

Your Healthcare Career Compass

Navigating the Job Search

Powered by the National Recruitment and Retention Network

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About 3RNET

3RNET is the most trusted resource for health professionals seeking careers in rural and underserved communities.

3RNET Mission

3RNET works to improve rural and underserved communities' access to quality health care through recruitment of physicians and other health care professionals, development of community based recruitment and retention activities, and national advocacy relative to rural and underserved health care workforce issues.

3RNET Vision

3RNET is the national leader for community-based health professional recruitment and retention, using interactive technologies and communication.

3RNET.org

Health professionals have trusted 3RNET.org to find jobs across the United States since 1995.

Rural and underserved health care employers' trusted, national platform for promoting their job openings.

3RNET's Network Coordinators

3RNET is powered by the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network.

3RNET Network Coordinators can guide health professionals through their job search process.

Network Coordinators support employers in rural and underserved communities with hiring and keeping mission-focused health professionals.



About this Guide

A career in the healthcare field can be very rewarding and fulfilling but navigating the many diverse options and choosing the right destination can be challenging. Landing a well-matched position starts with a thorough plan and a good understanding of your preferences and priorities. Whether you're just beginning your career or looking to make a shift, this guide will help you discover the many resources available that can help you define where your interests lie and give you guidance on building your network to support your career path in healthcare.

We share tips from drafting a compelling CV or resume to exploring eligible job opportunities. We also discuss what to look for in an opportunity to help you find the right fit based on your individual priorities so you can make the best, informed decisions on your first, next, or forever position.

