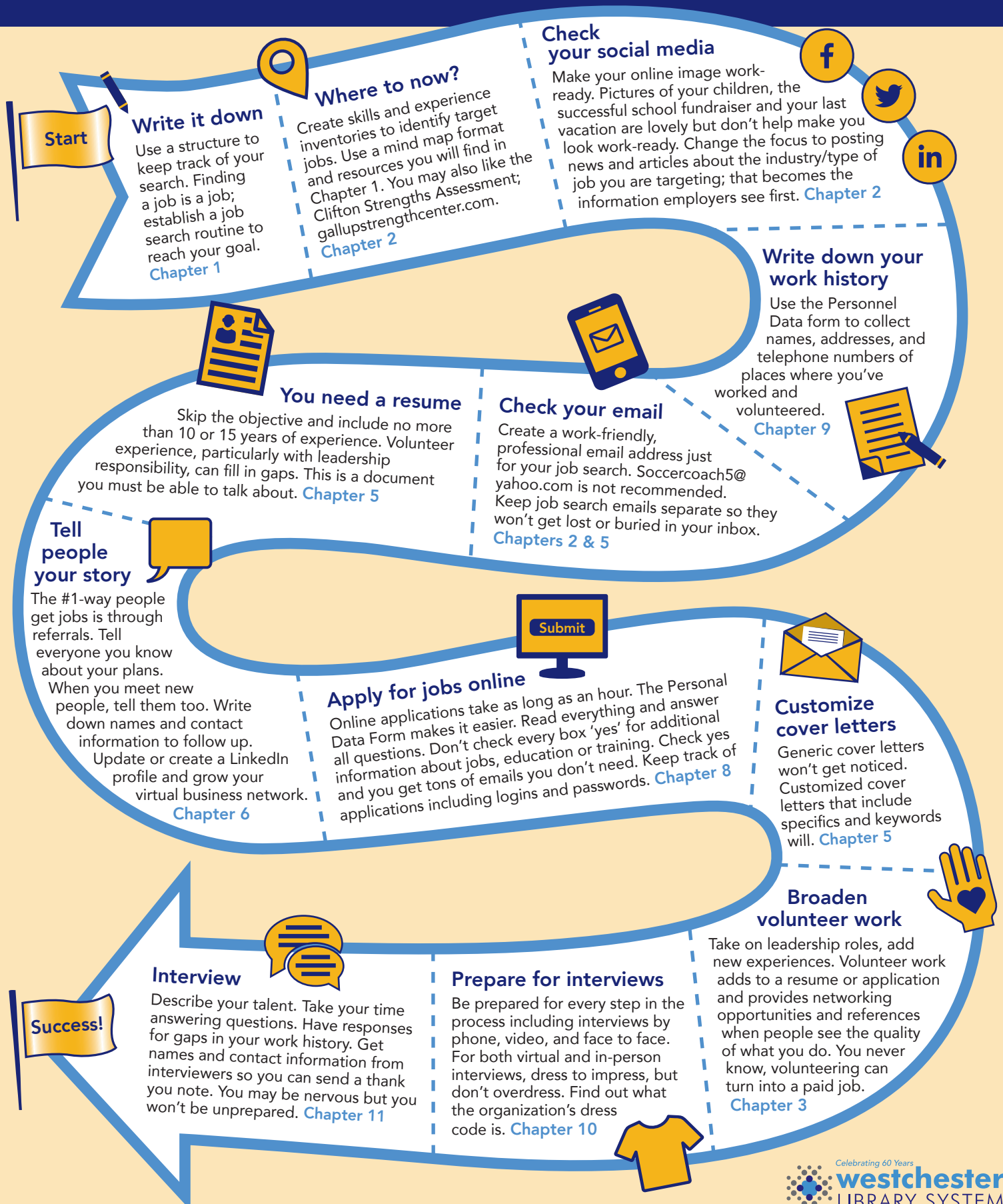


Returning to the Workforce

A GUIDE TO THE JOB SEARCH TOOLKIT

FULL GUIDE
AVAILABLE FREE AT
FIRSTFIND.ORG



First Time Job Seeker

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Start

Write it down

Use a structure to keep track of your search. Finding a job is a job. Establish a job search routine to reach your goal. **Chapter 1**

Where to now?

