

**JOB  
APPLICATION**

**9**

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**How Do You  
Complete Online  
Job Applications?**

# How Do You Complete Online Job Applications?

## Part 1: Get Ready

Completing a job application is often the first step to getting a job interview. Most applications today are completed online.

Even when you respond to a sign that says, “We’re Hiring,” you will probably be asked to complete an application online. Many employers use software that automatically sorts these applications to decide who should be called for an interview. Online applications can increase competition for a position since people fill them out without ever visiting the workplace. It is very important that you take the time to fill out job applications correctly.

Job applications ask for lots of information. Some of this information is easy to remember, like your name and address. Other information is harder to remember, like the dates and address of previous jobs you have had.

Use the [Personal Data Form](#) (in the Worksheets section) to put all the information you will need on a few pages. The [Personal Data Form](#) looks a lot like a job application. Filling out the form will help when you sit down to fill out an application because you will have the information you need in one place. This way you won’t have to skip information that can prevent you from finishing an application or getting timed out of a process.

Personal Data Form			
<b>Personal</b>			
Name			
Address			
Phone			
Email			
<b>Employment Desired</b>			
Position Title			
Date Available		Starting Wage Desired	
Available for Work (circle) Full-time Weekend Part-time On Call Temporary Seasonal Rotating Shifts			
<b>Education</b>			
Circle the last grade level you completed through high school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 GED/TASC			
Name/ Location of High School attended			
College	Major	Graduate ____ Yes ____ No	Degree Earned
Other	Major Subject	Completed Course of Study	Degree or Certificate Earned

Sample [Personal Data Form](#)





## Checklist for Success: Fill in the Personal Data Form to Have Information You Need in One Place

Complete the boxes in the [Personal Data Form](#).

- Name** Make certain to spell your name correctly. If you have a common name, include your middle initial or full middle name.
- Address** Write your complete current address, including zip code and any apartment number. You can use a post office box or another address where your mail can be held for you.
- Phone** If you are asked for one phone number and you have a landline and cellphone, write down the number you are most likely to answer. If you don't have a phone, ask a family member or friend if you can use his or her phone number. Write this number on the application with a note like "this is my Aunt's Phone where I receive calls." Don't forget your area code.
- Email Address** Include the employer-friendly email address you created for job searches. Check Chapters 2 or 5 for more on email addresses.
- Position Title** There are a few different ways you can complete this section:
  - Write the job title that you identified in Chapter 1: What Kind of Job Are You Looking For?
  - You can change the title to match a job you want to apply for.
  - If you are interested in any job available, you can write "any."
- Date Available** Write down the date you can start working at a new job. Be honest here. If you cannot start immediately, do not write "as soon as possible."
- Starting Wage** You can write "any" or find out what the job pays and write that down.
- Hours Available for Work** What days and hours can you work? Only write down days and times that you will be able to get to work. Don't say you can work any time if you can't catch a bus to get you to work at night!
- Education** Gather all of the information you have about when and where you went to school. Make sure the dates and names you use are the right ones; these may be checked.
- Employment History** This section is very important. Employers want to know about your work experience. They want to know where you have worked, what kind of skills you have, and how long you've kept a job. Read the instructions carefully. You will usually list your current job first. If you are not working, then you should start with the last job you had.
  - Make certain you have the correct name of the supervisor and the address and phone number of every place that you worked.



- Make sure that the dates when you worked at a job are correct. Employers may check a reference and not hire you because of incorrect information. The employer can also fire you later if the information or dates are wrong.
- If you have not had a paying job, you can include volunteer work. This information will demonstrate skills and responsibilities. Leave the information about pay blank for this volunteer work.
- Include information about all work, even if you were paid in cash. Employers still want to know that you were a handyman for your cousin or that you babysat for your sister.
- Don't skip the reason for leaving a job. If you were fired from a job, find a way to explain. For example, if you were fired for a poor record of attendance you can write, "Could not meet schedule requirements."
- If you have a job now and want to apply for another job, you may not want your current employer to know you are looking for work. You may want to check "no" for the question "May we contact your present employer?" on an actual job application. But if the job you have now is ending, such as a seasonal job, or if a company is closing or moving, ask your boss if he is willing to be contacted.

- Volunteer Activity** The [Personal Data Form](#) includes a section about volunteer experience.
- References** A reference is someone who can say that you were on time, dependable and good at completing assigned tasks. References can be previous employers, clergy, teachers, or people from community organizations. Write down your references on your [Personal Data Form](#).



## True Stories: I Have an Application for You

A job seeker asked about a job at a gas station. The owner said they were looking for someone to pump gas. The job seeker asked for an application and was told the company was too small, they did not have a job application form. The job seeker handed the business owner a neatly completed [Personal Data Form](#). It had space for all the information the owner needed. The job seeker was hired.

## Part 2: Apply Online

If you have never used a computer to fill out an application, you may want someone who can help if you get stuck. Find a friend, relative, or a staff person at a library or other community agency to be available for questions during the process.





