

Job Search Toolkit

Tools &
Techniques
You Need for
a Successful
Job Hunt



Libraries are here for you!

The **Westchester Library System (WLS)** is pleased to provide this Job Search Toolkit. The Toolkit is available for free and can be downloaded at FirstFind.org in the section titled "Jobs and Careers." A limited number of print copies are available to be mailed; you can request a copy by sending your address to outreach@wlsmail.org.

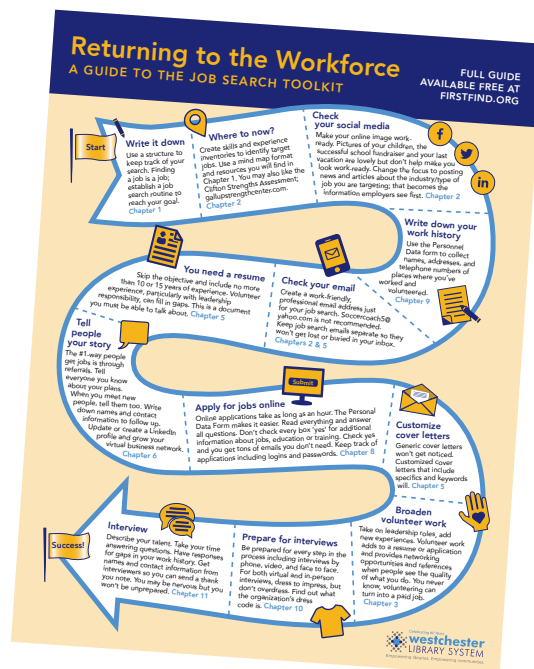
FirstFind.org has additional features. These features include helpful videos, regularly updated links to resources mentioned in the Toolkit, information on related job search services, and "roadmaps" for first-time and older job seekers as well as those returning to the workforce after incarceration.

At WestchesterLibraries.org you'll find information and resources that can be downloaded, borrowed, and streamed - including books, movies, graphic novels, and music. There are interactive programs that can help you learn everything from computer programming to sewing. You can also connect with counseling that helps you identify needed services and achieve your goals—including figuring out Medicare, studying for a high school equivalency diploma, helping your child learn, and finding help while on probation or parole.

To access many of the online resources we make available, you'll need a library card. If you don't already have a library card, contact your local library. Cards are free. Most libraries require two forms of identification to process a card; many offer online registration. A full list of libraries in Westchester County is available on the WLS website and is printed on the inside back cover of this Toolkit.

Your library is the place to go for internet access, learning, and entertainment. If you haven't visited your local library lately, stop by and ask about current programs and services. You'll be delighted to discover what is available to learn, create and connect!

See you there!



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1

**Are You
Work-Ready?**

Are You Work-Ready?

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.



A hand holding a smartphone against a blue grid background. The hand is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the thumb and index finger visible. The background is a blue grid pattern. A white square is in the top right corner, containing a large yellow number 2 and a yellow horizontal line below it.

2

**Does Your
Social Media
Make You Look
Ready to Work?**

Does Your Social Media Make You Look Ready to Work?

You have a good idea of the kind of job you are looking for. The logical next step sounds like completing applications. Not so fast! Before you fill out an online application, you need to check your online image.

Most employers check social media before making a hiring decision. Employers are going online to do a basic search to make certain there are no red flags that could create problems in the workplace and the community. They want to find a candidate who can demonstrate a good work ethic.

Check Your Online Image

Type your name into a search engine. It doesn't matter whether you prefer Google, Bing, Yahoo or Duck Duck Go.

If you have a profile, account, or have commented on any of these sites they will show up on the first page or two:

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Tik Tok
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Reddit
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- Google+
- Instagram

You may also find links to news stories about your school sports team, charity, community or church activity. So far so good.





Take the Extra Step: Same Name, But That's Not Me

If you share the same name with other people, information about you may not be at the top of the page. Scroll down to find yourself, or search again with a middle initial or name, or your name and location.

If there are a lot of people who pop up in a search with the same name, you may want to add a middle initial to your resume and your social media. Once you make this consistent it will narrow down the results and make you easier to find.

| Example of Name Searching Options |
|---|
| Jennifer Vargas – A lot of results, may not be you. |
| Jennifer Vargas White Plains NY – Will narrow the results. |
| Jennifer K. Vargas – Will narrow the results but make certain that the middle initial is used for your resume and LinkedIn if you have a profile there. |

Employers check social media to find information about candidate qualifications and interests that align with the job. These can be work accomplishments, volunteer activities and professional associations. Employers are also taking note of red flags that can sink a candidate including commentary that is racist, sexist, inflammatory or negative about a job or boss. A rant on Facebook about the way a supervisor or customer treated you at work could take you out of the running for a new position. It is essential that you show up on social media as responsible and employable.



True Stories

Search the name 'Susan Smith' and your screen will fill up with information about a woman serving life in prison for murder in South Carolina. Smith rolled her car, with her two young sons inside, into a lake in 1994. If you share the name of someone infamous, or famous, add a middle name or initial on social media, job applications and your resume so the correct person shows up in a search.