Review your skills, interests, and experience; use tools to identify a dream job, then see if work is available, and in a growing field. Match your strengths, education, and experience to jobs and careers where there are employment opportunities. **Chapter 1**

Check your social media

Make your online image work-ready. Take a critical look at all your social media. That Instagram after-party post, will not endear you to a potential employer. Follow companies and leaders that interest you. Post news about developments and trends in your chosen occupation. New professional content will rise above the party pics. **Chapter 2**



You need a resume

Get help writing a resume and make sure you can edit it and talk about all the content. Highlight any leadership and club membership or volunteering from school if your work experience is minimal. Save it in Google Docs, as a Word document and PDF. **Chapter 5**

Check your email

Create a work-friendly, professional email address just for your job search. hottestbabe@gmail.com is not recommended. It's time to stop using .edu email. Keep job search emails separate so they don't get lost or buried in your inbox. **Chapters 2 & 5**



Write down your work history

Use the Personal Data form to pull together names, addresses, and telephone numbers of places where you worked and volunteered. **Chapter 9**



Tell people your story

The #1-way people get jobs is through referrals. Tell everyone you know about your plans, including your relatives and their friends and colleagues. When you meet new people, tell them too. Write down names and contact information to follow up. Update or create a LinkedIn profile and grow your virtual network. **Chapter 6**



Establish a professional phone presence

Answer every call politely and use a professional, clear message for callers when you can't pick up. Don't answer the phone with a suspicious, "who is this?" or, "What did you say the name of the company is? I don't remember applying for a job there." **Chapter 2**



Customize cover letters

Generic cover letters won't get noticed. Customized cover letters that include specifics and keywords will. **Chapter 5**



Broaden volunteer work

Take on leadership roles, add new experiences. Volunteer work adds to a resume or application, and provides networking opportunities and references. You never know, volunteering can turn into a paid job. **Chapter 3**



Success!

Interview

Describe your talent. Take your time answering questions. Get names and contact information from interviewers and send a thank you note. You may be nervous, but you won't be unprepared. Learn from every experience. **Chapter 11**



Prepare for interviews

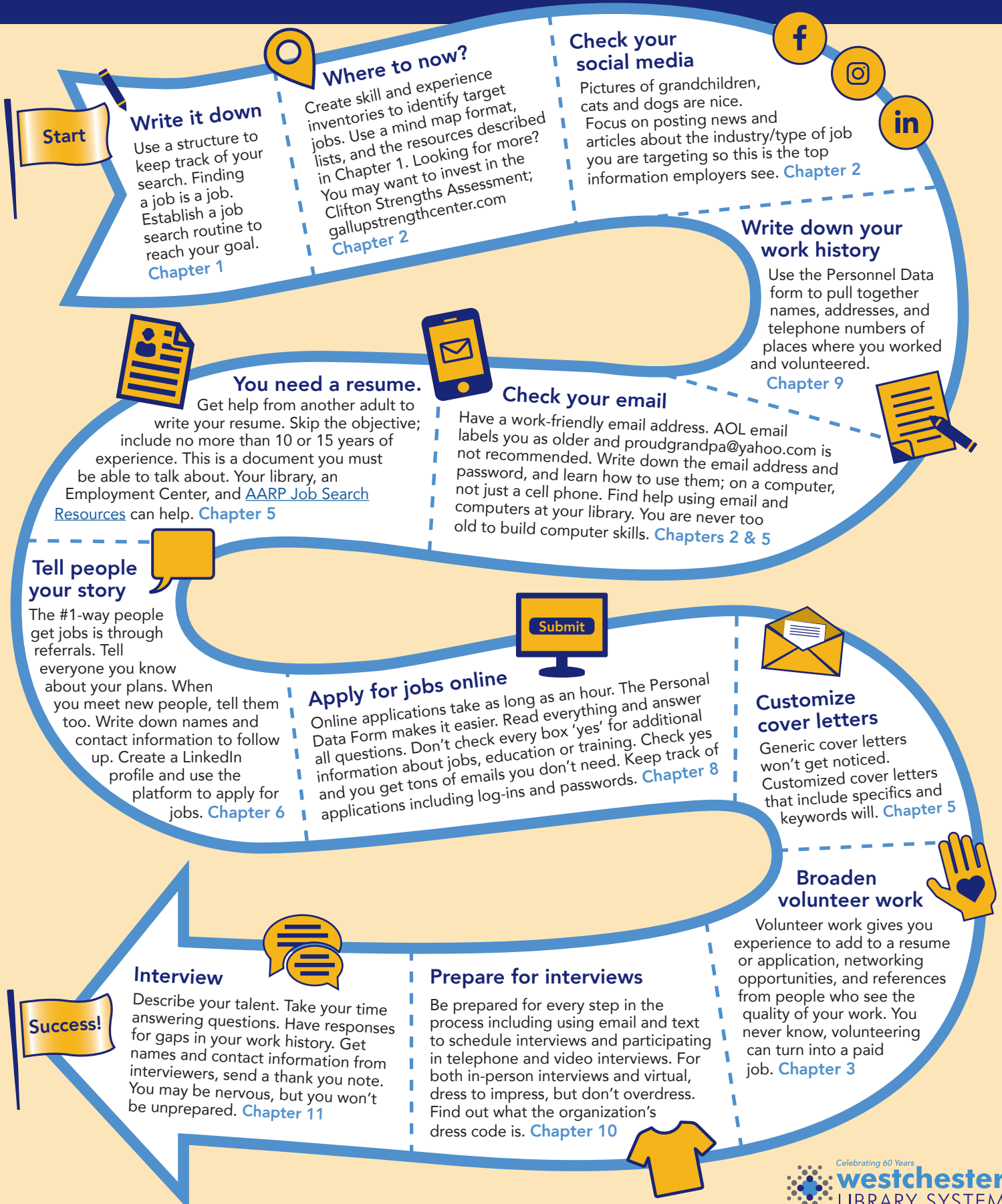
Know the process. Respond with confidence to every step, from setting appointments by email and text to interviews by phone, video, and face to face. For both in-person interviews and virtual, dress to impress, but don't overdress. Check out the organization's dress code. **Chapter 10**