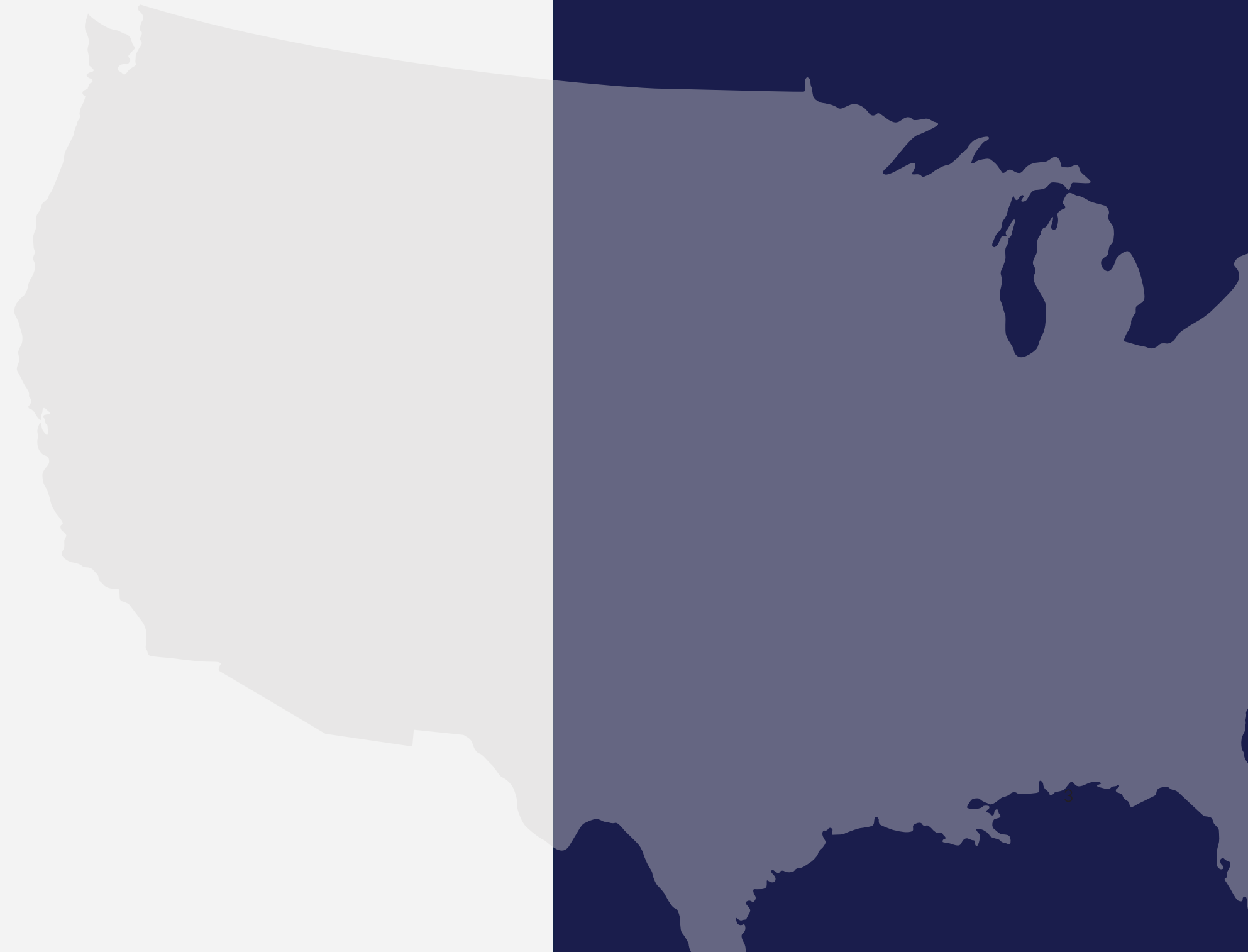
Trusted, Reliable Information

3RNET and our national network of Coordinators, the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network, are committed to providing unbiased, reliable information for health professionals.

Powered By

This guide was created in a collaborative effort to combine the expertise and industry knowledge of 3RNET's Network Coordinators.

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Know Your Options

Types of Healthcare Employers

There are numerous types of healthcare employers to choose from. 3RNET places an emphasis on safety net healthcare organizations as they support our mission to serve rural and underserved communities nationwide.

Safety net facilities include:

- Community Health Centers
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Critical Access Hospitals
- Community Hospitals
- Rural Health Clinics
- Indian Health Service
- Tribal Health
- Veterans Affairs
- Public Health Dental Clinics
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities
- And more

3RNET's Guides to Help

Safety Net Health Care Facilities

You can review the many different types of safety net healthcare organizations here: <https://www.3rnet.org/Resources/Safety-Net-Facilities>

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Loan Repayment Programs

If loan repayment is a priority for you in your job search, many safety net facilities are eligible but be sure to understand the eligibility requirements for NHSC-approved sites before accepting a position.

Check out our helpful guide on navigating loan repayment programs here: <https://www.3rnet.org/Resources/Loan-Repayment>

And our guide on Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) here: <https://www.3rnet.org/Resources/HPSA>



Define Your Priorities and Interests

Before diving into job opportunities, it's crucial to understand your motivations, preferences, and values. Taking the time to self-assess will help you identify the right path for you.

As you are going through your training and spending time in various healthcare settings, reflect on your interests and consider what aspects of your training you would enjoy in your job. Consider site size, patient population, organizational support, and work schedule options. Think about what kind of environment and location best suit you and your family.

Make a list of your "must haves" and your "nice to haves" - Consider and rank the importance of the following factors:

- Compensation and benefits
- Scope of practice/Practice structure
- Loan repayment
- Practice support
- Professional development and career advancement opportunities
- Autonomy
- Positive culture
- Alignment of mission, vision, values / Community impact
- Family Satisfaction / Availability of community amenities
- Quality of life / Cost of living

Evaluate Your Lifestyle and Career Goals

Work-Life Balance

How much flexibility do you need in your schedule? Some roles may involve long hours or shift work, while others may offer more regular hours.

Salary and Compensation

What are your financial goals? Salary can vary greatly depending on the role, location, and level of experience. What benefits are important to you?

Job Stability and Growth

Some healthcare fields have more demand and opportunities for advancement than others. Do you prioritize job security and opportunities for upward mobility?

Assess Your Skills and Strengths

Consider the technical, clinical, and soft skills you possess. Are you particularly skilled in communication, leadership, or patient interaction? Or do you excel in data analysis, organization, and management?

Do you enjoy hands-on care or prefer a role where you can make a broader impact?

