information to anyone else. You may choose to authorize the recruiter to share your data elsewhere, but your authorization should be given to the recruiter in writing.

Are candidates treated equally and fairly? If you are qualified for the job opportunity, the third-party recruiter must pass your information to employers without regard to your race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Who pays the fee? Before you agree to anything or sign a contract, ask the recruiter who will pay the fee.

For assistance with these questions or other related topics, contact the Career Development Center at 301-860-3825.

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