Think Before You Post, Edit if You Can

Don't post anything on the internet that you wouldn't want your boss, or your grandmother, to see or read. Even if you think your posts can't be shared because access is restricted to friends, another user may be able to share it in a way that the content can be spread.

Remember this rule: Nothing is private online.

Let's say you went on a great vacation and have photos of all night parties. You can try to take them down, but you may not be able to erase them. Whether you can take them down or not, make a point of adding positive content that will become the first items seen.

If you were really upset about the behavior of a neighbor and posted a long comment about the fact that "they don't clean up their trash and should go back to their country," it is time to set the record straight with an apology, particularly if it can't be deleted. Comment on your own post writing what you have learned and how you had conversations to understand the damage your writing could inflict.

| Content Do's and Don'ts For all Social Media | |
|--|---|
| Do Post | Don't Post |
| Content, articles and information related to the industry where you work, or want to work. | Complaints or negative comments about the reputation of an industry or employer. |
| Family events with people having responsible fun. | Pictures of lots of drinking, illegal drug use and revealing clothing. |
| Holiday celebrations. | Put downs of other religions, religious practices or beliefs. |
| Encouragement to register and vote is OK. | Content supporting a candidate or specific party. |
| If you are unemployed and post about an active job search, stick to positives. Write something like, "Looking for a job with a good agency as a Home Health Aide." | "Out of work again, laid off, company was bought. Anyone know about a job, any job? I'm getting tired of Ramen noodles and unemployment won't last forever." Or anything like, "Another waste of time job interview. It's pretty clear that they're only hiring cute young women for this job." If you are working, but looking for a new opportunity, don't announce your job search anywhere online. Your boss should not find out that you want to leave the job when someone sends them a link to your post. |
| Support for local businesses, non-profits and activities and involvement in these. | Anything that is obviously sexist or racist or could be interpreted as sexist or racist. |

Isn't Facebook Just for My Friends and Family?

First of all, know that any potential employers can find anything and everything you post online. It's important that your Facebook presence is rated G and shows you in the best light. If a hiring manager searches your name and finds a Facebook posting that boasts of the number of drinks you had before you passed out, or a rant about all of the idiots you worked with, including your boss, they won't be impressed. A simple, "I hate Monday mornings" is not going to endear you with an employer looking for a reliable office worker.



Follow this basic rule for Facebook: If you wouldn't want your boss, mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother or kids to see a posting, then it shouldn't be on Facebook.

Should I spend a lot of time making my Facebook page work-ready?

The time you spend filling out this information will give you a head start on details that you can use for other social media platforms, your resume and even job applications. The minimum you should do is update your profile and cover photos to be employer-friendly and make certain your Facebook content is ready for viewing by a potential future boss.



Checklist for Success: Smile for the Camera, Customize Your Cover Photo

The top of your Facebook page has your profile photo and a cover photo. Start here to make certain you look ready to work.

- ☐ Choose an image you would present in a job interview, competent and friendly.
- ☐ There should be only one person in the photo: You. No family members, friends, love interests or pets.
- ☐ You can have a friend take the photo in front of a plain, or nondistracting, background. Wear the kind of clothes you would wear to work and try a few angles to find the one you think is best.
- ☐ Save the good picture to use for other social media.

Next, check the cover photo. It's a large space at the top of your Facebook page where you can show off your experience, skills and training. Here are some ideas:

- ☐ If you work preparing food, use a cover photo with finished items or cooking tools. For example it could be a decorated cake, a mixing bowl or a grill.
- ☐ When your experience leans towards IT, use a cover photo of computers or computer equipment.
- ☐ If you are skilled in building trades, tools for carpentry or finishes would work.
- ☐ For food service, a cup of coffee or fresh food will be nice.
- ☐ If retail is your passion, the cover photo can be racks of clothes.
- ☐ If you can't capture your work identity in the cover photo, use a background of nature, a landmark, relevant city, flowers, a pattern or item of general interest.
- ☐ Use something that complements your profile photo and doesn't distract.
- ☐ Stay away from family and the wedding party photos for this section.

Once you have made the top of the page work-ready, it's time to edit your personal information to be employer friendly.





Checklist for Success: Edit Facebook Profile

- ☐ Click on Edit Details or the About tab and start from the top making certain your work experience and education match your applications or resume. You don't have to list all your jobs.
- ☐ List your high school and post high school education.
- ☐ Current city can be general, your state or metropolitan area.
- ☐ It's your choice whether you want to include a hometown.
- ☐ Keep the relationship status blank and make certain any website or social links you include are work-ready.
- ☐ Add hobbies as long as they are ones you would share with an interviewer.
- ☐ In About, you may want to add the same statements that appear at the top of your resume.
- ☐ In About you will also find the option to add favorite quotes. These can be inspirational about success or by a leader in your field of interest.



What is LinkedIn and Do I Need a Profile There?