Your Career @ 50+

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Re-entry Road Map

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FULL GUIDE
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FIRSTFIND.ORG

Start

Write it down.

Finding a job is your new job. Start with a notebook, pen, and calendar. Establish a job search routine. Plan and keep track of your efforts. **Chapter 1**



What kind of work can you do?

Know the jobs you won't be hired for; skip jobs that relate to your rap sheet. If you were convicted of armed robbery—don't plan on working in private homes without supervision. **Chapter 1**

Where can you work?

Find help, training and ex-offender-friendly companies who have committed to The Fair Chance Pledge at www.fairshake.net. Be polite and professional with everyone you meet. (The employer list is here: <https://www.fairshake.net/fair-chance-employers/>) **Chapter 4**

Write down your work history.

Get names, addresses, and telephone numbers of places where you worked or volunteered. **Chapter 9**

You may need a resume.

Get help and be closely involved in the preparation. This is a document you must be able to talk about. Your library, a One Stop Center and non-profits can be your guide to resume writing. **Chapter 5**

Check your email.

Have a work-friendly email address. bigbaddaddy@aol.com is not recommended. Write down the email and password and learn how to use it; on a computer, not just a cell phone. Find email and computer help at your local library. **Chapters 2 & 5**

Telephone tips.

Answer every call politely and use a professional, clear, message when you can't pick up. Don't have your own phone? Ask someone you trust if you can use their number and have them take a message if you get calls. **Chapter 2**

Tell people you're looking for a job.

The #1-way people get jobs is referrals. Tell everyone you know you're looking for a job. When you meet new people, tell them too. Write down names and contact information to follow up. Keep Facebook work friendly, no photos of partying foul language, racist or sexist content. **Chapter 6**

Apply for jobs online

Online applications take a long time. The Personal Data Form makes it easier. Read instructions and answer all questions. Don't check every box 'yes' that offer information about jobs, education or training. Check yes and you get tons of useless email. Keep track of applications including log-ins and passwords. **Chapter 8**

Find volunteer work.

Volunteer work gives you experience to add to a resume or application and references from people who see the quality of what you do. You never know, volunteering can turn into a paid job. **Chapter 3**

Success!

Answer the Criminal Conviction Question

In some states, and many cities and counties, there are laws that "ban the box." You can't be asked about criminal convictions until after you are offered a job. Prepare for when the question is allowed, stating facts not excuses, describe what you learned and how you have grown since incarceration.

Practice Interview Questions

It's ok to be nervous, it's not ok to be unprepared. Practice questions and then take your time answering. Have responses for gaps in your work history. Focus on what you learned and how you have grown, not excuses and blame. Get names and contact information from interviewers; send a thank you note. **Chapters 11 & 12**

Prepare for interviews.

Be prepared for every step in the process; interviews by phone, video and face to face. Be on time but not too early. Wear neat and clean clothes, same with your hair, hygiene and any jewelry. **Chapter 10**