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**Are You
Work-Ready?**

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Whether you are employed, unemployed or partially employed you need to establish a routine for success in a job search. If you've been out of work for a while, or are looking for your first paying job, this routine is practice for setting an alarm to get ready to go to work.

A good job search routine is like brushing your teeth. It's not something you do once in a while. Brushing just four teeth in the front, twice a week, won't keep your smile healthy and bright. Answering random job postings on Mondays and Fridays is unlikely to lead to a job.

If you are already working full or part-time, a routine is just as important, and maybe more so. Without a routine it's easy to fill time with things that seem more valuable in the moment, or are simply relaxing after a work day. Identifying a reason for your job search will create a goal to motivate you to stick to your job search routine.

First Steps

You will need a few things:

- **Pens** with blue or black ink.
- **A notebook** is a great place to track and organize actions and activities. Yes, even if every job you apply for requires an online application, or you are an expert at OneNote or Evernote, you will need one.
- **A calendar** with space to make notes—this can be hard copy or digital. If digital, like on your phone, take time to learn how to use the app without relying on someone else.





You will find this icon as a reminder to take out your pen and notebook to Write it Down throughout the Toolkit.

With your calendar, create time for yourself to work on your job search. Having a consistent schedule creates a routine. Don't try to plan for more than a week, you may need to make some adjustments in times once you get started. And don't be too hard on yourself if you don't stick to the schedule.

Why are you looking for a job?

On the first page of your notebook write down why you are looking for a job.

This might be:

- "I'm out of work and need to pay rent and get food."
- "I want to earn enough money to move out of my parent's house."
- "I'm ready for more responsibility and pay so I can grow professionally and save up to get married."
- "I want to find a job that lets me use my skills and experience fixing things."
- "I want a job that takes advantage of my ability to manage people and projects."

One of these examples may guide you in writing your reason for a job search, or you may have a totally different motivation. Whatever it is, write it down. You can change the reason at any time but knowing the "why" sets the foundation for taking action. When you are tempted to skip the time you planned to devote to your job hunt, think about your goal. Will watching a movie help you move to a next level job that makes more money?

Will it take one or two months to get a job?

Use the Job Search Toolkit to plan and stick to a routine for your search and you may have a new job in a month, or two. Or you may still be looking. Goals are important for getting things done. The clearer and more specific a goal, the better. However, there are so many variables in a job search that make meeting a specific target date for employment unrealistic.

Job market changes, driven by forces such as the economy and community health concerns, impact nearly all job searches. The most qualified candidate cannot get a job if an opening doesn't exist. At the same time there may be other jobs that make use of transferable skills and experience. Transferable skills are talents you use in one role that are valuable in a different job. These can be general, like the ability to provide excellent customer service, or more technical, such as expertise with QuickBooks for bookkeeping and accounting.





Take the Extra Step: Explore Healthcare Job Titles

The role of Direct Support Professional (DSP) is considered to have a bright future. There is growth in jobs for people who work directly with people with disabilities or illness, and who need help with the activities of daily living. Also called Direct Support Assistants or Personal Care Aides, these roles are found primarily in group homes. While the starting pay is not high, there is no requirement for college education, training is provided and employers in this field commonly promote from within to provide growth to supervisory and management levels.

What kind of job are you looking for? Should you try for your dream job?

Setting your sights on a dream job can be a great goal if you have the qualifications needed to get the job. Let's say you are confident that you have the skills to work as a home health aide. You are the go-to person whenever a family member or good friend is sick at home, recovering from surgery, or has become frail with age. People you have helped are always grateful and have said they would gladly give you a great reference. It should be a snap to get a job like this.

Sorry—not so fast. Workers in these types of jobs are called *Home Health Aides*, or *Personal Care Aides*, and you will most likely need a certificate or certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Home Health Aide (HHA) or Personal Care Aide (PCA) to get a job. People are often hired for these jobs through agencies who place these important professional caregivers in homes or in a facility where people are recovering or rehabilitating after hospitalization, like a nursing home. New York State, and many other states, have specific requirements to obtain a certificate necessary to apply for such a job. Other states may not have these requirements, but it makes sense that jobs will go first to people with proof of training and certification.