LinkedIn is the world's largest online professional network, with more than 150 million users in the U.S. LinkedIn is not for sharing birthdays or pictures of your last family event. Users post professional profiles. Most LinkedIn users have college degrees but this does not mean all users do, or that all jobs posted require the same level of education. LinkedIn is a great place to find people for Networking, which we will describe in Chapter 6.



Write It Down: The Email Address and Password You Used to Access LinkedIn

Add to your notebook both the email address and password you created to access LinkedIn.

To figure out if you should create a profile on LinkedIn, search the site for profiles of people you know with jobs that are similar to the one you have, or the one you want. If some of them show up with LinkedIn profiles, that may inspire you to take the time to create your own LinkedIn profile.



Checklist for Success: LinkedIn Profiles

If you have decided that a LinkedIn profile can help your job search, set aside a couple of hours to create your profile.

- ☐ Create a LinkedIn account. A basic LinkedIn account is free and should meet your job search needs. LinkedIn does a good job of walking you through building the parts of your profile once you have created an account.
- ☐ In Settings & Privacy under Visibility, make certain your profile is visible so potential employers can find you.
- ☐ When you are starting your profile in Account Preferences/Visibility of Your LinkedIn Activity, check "no" for "Share job changes, education changes, etc." If this is checked "yes," your network is notified every time you make a change. You can change this once your profile is complete.

Ready to Write Your LinkedIn Profile?

Use these tips for writing your LinkedIn Profile:

- Use a clear headline that describes the work you do. For example, Administrative Assistant at ABC Audio or Health Care Professional. Make sure it is realistic. It's one of the first things a potential employer will see so make it count.
- Include a professional photo. Use the same photo for Facebook as long as it looks professional.
- Include a background photo behind your profile photo that is related to the work you do. The beautiful sunset is fine for Facebook but on LinkedIn you will need a work setting or work tools. For example, administrative work can be represented by desks or computers.
- Write a summary that describes, in no more than a few sentences, what you do. You can use one from your resume or create a new one. For ideas look at profiles of people with similar skills and experience. It can be the same content as the About section in Facebook.
- Be precise in your job descriptions and make sure your work history does not conflict with your resume. Decide how far back you will go; it can be earlier than your resume.
- Include transferable skills, results and key words.
- Join Groups. They will be listed on your profile. Search for groups starting with Alumni from the schools you attended. Then look for alumni groups from former employers, then professional groups based on your industry, job function and interests. When searching for groups, make sure they are in the U.S. and have more than a few members.
- Provide specifics about your education.
- Choose skills to add from the list provided. Endorse other LinkedIn users for their skills.
- Request recommendations from former bosses and colleagues. Recommend people you know on LinkedIn.



It's a Good Thing I Have a Cellphone

Your primary phone is likely a cellphone. When you're searching for a job it's very important to make sure every phone call is professional, whether on a cellphone or landline, or if you are the caller or receiver.

| Telephone Tips | |
|---|---|
| Do | Don't |
| Make and take calls in a quiet place. | Take or make a call from the supermarket, playground or with a TV playing in the background. |
| Ask to call back if needed. For instance, if an employer calls while you are somewhere noisy simply say, "I'm just getting off the bus, can I call you back in 20 minutes?" | Say, "I'm too busy, can you call back?" |
| Cancel or ignore call-waiting. | Take any other incoming calls when you are speaking with someone about employment. Tell a potential employer, "Please hold for a minute, I have another call coming in." |
| State your name and number clearly when leaving a message. | Think, "I don't have to leave my number, they can find it." |
| Reschedule the call if you hear the connection is bad or you are in a dead zone. | Blame the employer for a bad connection. |
| Answer politely by saying hello or stating your name. When you are looking for a job, any phone call could be from your new boss. | Answer the phone with a suspicious, "Who is this?" |
| Have a pen and paper (your notebook) so you can write down information. | Ask the employer to repeat themselves then to hold while you get a paper and pen. |



Take the Extra Step: Record A Work-Ready Phone Message

When you are searching for a job, make sure the message people hear when you are unable to pick up your phone is work-ready. It should be short and include your name. For example, "Hi, this is Jennifer Vargas, I can't answer the phone right now, leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible." Including your name is important for the employer to know they reached the right person. Skip the background music or funny voices.

What are the details for work-ready Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Tumblr, Tik Tok, Reddit and Google+?

Once you have Facebook and LinkedIn work-ready, you can follow the same rules for any other social media site. For example, for Twitter use the same profile photo and background as LinkedIn; and the Bio is the same as your Headline on LinkedIn. Make sure the pictures and content on Pinterest would make your grandmother, and any employer, proud. Every video you post should be G rated and free from political statements.

What does your email address say about you?

A work-friendly email address is a must for a job search. You don't need to own a computer to have an email account and you can get an email account free. Sign up with gmail, hotmail, yahoo or any other free service. Make sure you remember your password and address, and write these in your notebook. If someone sets up your email address for you, make sure you know how to open your email account and use it including the password. Instructions on how to set up an email account can be found on FirstFind.org under Digital Learning.