## Checklist for Success: Completing Online Job Applications

- Have your [Personal Data Form](#)** in front of you so you don't have to hunt for the information you need.
- Give yourself plenty of time.** Most online applications take at least 30 minutes and up to an hour and a half.
- Most employer sites and job boards ask you to create a login and password.** Make a list in one place. The [Job Search Web Site Registration Form](#) you will find in the Worksheets section.
- Follow instructions for password requirements** which may include minimum and maximum lengths, letters, numbers and symbols. Also be aware if the user name and password are case sensitive; if so, you will have to use the same upper and lower case letters each time.
- Read all of the instructions carefully,** that's how you will know how to move to the next page or section.
- If you have a resume, make certain you can access it on your computer or smartphone** so you can download it into the application.
- If you have to stop or want to change something, don't hit submit.** You will be able to log in to finish and apply for other open positions.
- If the application asks for a cover letter** tailor it for the job you are applying for using the template in Chapter 5.
- Answer all of the questions.** You usually have to answer all questions to get to the next page. Follow instructions to click "next" or "submit" to get to the next online page or section.
- If you can't move ahead or seem stuck on a page, look for the sections highlighted in red** that show missing information or items not put in the correct format. For example, you may be asked to type in your phone number as 914-555-1234, so if you type in (914)5551234 the answer will not be accepted and you will have to go back and make a change.
- If you are using your phone to complete an application** and it seems too hard on the small screen, log out and log on to the site on a laptop, tablet or desktop computer to finish the application. You can find one at your local library.
- Explain titles or job duties** in your employment history that may not be clear.
- Make certain all information about employment is correct** including the spelling of the name of the employer, address, dates you worked there and your supervisor.
- Check what you wrote before clicking "submit."**

The preceding checklist will keep you on track. The following items can sink an application.



Don't

- Lie.
- Leave any questions blank.
- Make up job titles or jobs.
- Make mistakes with dates of employment.
- Say you can work any shift or schedule if you can't.
- Tell the employer that the application has illegal questions on it.
- Use a generic cover letter if the application asks for one.

## Don't I Need My Social Security Number?

Very few applications will ask but if it's on the application be sure to include the correct number. You will need a social security number if you are hired. If you do not have a social security number, you can apply for one online at the [Social Security Administration](#), or call 1-800-772-1213.

All U.S. citizens and immigrants with permanent status can apply for a social security number. Anyone who has applied for a green card or refugee status, or has a work or student visa, can also apply for a social security number.

## Other types of questions on a job application

Applications can include questions or sections that test a candidate's honesty or skills. These may also be called assessments specific to the job you are applying for.

Some employers include questions about honesty, customer service, and getting along with workers. Read every question carefully and answer them honestly. Don't try to figure out what the employer is looking for.

Other questions ask about how you work with co-workers and customers. These questions may look like this:

- In other jobs, how many times have you said or done something that may result in a customer not coming back?
- How many times have you found yourself in a loud argument with a supervisor, coworker or customer in the last three years?
- Do you agree or disagree with statements such as, "At work you simply can't help everyone and get your own job done."
- If you are assisting a customer who is hard to understand, what would you do?



## What is all the fine print at the end of the application?

At the end of the application you may be asked to read a lot of information written in small print, and then to sign or click a box that indicates you have read and agree with all of the information. Here are examples of what you may see.

- A statement that the application is not a contract of employment. This means that you do not have the job just because you complete a job application.
- Acknowledgment that you know the employer will check your references, employment and education history. The employer may also conduct other background checks, such as for training certifications or licenses.
- If employers want to give you a drug test before they hire you, you will probably be given a long consent form to sign. The forms explain the testing process and excuses the employer from responsibility if there are any problems with the test.
- Credit check: Applications for jobs that require you to handle money (like a cashier) may include a pre-employment credit check. If so, you will be asked to sign a consent form. By law, a potential employer has to tell you if he makes an employment decision based upon a credit report. If you are denied a job because of poor credit, an employer has to tell you why and you have a right to respond or contest the credit report.
- Optional questions to indicate whether you are male or female and your race and ethnicity. These are collected for statistical purposes. The information is kept separately. Employers can't use the information to make decisions about who to hire.
- A questionnaire to determine employer eligibility for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). These include questions about public benefits like food stamps, disability payments, welfare and military status. Just like questions about gender and ethnicity, this information is kept separately and cannot be used to make an employment decision.
- Finally, there is often a statement that asks you to agree that the information that you provided is correct. Read the instructions carefully to complete your application.



## Keep Track of Applications You Complete

It will be important to keep track of all of the applications you complete. Use the [Record of Completed Job Applications](#) (in the Worksheets section). Keeping track will help you follow up and answer calls by remembering where you applied. This record will also provide a place where you can keep login and password information for online applications.



### Write It Down: Here's what your Record of Completed Job Applications would look like

Employer	Job Title	Date	Form of Application/Next Steps
Main Street Restaurant	Cashier	10/30/21	Paper and gave to manager, Joe Franklin. He told me to call back in a week if I had not heard from them.
Home Depot	Cashier	11/01/21	Log in, my email address, password, Working914!. Received email with reference number 4369065.

## Following Up

After you complete an online application, you will get an email with any instructions for following up or additional tests to take. Follow these instructions. You can also go to the business where you have completed the online application and ask to see a manager. Only do this once or twice **if the person you talk to tells you to do so**. Always get the name and title of any person you talk to. When you return to the employer, walk in and say, "I was here last Friday and Ms. Larkin told me to come in on Wednesday about the job as a cashier." Never go repeatedly and ask the same question or demand a job.

If a company has multiple stores, you can apply more than once to the same position in different locations. You can also apply for different jobs at the same and/or different locations. For example, when you go online to apply for a job at ShopRite you may see that there is an opening for a Produce Clerk and Grocer in New Rochelle and Yonkers. You can apply for each job online and check back in person to New Rochelle for the Produce and Grocery jobs and to Yonkers for the Grocery position.







## Chapter 9 To Do List

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fill in your [Personal Data Form](#)
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you have never filled out an online application, have someone available to help you navigate; share this toolkit with them to help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write down your login and password for each site that you create these for.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have your resume and cover letter template available to customize and include if requested by the employer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check and double check application contents to make certain it is correct.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep a record of all the online applications you complete.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read to build skills and take time to brush up on your math.

### Quick Links to Resources

Resource Name	Web Address
Social Security Administration	<a href="http://ssa.gov">ssa.gov</a> Located in the Menu under Social Security Number & Card



## 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](http://FirstFind.org).