Consider Your Values and Impact

Healthcare professionals often seek careers where they can make a meaningful difference. Ask yourself: What kind of impact do you want to have on your patients and the community? Whether it's patient care, improving healthcare systems, or advancing medical research, it's important to align your career with your values.

Be flexible and open-minded about rural, underserved, and high-need areas across the country as these unique opportunities can be very rewarding.



Draft a Compelling Résumé or CV

Crafting a strong résumé is essential for standing out in the competitive healthcare job market. Here are some tips to help you create an impactful and compelling résumé:

Make sure your CV/résumé is visually appealing and easy to scan with clear headings and consistent formatting and use of bullet points. It's a good idea to keep your résumé to one to two pages, focusing on the most relevant and impactful information. Customize your résumé for each application by highlighting skills and experiences that align with the specific job description. Use keywords from the job listing, as many employers use applicant tracking systems (ATS) that scan for relevant keywords.

List relevant degrees, certifications, and licenses and include any continuing education or specialized training that is relevant to the role. Be sure to include these four key elements for the education, training, and work experience sections of your résumé:

- Position or degree
- Name of the organization
- Location of the organization
- Dates of your tenure

Providing this level of detail can help paint a picture for prospective employers of the various types of organizations, scope of practice, patient populations and community types you have been exposed to as well as the skill sets developed.

Be sure to update your résumé regularly as you go through your training while the information is still fresh in your mind. Mention professional associations you are a member of and showcase relevant volunteer work, internships, and achievements such as awards/certifications/credentials you have earned that can help you stand out. For instance, if you are an AHEC Scholar, including your certification and digital badge is a great way to show your dedication to rural communities and the extra work you have put in which can help differentiate you from other applicants.

Highlight your Clinical and Non-Clinical Skills

Clinical Skills

For clinical roles, emphasize technical skills like patient care, diagnostic abilities, or knowledge of medical equipment.

Soft Skills

For all healthcare roles, emphasize interpersonal skills, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities.

Non-Clinical Skills

If you're applying for non-clinical roles, focus on project management, data analysis, or leadership experience.

Other Résumé/CV Tips to Consider

Personalize a cover letter to send along with your résumé which will also help communicate what sets you apart. Be sure to reference why you're interested in the practice and the location and mention any connections you may have with the organization. If you took a leave of absence from training, be prepared to explain any gaps.

Before sending, save your résumé as a pdf file and use your full name in the title to make it easier for staff to file and locate your résumé during the recruitment process. To prevent important email messages from getting missed, it can be helpful to open an email account specifically for your job search. Again, use your professional name for the email address and be sure to check for new messages often during your active job search.

Make sure to share your résumé and cover letter with your professional references so they have your information available for talking points when they receive a call from potential hiring professionals.

Plan Your Job Search Strategy

- Network with colleagues
- Social networks (LinkedIn)
- Professional journals/associations
- Health center/Hospital website career pages
- Contact in-house recruiters directly
- Regularly check your email for healthcare organizations that reach out to you
- Conference exhibits and job fairs (virtual and in-person)
- Job boards - There are many online job boards available to choose from, including:
 - www.3RNET.org which prioritizes a variety of rural and underserved opportunities nationwide
 - NHSC Workforce Connector for jobs eligible for federal loan repayment programs
 - Niche job boards by healthcare specialty or discipline
 - Indeed and other similar broad job search platforms



Build a Strong Network to Support Your Career Path

Plan your references carefully. Identify those that can speak to your skills, experiences, education and personal qualities. (Remember to share your CV with them).

As you go through your training and find a particular site is a good fit, let them know you are interested in working there. Don't assume they will automatically extend an offer. If they don't have a current opening available, ask HR staff to stay in touch and help you make connections within their networks.

Seek connections on LinkedIn to help spread the word on what you're looking for.

Follow interest groups and healthcare organizations on social media for updates on new job opportunities.

Ask your colleagues and networks for referrals.