Whether you are picking out a new email address or already have one, the address should be professional and preferably have your name in it. Since email addresses are unique and cannot be used by more than one person, your name may already be taken. tsmith@gmail.com, for example, won't be available. But an address that combines your name and or a middle name is fine. Avoid adding something that indicates your age like terrismith1985@gmail.com.



Take the Extra Step: Use Your Area Code For Your Email Address

If you need to add a number to get a unique email address your telephone area code will probably work, terrismith914@gmail.com

If you usually use mightyfinedude@gmail.com—don't! Save it for messages to your friends. Start a new account for your job search, like tomsmith914@gmail.com, so emails from potential employers won't get lost in a long list of personal messages and your address will look more professional.





Write It Down: Your Email Account Address, Username, and Password

Write down your email address and password, even if it's put into your phone for you.



Chapter 2 To Do List

- _____ Search your name using your favorite search engine.
- _____ Make sure your social media makes you look ready to work.
- _____ Add content and remove red flag items.
- _____ Consider a LinkedIn profile and complete one if you find people with similar backgrounds on LinkedIn.
- _____ Make certain you have a professional-looking email address.

Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|---------------------------|--|
| First Find - Email Basics | FirstFind.org Located under Web Skills |



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.



An orange t-shirt with the word 'VOLUNTEER' printed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. The shirt is worn by a person, and the background is a solid orange color.

3

**Are You
Volunteering to
Gain Experience
and More?**

Are You Volunteering?

It may seem like a waste of time to “work for free” when you really need a paycheck. But volunteering can actually help you get a job.

Volunteer work helps by:

- Giving you experience
- Improving your skills
- Providing potential references
- Increasing the number of people you know for networking
- Making you feel good about yourself because you are helping other people
- Giving you a structure and schedule to follow
- Providing experience you can include on your resume
- Possibly turning into a paying job

Volunteering Can Make You More Employable

Employers often prefer to hire someone who is already working. They are concerned if you have been out of work for a while that you are not used to the responsibility of a dedicated work schedule. Regular volunteer work demonstrates that you can stick to a schedule, you are involved, and you are willing to build your resume.





Checklist for Success: Find Out Where You Can Volunteer

- ☐ Call or stop by a local house of worship, boys & girls club, community organization, library, senior center, food pantry, museum, nature center or school.
 - ☐ Ask if they use volunteers.
 - ☐ You can say, "I am looking for a job right now and have the time to do some volunteer work. Do you need any help?"
- ☐ Go to the sites of well known large non-profits, like the [American Red Cross](#) or [The United Way](#)
- ☐ Go to sites that are dedicated to volunteer work: [Volunteer New York](#) and [VolunteerMatch](#) are two examples.

Organizations may need you to do a variety of tasks, such as reading to children or seniors, filing, making copies, fixing things, cleaning up, preparing mailings, helping serve food, gardening, social media updates, database input, and help with fundraising and special events.

If you are interested in a specific field such as health care, you can volunteer in a nursing home. Any volunteer work will be valuable even if it's not connected to a specific type of job because it will show an employer that you are an active and involved person. You can gain new experience in a volunteer position. For example, if you help answer phones you will get practice dealing with the public, an important customer service skill.

Volunteering also offers a chance to do something different. You may gain experience and find new interests that help you consider other types of jobs.

The Importance of the People You Meet as a Volunteer

As a volunteer you will meet people who can become part of your network when you look for a job. When you feel comfortable, tell people that you are looking for a job. Letting people know you are looking for a job will be important if you have to change your volunteer schedule to be at an interview. You might work with other volunteers who work for a company that is hiring people just like you.

It is important to be responsible and work well as part of a team when you are volunteering. Even though you are not getting paid, you should treat volunteer work just like a job.





Take the Extra Step: Find a Reference

When you apply for a paying job, the person you reported to as a volunteer can be a good reference for you. Ask this person if you can use them as a reference and add their name and job title and contact information (telephone number and email address) to your notebook and [Personal Data Form](#) (discussed in Chapter 9).

Add it to your resume

Volunteer work can be included on your resume to represent skills, activity and relevant work experience. Including volunteer work on a resume is particularly helpful – it shows activity and responsibility. There is no need to indicate that the work is unpaid.

Here's a sample of volunteer activity on a resume:

Bethesda Senior Day Care Center | Yonkers, NY | 2019-present

Meal Server

- Serve meals to 75 senior citizens.
- Distribute nutrition information and respond to questions.
- Provide outstanding service.



Write It Down: Add It to Your Schedule

When you do volunteer work, write it down on your calendar. This will help you stay organized. Having hours on your calendar will also give you structure and a sense of purpose. It is important that you treat this commitment like a regular job by showing up prepared and on time.

From Volunteer to Paid Employee

Sometimes volunteer work can lead to a paycheck. When you impress the people around you with your hard work, your ability to complete a task and your reliability, they will think of you when there is a job opening.