There are other jobs that don't require certification or a specific license but employers do expect successful candidates to have up-to-date skills. For example, a good command of current office software programs will be a requirement for pretty much any job in an office setting. If an employer is looking for experience with Microsoft Word and Excel, make sure you are comfortable with the most recent versions of those programs. Check with your library for classes and online options to get this training. Volunteer opportunities, covered in Chapter 7, can also be a good way to learn and practice.

The following chart, a good place to start this research, shows some common occupations and general information about New York State certificate and/or training requirements. Certifications often require high school diplomas.



Occupation	Job(s)	License/ Certification/ Registration Requirement	Training Requirement	Other Skills/ Experience
Driver	Delivery Driver Taxi Driver Limo Driver	State Driver's License	No training but required to take a written test and driving test for license, possible physical vision test and drug/alcohol testing	A "clean" driving record free of moving violations and accidents Good customer service skills and the ability to find locations possibly using GPS devices
	Truck Driver School Bus Driver	Commercial Driver License (CDL) issued by the state, which regulates licenses required for specific jobs. In NYS, "Passenger Endorsement" is required for a School Bus Driver.	No training but required to take a written test and driving test for license, possible physical vision test and drug/alcohol testing	A "clean" driving record free of moving violations and accidents Good customer service skills and the ability to find locations possibly using GPS devices
Information Technology (IT)	Computer Help Desk	May need software specific certifications such as Java	Certifications will require classes, training or retraining	Good customer service and problem solving skills
Healthcare and Human Service	Direct Support Professional (DSP)	None If facility is run by NYS, may require civil service exam; private non-profits do not	High School Diploma or High School Equivalency Diploma	Challenging but rewarding roles provide assistance to people with developmental disabilities, primarily in small, group home settings requiring empathy, caring and ability to deal with individuals with significant limitations
	Home Health Aide	HHA, CNA or PCA certification	Certification required in NY and 34 other states, with a range of training required based on state, setting, and type of care	Ability to provide excellent patient care, follow care plans and track activity
	Medical Assistant	No certification or licensing required in most situations but may necessitate specific training or certification for drawing blood (phlebotomy)	Specific skills certification may be needed based on type of practice	Ability to provide excellent patient care



Occupation	Job(s)	License/ Certification/ Registration Requirement	Training Requirement	Other Skills/ Experience
	Dental Assistant	3 types in NY State: Unlicensed Dental Assistant, Dental Assistant With a Limited Licensed Permit & Licensed Certified Dental Assistant	None for unlicensed but limited duties permitted; training and preparation for passing certification test for other levels	Specific experience with dental patients and dental X-rays
	Receptionist; Medical or Dental	None needed	None needed but experience including medical/dental billing often preferred	Excellent customer and phone skills, good computer skills, ability to work in a busy office making appointments and interacting with patients
Office Work	Administrative Assistant	No certification requirement	Specific computer software expertise may be required, such as QuickBooks and Outlook	Strong current, skills with applicable software most likely Microsoft Office Suite
	Receptionist	None necessary	None necessary	Excellent customer service and phone skills, good knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite
Security	Security Guard	Specific license required in NY and most other states CPR and First Aid certifications a common requirement	NY and most other states require completion of training course for certification; local governments may have additional requirements	Attention to detail, can include report writing
Trades/ Construction	Helper/ Laborer	No certification required	None necessary	Experience with repairs and maintenance
	Mechanic	Specific certifications may be necessary for jobs in HVAC and other areas	May be necessary if it results in a certification such as for welding	Generally requires specific, relevant work experience in the trade