Network with healthcare workforce representatives at the state level. 3RNET Network Coordinators work for non-profit organizations unique to each state and the contact list can be found on our website here: www.3RNET.org/locations. 3RNET Network Coordinators represent these types of state-wide organizations:

- State Primary Care Associations
- Primary Care Offices
- State Offices of Rural Health
- Federal Agencies
- Territory & Sovereign Nation



Evaluating Job Opportunities: Key Considerations

In preparation for any interviews or site visits, it's helpful to research potential employers to understand their values, mission, and workplace culture. Review the facility website, social platforms, and any available annual reports to gather specific details on the healthcare organizations you are exploring.

Identify the following information to help evaluate specific job opportunities and to facilitate meaningful conversations during the interview and express your committed interest in the organization:

- Size of facility / site locations / number of beds
- Number of employees, types of services provided
- Numbers of years in business
- Organization's mission, vision, and values
- Who they serve: type of population, patient mix, demographics
- Know who the key people you may be interviewing with are (CEO, medical director, hiring physician, director of operations, HR director, nurse manager, etc).

If you are exploring hospital opportunities, you can also review specific hospital data available on these directories: [American Hospital Directory](#) and [Lown Hospitals Index](#).

Reviewing social media platforms may give you a sense of the organizational culture, dedication to the mission, and community impact. Pay attention to staff and patient testimonials as well as recognition of achievements as you envision your fit with the organization.

Other things to consider as you evaluate opportunities and compare them to your specific interests and priorities include:

Opportunities for Growth and Development

- Does the position offer opportunities for advancement or continuing education?
- Consider whether the organization provides training programs, mentorship, or a clear career progression pathway.

Location and Work Environment

- Consider whether the location is convenient for your personal life. Do you need to relocate, or is remote work an option?
- What are the work conditions? Do you prefer a fast-paced, high-pressure environment like an emergency department, or a more stable, patient-centered environment?

Salary and Benefits

- Ensure that the compensation aligns with your financial needs. Compare the salary and benefits package with others in your field. Are they an eligible site for applicable incentive programs you might be interested in, such as loan repayment or visa sponsorship?
- Consider non-monetary benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, vacation time, work flexibility and other unique benefits and perks. Cost of living for the area is an important factor to weigh as well.



Rural Health Care Support Resources

Government Offices

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
(FORHP)
<https://www.hrsa.gov/about/organization/bureaus/forhp>

Primary Care Offices
(PCO)
<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/shortage-designation/hpsa/primary-care-offices>

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA)
<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Other Helpful Resources

Rural Health Information Hub
(RHInfoHub)
<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>

Associations Supporting Safety Net Facilities

3RNET
<https://www.3rnet.org/>

American Hospital Association Rural Health Services
(AHA)
<https://www.aha.org/advocacy/rural-health-services>

Association Of Clinicians for the Underserved
(ACU)
<https://clinicians.org/>

National Association of Rural Mental Health
(NARMH)
<https://www.narmh.org/>

National Association of Community Health Centers
(NACHC)
<https://www.nachc.org/>

National Association of Rural Health Clinics
(NARHC)
<https://www.narhc.org/narhc/Default.asp>

National Network for Oral Health Access
(NNOHA)
<https://www.nnoha.org/>

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health
(NOSORH)
<https://nosorh.org/>

National Rural Health Association
(NRHA)
<https://www.ruralhealth.us/>

Primary Care Associations by State
(PCA)
<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/technical-assistance/strategic-partnerships/primary-care-associations>

Conclusion

Navigating a career in healthcare requires self-reflection, research, and strategic planning. Crafting a targeted CV/résumé and cover letter will help you present your qualifications effectively. And by understanding your personal priorities and interests, researching various career paths, and evaluating job opportunities carefully, you'll be better positioned to make informed decisions that align with your goals.

Remember, healthcare is a dynamic field with diverse opportunities—whether you're passionate about patient care in a rural, metropolitan, urban, or urban-underserved community, there's a role for you to make a fulfilling and meaningful impact. Let 3RNET help you find your place – search for jobs nationwide that meet your specific preferences on www.3rnet.org.





3 R N E T

The Nation's Most Trusted Resource for Health Professionals
Seeking Careers in Rural and Underserved Communities.