True Stories

A job seeker volunteered for a political campaign conducting telephone canvassing. The experience on their resume described responsibilities that helped them get a job in telephone surveys and in person canvassing. There was no need to indicate their political party on the resume, as the work spoke for itself.

Unpaid, volunteer work can build your experience and career path. Not only do you gain experience, you also gain connections and a track record as a responsible worker.



Chapter 3 To Do List

- _____ Find out where you can volunteer
- _____ Sign up and schedule volunteer activities
- _____ Treat volunteer work like a job; be responsible
- _____ Tell people you are looking for a paying job
- _____ Add volunteer work to your resume

Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|--------------------|--|
| American Red Cross | redcross.org |
| United Way | unitedway.org |
| Volunteer New York | VolunteerNewYork.org |
| Volunteer Match | volunteermatch.org |





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.



A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a dark blue shirt, is seated in a wheelchair. He is smiling and waving his right hand. A laptop is open on his lap. The background shows a modern kitchen with a refrigerator and some decor.

4

**Where do you Find
Training Programs
and Help from the
Government for
Your Job Search
and Career?**

Where do you Find Training Programs and Help from the Government for Your Job Search and Career?

There are government and private organizations that can help you find a job or job training.

Career Centers

One-Stop Career Centers are free job search and employment centers open to the public. They provide information and assistance for people who are looking for a job or who need education and training to get a job.

One-Stop Career Centers can be found across the United States (also called employment centers). You can find the locations of New York State Centers by zip code at the Department of Labor's [New York State Career Center Locator](#). To find Centers outside of New York State call 877-872-5627 or go online to [CareerOneStop](#).

One-Stop Career Centers offer classes on how to write a resume, use computers and improve interview skills. Take advantage of programs that fit your schedule; you may get some new ideas.

Career Centers may also administer tests to evaluate your skills, like the ones described in Chapter 1 of this Toolkit. These tests can help you figure out your skills and interests. Some tests may match your skills and interests to different types of jobs. Career Centers will also have links to job banks with instructions for applications. The [New York State Job Bank](#) lists opportunities in New York, nearby New Jersey and Connecticut that can be searched by type of job and location. Learn more about searching online postings in Chapter 7.

During business hours these Career Centers also give you access to computers, the internet and printers. Career Centers may refer you to other training programs or organizations. They can also have information about benefits for eligible job seekers like bus passes or clothing allowances.

Before you visit a Career Center in person be prepared the same way as you would when you apply for a job. Bring the [Personal Data Form](#) you will complete in Chapter 7 and your resume if you have one. Dress neatly. Bring a list of questions in your notebook to help you understand how you can get the most from a Career Center.





Write It Down: Possible Questions

- What type of classes do you offer?
- What is the schedule of classes?
- When and where are job openings posted?
- What career evaluation tests do you give and which ones should I take?
- Are there training programs you can refer me to?
- Are there other benefits I could be eligible for?

Sometimes employers will hold job interview sessions at Career Centers, which are posted online via employer websites or social media, such as Craigslist. Check instructions to see if you have to sign up for an interview or complete an application in advance, or if you must show up at the Center only during specific days and hours. Make certain you meet all of the criteria for the job. For example, if a bus company is interviewing for drivers, be sure you have the type of driver's license and driving record required for the job.

When you go to the Career Center for one of these interview sessions, bring at least five (5) copies of your resume, since you may meet multiple employers or more than one person from a single employer, and dress for an interview. For popular jobs you may have to wait to be interviewed. Be prepared for multiple interviews. Treat each one as important and never complain about waiting, even to other job seekers. Someone from your next employer may be listening.

Write Down Names, Be Polite and Enthusiastic

Career Centers can provide you with a lot of help. Career Centers also see a lot of people. When you are polite, eager and enthusiastic, you will stand out in a big group of people looking for jobs. This starts with learning the names of people that you meet, such as job coaches, counselors, and employment specialists.





Take the Extra Step: Learn People's Names and Use Them

Ask people who help you for their business card, and when you return to their office, ask for them by their correct name. Don't walk up to a desk and say, "I was here last week and that tall lady helped me." Learn the names and use them correctly. Say Mr. or Ms. unless you are encouraged to use first names. If you cannot pronounce a name, ask for help. People will appreciate it if you say, "I want to be sure to pronounce your name correctly, can you help me?" When someone helps you, write a short thank you note. This can be handwritten and hand delivered, or sent via mail or email.

Always use your best manners, keep appointments and be on time for any classes. Simply saying please and thank you are very effective. Remember that the people at the Career Center are there to **help** you get a job. They do not get you a job – you do that. If you demand things and are rude, they will naturally be less helpful. Show off your organizational skills by writing down appointments in your calendar and taking notes in your notebook. Many of these people talk to the employers who are hiring, and they are asked to recommend someone for a job opening. If you are polite and professional, they are more likely to recommend you.