Occupation	Job(s)	License/ Certification/ Registration Requirement	Training Requirement	Other Skills/ Experience
	Maintenance Assistant	Usually requires driver's license to travel to work sites		
Retail (Non - food)	Cashier	No certification needed	None necessary	Attention to detail, comfort with math, money and good customer service
	Sales Associate	No certification needed	None necessary	Excellent customer service along with familiarity and interest in product offered by the store
	Warehouse/ Stock Associate	May require Forklift and other OSHA mandated certifications for safety	None necessary before hire	Ability to organize, follow a written plan, lift up to 50 lbs
Retail (Food) Supermarket, warehouse stores	Cashier	No certification needed	None necessary	Attention to detail, comfort with math, money and good customer service
	Grocery Clerk	No certification required	None necessary	Ability to organize and stock shelves and displays, ability to lift 25 - 50 lbs based on department (for example, dairy, produce, deli, grocery or frozen foods); accuracy and attention to detail
	Warehouse/ Stock Associate	May require Forklift and Power Jack training	None necessary before hire	Ability to organize, follow written instructions, lift up to 50 lbs, work in extreme temperatures of hot and cold



The industries or types of jobs that most commonly require no specific training or licensing include retail, hospitality, food and beverage and customer service – though most jobs do require a high school diploma. If you do not have a diploma, look into local instructional programs where you can study for a high school equivalency diploma. For New York residents, go to the [NY State Education Department](#) or [FirstFind.org](#) for more information. (See Quick Links to Resources at the end of this chapter for complete web addresses. Go to [FirstFind.org](#) for updates.)

For occupations that require certifications, like Security Guard, call the State Department of Labor at 518-457-9000 or 888-469-7363. A list of all “occupations Licensed or Certified by New York State” is maintained by the [New York State Department of Labor](#). The list includes links to a brief description and requirements that will be helpful if you are thinking about one of these occupations. For example, if you have a love for dogs and cats, follow the link to find out what goes into becoming a Veterinary Technician (Vet Tech).

This may all seem overwhelming, and you may be saying, “I don’t know what kind of job to go for, where do I start?” Check out [Find Something New](#) or [My Next Move](#) for in-depth resources to help chart your job search and career.

What about driving for Uber or Lyft?

Start a job search and it won’t take long before you see postings to work for the ride sharing services Uber and Lyft. Uber and Lyft drivers use an app to make themselves available to take passengers between locations.

Look for jobs related to driving or food and you will spot Instacart, DoorDash, Postmate, Shipt and UberEats to deliver food from restaurants or to shop and deliver food from grocery stores.

When you work for any of these services you are a contractor, not an employee. This means that, yes, you can set your hours and availability, but it also means what you make will vary a lot. These drivers are paid by the delivery with potential for tips. Since taxes or payment for Social Security are not taken out of your payments, you have to take care tax payments on your own. Your car may need to meet specific and age and insurance requirements. You may also be able to use a bicycle or scooter for food and shopping delivery services. These jobs can be a good way to earn some extra cash but are a tough way to make enough money to pay all your bills.



Take the Extra Step: Talk to a Driver or Delivery Person

Even if driving for Uber and Lyft or delivering for Instacart, DoorDash, Postmate, Shipt and UberEats sounds like a dream job, talk to at least one person doing this work before you commit. It’s easy to spot these people in stores, on the street or by booking a ride or order. This will give you a better understanding of the ups and downs of this arrangement.





Write It Down: What Kinds of Work Have You Done?

This is a good time to make a list of all of the work you have ever done and add this to your notebook. Make a list of the jobs you've had and who you worked for; describe what you did at each job. The list should include any work you did "off the books" or as a volunteer. You gained skills and experience in all of these places.

