

# Job hunting? Don't sit out the holidays

BY HEATHER BOULGER

**PITTSFIELD** — Many job seekers take a break from job searching during the holidays. It's a hectic time of year and can be challenging to juggle all of the responsibilities of the season with keeping a job hunt moving forward.

But, if you buy into this myth about December job searching, you are losing one of the better job searching seasons of the year. The current Berkshire unemployment rate is 2.72 percent and the state-wide database shows 1,248 job openings in the region.

Employers hire when they need new employees, and a slower holiday season for some businesses means more time for hiring. It can also mean less competition for available jobs as other job seekers take a break from their job hunt.

Here are some tips to keep you in the game:

- There are jobs, and employers are hiring. Check out the job boards regularly at the MassHireBerkshire Career Center; 1Berkshires' Jobs Thing; BerkshireJobs.com, BerkshireEagle.com/careers; Monster; LinkedIn; Indeed and Career Builder.

- Network. You couldn't pick a better time of year to attend social and business holiday functions to connect with people who can help. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job.

Someone who knows your strengths may know of an available position that would be perfect for you.

- Don't sit around waiting for your dream job to show up — get out and volunteer or take part-time, seasonal and/or temporary work. Employers look highly on those who take the initiative and stay positive. Temporary jobs often become permanent.

- Get organized. Design a new resume, post online and be methodical about your job search. Do something relating to your job search every day.

- Avoid bad habits. Get in shape and focus on your health. Do not let those negative voices in your head get the best of you.

- Do try to keep a positive and enthusiastic attitude and be patient. Understand that it does take some time to find employment but that your upbeat attitude will help you be successful. Today's new education and training opportunities can become tomorrow's job.

The holiday season usually offers time for thoughts about family and future as we celebrate religious festivals and begin a new year. For people who are unemployed or are concerned about company downsizing, this season can be filled with great uncertainty. For those who are challenged by unemployment, please know that opportunities can

be found during this season. Visit [MassHireBerkshireCC.com](http://MassHireBerkshireCC.com) for assistance on job search, career planning, job listings, job clubs, workshops on job search techniques, data on labor market trends, resources to help find the right training opportunities and tools to help you conduct an effective job search.

## HOLIDAY WORK TIPS

December can be an especially stressful month at work as well, with holiday seasonal pressures and with many end-of-year business deadlines. Some people celebrate holidays this time of year, while others do not.

Everyone has their own feelings and expectations about this time of year, with some being excited and others dreading the season. To make this year's festivities more enjoyable, try some of these tips to help get you through the holiday workplace and preserve harmony and sanity on your team.

- Give everyone the benefit of the doubt in December. It's a chaotic and stressful time, and we are all carrying a heavy load.

- Be respectful of your work environment. Avoid going overboard with holiday decorations. The holidays can be a festive and distracting time, but don't forget that your productivity must remain high.

- Wash your hands frequently. With winter being

the cold and flu season, the last thing you want to do is spread viruses through infected hands reaching into the candy dish or by shaking hands.

- Don't skip the holiday work party. You may dread attending, but it's a work function, so, you should go. Smile, grin and bear it, act professionally and don't over-consume.

- Keep gift-giving to a minimum. Most people would rather not exchange gifts with co-workers, so, if you decide on giving any gifts, keep them small or opt for doing something for the entire department.

- Express gratitude. Remember to thank your colleagues, vendors and customers for their support over the past year. Being grateful increases happiness and motivation.

And finally, be good to yourself! It's easy to over-commit, overextend and criticize yourself as the year comes to a close. Try to exercise daily, don't skimp on your sleep, and try to eat healthy.

Take a moment and remember all the good things you accomplished, earned, experienced and discovered in 2019. It's time to celebrate your awesomeness and dive into the new decade.

Heather Boulger is the executive director of the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board.

Sunday, December 29, 2019