Treat the Center office like a workplace. Do not become too casual. Don't ask counselors for dates or to go to parties. These are offices, not places for gossip.





Checklist for Success: Be An Active Participant

Find out as much as you can about any program or agencies you come in contact with. This way when you are referred for a job or internship, you can speak well about the program or office that sent you.

- ☐ Know the correct names and titles of the people who help you.
- ☐ Treat everyone at the organization with respect. Remember, they can all be references and they talk to employers.
- ☐ Volunteer to help your counselor, your coach, your trainer or a fellow job seeker. This is a way to get some experience and show you are a responsible team player. You can help make copies, phone calls, deliver packages, clean up a closet, show someone how to find the restroom, anything! Your help will be appreciated.
- ☐ Always show up on time and keep appointments. Write appointments down on your calendar!
- ☐ Ask for feedback about assignments and interviews, and listen! These people can give you valuable information.
- ☐ Send or hand deliver thank you notes.
- ☐ Thank people in person.
- ☐ Do not make demands.
- ☐ Ask for referrals and suggestions.
- ☐ Never bad-mouth the organization or its people.
- ☐ If a counselor or a job coach or a trainer leaves the organization, find out where they are going and if it would be appropriate to contact them at the new organization. They could continue to be a great resource for you at their new workplace.
- ☐ Don't criticize or complain about paperwork or testing. These are steps in the process and may be required so that the organization gets paid. Prepare for these and be professional.



Other Government Offices That Can Help

Many states, counties and cities also have departments set up to help people with specific needs or backgrounds in their job search. These can range from helping people with different types of disabilities to veterans and young adults. The Career Center can refer you to agencies that could be helpful.

In New York State [ACCES-VR](#) (Vocational Rehabilitation) is a government office set up to help individuals with disabilities find training and employment, including those who were formerly incarcerated. ACCES-VR is part of the State Department of Education. The site will tell you when and where information sessions are held to determine eligibility for services. If you are not in New York, you will need to find out if there is an agency like ACCES-VR in your state. One-Stop Career Centers are a great place to find out this information.



True Stories

A job seeker was employed as a Home Health Aide (HHA) having earned her Home Health Aide (HHA) Certification after high school. She also wanted to become a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), but was concerned about the cost of the training; she had paid for the HHA training and did not have the money for the CNA class. During a conversation about career ladders at a career center, the job seeker disclosed she had a learning disability and had received special educational services in high school. The job search coach recommended the job seeker sign up with ACCES-VR for services and assistance. ACCES-VR paid for the CNA class and the job seeker got the job she wanted.

Industry Training; Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and often a portable, nationally-recognized credential.

Apprenticeships have traditionally been found in construction and trades including Plumbing, Carpentry, HVAC, Locksmith, Auto Glass Repair and Auto Technician. Apprentice opportunities are now in diverse fields including Information Technology (IT), Healthcare, Hospitality, Cybersecurity, Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation, Financial Services and even Dog Training and Pet Grooming. A good place to start an apprenticeship search is [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov).



Non-Profits That Help With Training and Job Search

There are also many organizations that help people gain skills for jobs or provide assistance with job searches. These can be independent organizations, they may be part of larger organizations or linked to government programs. For example, your local YMCA may have a program that helps with a job search. You can also ask about training programs at the library, at your nearest community center or at a house of worship. Call them to find out.

You should not have to pay someone to help you find a job. Stay away from programs that charge you to write your resume or to provide job leads. You can get this help for free.

There are education and training programs that charge a fee, like those for New York State Security Guard Licensing or certified Home Health Aide. If you are thinking of enrolling in a program, ask about all the ways you can get government grants to pay for the class. Some schools tell you they can help you get loans. Be aware that you will have to pay back a loan even if you do not find work after you have completed school. Make sure people who complete the course or training are getting jobs that pay enough to live on and to pay back their loans. Ask to speak to graduates and find out their experiences before you start a class.

Community Based

Job Clubs are organized to help by sharing resources through group discussion. They are sponsored by a range of organizations. The Career One Stop website has a [Job Club Finder](#).

Young Adults

Job Corps provides skills needed to succeed in a career, and life, for eligible young people ages 16-24. Call 800-733-5627 for information, and use the [Job Corps Center Finder](#) to check for locations. Search for other assistance using the [Youth Programs Finder](#); contact more than one to learn about the different kinds of help they provide.

Older Adults

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a work-based job training service for older Americans. Call 877-872-5627 to learn more or check the [Older Worker Program Finder](#).

Immigrants

Individuals who have immigrated to the U.S. can use the [Refugee Assistance Finder](#) to search for employment services, career assistance for skilled workers, and social services.

SSI and SSDI Recipients

[America Works](#) is a program currently helping people ages 18-64 searching for work who are receiving Social Security (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). SSDI recipients who wish to work can learn more about the opportunities available through the federal [Ticket to Work](#) program.



What is an internship and how do I get one?

An internship is when you work alongside a more experienced person to help and learn. Internships can last from a few hours to a few months; they can also be called job shadowing.