Here is a sample list:

Skills and Experience I have Gained at work and Volunteering

Title	Organization/Company	Skills Used
Receptionist	ABC Office Products	Answered phones, took messages, greeted people, used Outlook Calendar, maintained hard copy and virtual files, organized and cleaned work area, typed letters using Microsoft Word
Stock Clerk	Acme Drug Store	Took inventory, packed boxes, processed orders in computer system, unloaded trucks, set up deliveries, stocked shelves
Volunteer for Events	Community Center	Set up tables and chairs for events, served food, extended a friendly greeting to everyone, cleaned up after meals
Barrista	Leos Local Coffee	Took orders, prepared drinks to customer specifications, used POS system to complete sales taking cash and credit cards, kept area clean to health department standards, ordered supplies, arranged food items into display case, followed all rules and standards

How can I find out the skills or training required for a specific job?

Job and career information can be found in the U.S. Department of Labor's [Career One Stop](#). You can go to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook](#) to research industries, positions and availability of jobs. Make certain you dig down to identify regional and local information.

Speaking to local employers is the most direct way to check out the job market in your area. You can call or visit a business and ask, or talk to someone who has the kind of job you want. This could be a friend, someone you have seen working in a store, restaurant or medical office you go to. If you can't think of someone, ask friends and family members if they know someone who works in your targeted job and see if they can spend a few minutes sharing their experiences. These conversations are part of networking, a valuable skill you will learn more about in Chapter 6.





True Stories: So You Want to Be a Sports Writer

A recent college grad came for help with his resume and described how he wanted to be a Sports Writer for a newspaper. He figured he would have to start with a local newspaper. After a reality check about the dwindling number of print newspapers and jobs in print newspapers, a shrinking segment where sports sections occupy very little space, he refocused his search to online publications and platforms. Understanding this work is more commonly freelance, he was able to land consistent assignments to work towards building a career.

Before you invest a lot of time and energy to target a specific occupation, make certain it's one where there are opportunities. Technology and economic conditions have a huge impact on industries. You may love sports and be a great writer, but in a digital world trying to become a sports writer for a local paper is a huge stretch. Hotels, conference centers and restaurants have been great places to start and grow careers. Local employers can give you an idea if they are hiring for a particular position as this industry reemerges.



Checklist for Success: Find a Match Between Your Work Experience, Education and Training and Available Jobs

- Take a look at the kind of work you have done, then think about the work you want and the work you are qualified to perform.
- Check out some online job postings to see if you have basic qualifications.
- Start with Craigslist.com and a search on Google, where you can type in the job title and jobs. For example, if you are looking for a job as a chef, type "chef jobs in my area."
- Don't just look at the job titles. Read the entire job posting and focus on the requirements or qualifications.
- You can look for more than one kind of job.





Write It Down: Make a List of Job Postings

Write down postings and jobs that sound like a match. You can go back to these when you are ready to apply; if they are not available you will find similar openings. Hold off until you have all the information together, because mistakes, quick answers and blank responses can send an application right to the “no” file.

Every job posting requires experience that I don't have. What should I do ?

Employers prefer experience because this cuts down on the time it will take to train a new employee. For example, you want to be a bartender and have experience mixing drinks at parties. You've even taken a bartending class, but you can't get an employer to talk to you without paid experience behind the bar. Think outside the box. You may need to start in a restaurant as a bus attendant or server. When employers see how well you do your job, they are more likely to let you advance to a new role. So try for a job at the same place or industry that does not require extensive training and be open to starting part-time to get the experience you need.

Once you have identified jobs that are a potential fit for your skills, experience and training, write down the title(s) of the types of jobs you will look for. Remember, employers may use different titles for the same type of job (for example, Sales Person or Sales Associate).

Part-time, full-time, temporary or seasonal?

Many employers in the job categories listed hire new people for jobs that are part-time or temporary, especially in retail and hospitality. Be flexible about your willingness to work different shifts, which may be shorter or longer, to increase your chance of getting hired. Most employers prefer to promote the best part-time workers to available full-time roles.

Seasonal hiring needs are another way to get started with a company. Many businesses hire extra staff for the holiday season, for example; seasonal jobs can also come with warm weather for outdoor recreation, camps and summer resorts. If you live near an amusement park, you know that people get jobs when the season starts. Not everyone stays employed after the rush, so getting a seasonal job will help you grow your skills, references and network contacts—and earn money!