You rarely get paid for an internship. You do get great work experience. You also get potential references and a chance to experience the job first hand. Some employers also hire people who have been good interns.

Treat an internship just like a paying job. When you are an intern, you must show up on time. Show respect to your supervisors, other interns and paid employees. Complete your work (and ask for extra work) and be enthusiastic.

Include any experience as an intern in your resume. You may use "Intern" in the job title, but don't have to if the title sounds fine without it. For example, if you were an intern at a non-profit you may have been a "Program Assistant." Intern experience belongs on your resume whether it is paid or unpaid, just like volunteer experience.

Internship openings can be found on job posting sites and career centers.

Check Your Attitude

So let's say you land an Internship or start a training program, but you feel the program is lacking or not really worth the time. This is the time for you to check your attitude and remember that you are looking for a JOB – and only YOU can have a good attitude about it, which others will notice.

When you add working with agencies and training programs to your job search, your calendar is getting quite full. You are doing a great job of looking for a job. You are getting closer to your goal every day.



Chapter 4 To Do List

- _____ Find your local One Stop Career Center, Employment Center or Career Center and check out what they offer
- _____ Check out Apprenticeship or Intern opportunities if these might meet your goal
- _____ Identify at least one Community Organization or Non-Profit with services that meet your needs



Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|--|--|
| America Works | americaworks.com |
| Apprenticeship.gov | apprenticeship.gov |
| Career One Stop - Job Club Finder | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help Community Services (Job Club Finder) |
| Career One Stop - Job Corps Center Finder | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help Job Corp Center Finder |
| Career One Stop - Locations of American Job Centers | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help |
| Career One Stop - Older Worker Program Finder | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help Older Worker Program Finder |
| Career One Stop - Refugee Assistance Finder | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help Refugee Assistance Finder |
| Career One Stop - Youth Programs Finder | careeronestop.org Located under Find Local Help Youth Programs Finder |
| New York State Career Center Locator | labor.ny.gov/career-center-locator |
| New York State Job Bank | newyork.usnlx.com |
| NYS ACCESS-VR | access.nysed.gov/vr |
| Ticket to Work | ssa.gov/work |
| New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services | criminaljustice.ny.gov Search for "reentry task force" |
| New York Public Library | nypl.org Search "Connections a free guide for formerly incarcerated people" |
| Westchester Library System | connections.westchesterlibraries.org |



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.



A smiling woman with a large afro and glasses is holding a resume. The resume is titled 'RESUME' and has sections for 'PROFILE', 'EDUCATION', and 'EXPERIENCE'. The 'EDUCATION' section lists 'Bachelor of English UNIVERSITY' and 'Master in Journalism UNIVERSITY'. The 'EXPERIENCE' section lists 'Journalist CREATIVE STUDIO' and 'Writer Assistant COMMUNICATION CENTER'. A large yellow number '5' is overlaid on the top right of the image.

5

Do I Need a
Resume and a
Cover Letter?

Do I Need a Resume and a Cover Letter?

Do you need a resume? Maybe. If you apply for a job and an employer asks for a resume, you should have one. You don't need one to apply for an hourly, non-management position that uses an online application system, particularly if it is part-time or seasonal.

Is your email address up to the job?

It is essential to have an email address. You can get a free email address, and you don't have to own a computer to get one. Free email accounts can be set up at the library where you can then send email or check for email messages. Many libraries have classes to introduce you to the internet or someone who can help you set up your email account. FirstFind.org has plain language guidance in its Web Skills section.



Checklist for Success: Have a Professional Email Address for Job Search

- ☐ If your email is something like curlygurl@yahoo.com or cooldude@hotmail.com, set up a new email just for job search.
- ☐ Use your first and last name in your email address whenever possible, it makes it easier for an employer to identify you.
- ☐ If your name is taken, someone with the same name already has the email address. Try your first and last name with a period between the two, or first initial and last name.
- ☐ Your telephone area code is a good option. billsmith914@gmail.com is an example of a good email address for someone with a common name. Don't use the year you were born or graduated from school in your email address.
- ☐ Ask for help setting up your email address. You will find that email is much easier than you thought.





Take the Extra Step: Know Your Email Address and Password

When you get a smartphone the person helping you will likely set up your email. Make sure you know the email account address, username, and password. Write them down. It will be hard to apply to some jobs using only your smartphone, so make sure you know how to log in to your email on a computer, too.

What does a resume look like?

Most resumes are written in a few basic formats because most people create the document using resume templates.

In Microsoft Word:

- choose NEW and you will see RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS as one of the selections below the search box.

Using Google Docs:

- click on FILE then NEW, then FROM TEMPLATE to find options.

Google's [Applied Digital Skills](#) series offers helpful video tutorials on creating a resume in Google Docs.

You can also search online for Word resume templates. Make certain that you are choosing a free template and not signing up for a resume writing service.

We have created a sample resume for a fictional job applicant named Bill Smith. It was built from one of the Word formats. You can find this [sample resume](#) at the end of this chapter.