What's the gig economy and how do I get one of these jobs?

The gig economy describes temporary, flexible jobs where individuals are hired as contractors or freelancers. If you are hired for this type of work, you will be given an assignment, or role, for a fixed period of time, project or type of work. When you work as a contractor or freelancer, you are not an employee, the employer doesn't pay any employment taxes, and you may have to pay your own taxes since they aren't taken out of your checks.



Gig economy work started out as a way to supplement income and grew into an arrangement that many companies use for longer term assignments; it is the foundation that some businesses are built on. The best known freelance roles are Uber and Lyft drivers and the food or goods delivery services described earlier.

How do I get a government job?

There are many types of government jobs, often called civil service jobs. These include roles working for the federal government, states and local cities and towns. While some of the titles and duties may be similar, there will be a range of jobs based on the needs of each community.

For example:

- *Local government jobs include* police and corrections officers, sanitation workers, and teacher aides
- *State government jobs include* Department of Motor Vehicles agents and highway construction workers
- *Federal government jobs include* post office workers and airport security officers

If you are interested in a government job, you will need to check the requirements for the specific position you want. Some jobs require a particular level of education or that you live in the town where the job is located. Often you will need to take and pass a civil service exam.

To learn more about available government jobs look at these websites:

- [USA Jobs](#) for jobs in the federal government
- [State Jobs NY](#) Use the search box to find jobs for a specific agency (for example the Department of Motor Vehicles)

For jobs in a town or city government, contact the local human resources department, usually located in city hall. Your local library will also have resources for public sector employment information, including practice tests for civil service exams.



Take the Extra Step: Find Civil Service Jobs, State and Local

If you are interested in working for your state, city, village or county, search for the name of the location and civil service jobs. For instance: civil service jobs White Plains NY. On the search results page, look for the option that has .gov in the email location or is the official site. For example, cityofwhiteplains.com/98/personnel. These sites will explain the process for local or state government employment which may include taking a test, such as a civil service exam. The site will tell you whether to take state tests, or if there is a local version. Follow all the instructions. Contact the connected Human Resources office with questions and for confirmation.



Are there places and people to help me measure what I am good at?

There are all kinds of tests to measure your skills and interests. Check out the [CareerOneStop Skills Matcher](#) and [O*net Interest Profiler](#). Learn about these and other assessments at Find Something New. You can find other resources linked to job search sites with an initial free test but these frequently collect your information to send marketing material or recommend resources for an extra fee. Read carefully before you click.

Now that you know what kind of jobs you want to find, you are ready for the next steps to help you find a job.



Chapter 1 To Do List

- _____ Get a notebook and calendar
- _____ Write down why I'm looking for a job
- _____ Write down potential jobs
- _____ Write down my experience, skills and interests

Quick Links to Resources

Resource Name	Web Address
Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook	bls.gov/ooh
CareerOneStop – Skills Matcher	careeronestop.org Located under Toolkit Skills Matcher
City of White Plains	cityofwhiteplains.com/98/personnel
Find Something New – Self assessments	findsomethingnew.org Located under Resources



My Next Move	mynextmove.org
NYS Department of Labor – Licenses and Certifications	labor.ny.gov Search for “occupations, licensed or certified by New York State”
NYS Department of Education – What is the HSE /TASC™ Test?	access.nysed.gov Search for: What is the HSE
O*net Interest Profile	onetcenter.org Located under Career Exploration Tools
Office of People with Disabilities – Become a Direct Support Professional	opwdd.ny.gov Scroll down to Career Opportunities Learn About the Job
State Jobs NY	statejobsNY.gov
USA Jobs	usajobs.gov



Need Help?

The Westchester Library System offers workshops, resources, and one-to-one counseling to guide your job search and improve your interviewing skills. Find out more at FirstFind.org.