In your resume **do not:**

- Use multiple fonts (print style) and multiple sizes of type, with the exception of your name, which can be a bit larger.
- Include a photo or personal identifying details including your name marital status and nationality.
- Use fancy formats or colored paper, unless you are a designer.

The [Personal Data form](#) in Chapter 7 will be valuable for organizing information making certain it is correct.

Someone is helping me with my resume. Shouldn't I just let them write it?

When you are working with a training program or referral organization, it is very likely someone will help write your resume. You may also have a friend or relative who offers to help with resume writing.

That's fine, but remember it is **your** resume. You need to be able to talk about or explain all the facts on the resume. The person who helped you will not be with you during an interview.

You need to know how to physically prepare or change your resume, attach it to an email, and print a copy. Remember, whoever helps you also needs to show you how to change or edit your resume, how to convert to a PDF if desired, and how to send or attach it digitally.



Checklist for Success: Know How to Edit, Save and Send Your Resume

- ☐ If someone helps you prepare your resume, have them also help you practice making a change in the document.
- ☐ Learn how to save and print a copy of your resume in multiple formats, including as a PDF.
- ☐ Practice opening your resume on a computer. Even if you can access it on your phone, you may need to make changes and/or print it.
- ☐ Name the file clearly with your name and a date, such as "Suzy Smith Resume 2021" to make it easier for an employer to find your resume when sent by email.
- ☐ Make sure the date on your file name is current – don't send a resume labeled "Suzy Smith resume 2018"!
- ☐ Learn how to attach a document to an email and send a copy of your resume to yourself by email.
- ☐ Open your email account to access a copy of your resume; it will be in your email inbox and in your "Sent" file.
- ☐ Check your email on your smartphone, you will find your resume there too.

You don't have to own a computer to retrieve your resume. After you send the resume to yourself by email, or have saved it to a flash drive, you can access your resume on any available computer. A flash drive is a small, portable device available at all kinds of stores that only costs a few dollars. Flash drives can be great for saving documents but they can also be lost and break, so always email your resume to yourself.





Take the Extra Step: Stick to Digital if the Process is All Digital

If you complete a job application online, you will likely communicate with the employer by text and cellphone. When you meet a hiring manager who reviews your information on an iPad, don't hand over a resume. The employer has gone digital, they don't want the paper.

Where do I start? Identify yourself correctly.

The top of the resume includes your contact details. Everything must be spelled correctly. Use correct two letter state abbreviations, for example, New York is NY. Make sure that capital letters are used for city and street names; St., Ave., or Rd. There is no need to write **phone number** or **email** next to these items. If you have more than one phone number, a landline and a cell number, include just one, the number you are most likely to answer professionally and that gets good reception.

Here's a sample of identifying information at the top of a resume:

Bill Smith

11 Main Street, Southchester, NY 11233 | (914) 555-0100 | billsmith914@gmail.com

Some job seekers don't want to put a home address on a resume. It is acceptable to leave out your street address and put in only city, state, phone number and email address. Employers will want to know that you live in the area where the job is located. Be aware that it's not difficult to find addresses and you will have to include one on an application.

What's my objective?

An objective on a resume is considered old fashioned. Resume objectives are written to target one position or highlight generic skills. Today's resumes start with a short statement, a summary of skills, experience and goals. This is called a **Profile**.

How do I write a Profile for my resume?

The Profile at the top of a resume is a 2 - 4 sentence introduction. The Profile needs to be short, creates a clear picture of your value as an employee and includes keywords that relate to the job you are interested in. Employers receive a lot of resumes, and they are unlikely to read them word for word. A good Profile draws the attention of a reader and provides a brief summary.

What's a keyword and why should they be in my Profile?

Keywords are the magic words in your resume that describe the skills, abilities, and work experience employers are looking for. They are an important part of your Profile. Employers look for these words when reading hard copy resumes or use software called applicant tracking systems (ATS) to find keywords electronically to identify candidates to meet in person.

Skills such as "master carpenter" are certainly keywords. Common keywords to include in your resume can be found in job postings. These might be **project management, team building, customer focus** and **leadership**. Make sure the resume you submit includes a few of the keywords in the description posted about the position.

Look at this sample of "Key Responsibilities for a Retail Cashier" from a job posting for Bed Bath & Beyond and you will see keywords highlighted.

Key Responsibilities:

- Engage customers in a **courteous, helpful** and **respectful manner, promptly** and politely **respond to customer inquiries** and customer requests for support.
- **Process customer transactions** through the register and customer service desk.
- Collect and **process payment** from customer and enter into register (includes applying coupons, providing change and receipts).
- **Package customer purchases** for removal from the store (includes wrapping and bagging).
- Ensure all items intended for purchase are identified and **properly scanned**.
- Execute activities related to store initiatives to **offer customers additional products and services** (i.e. special sale items, credit card applications).
- Return misplaced product, **customer returns** and other products gathered in the front-end to the correct location in the store.
- **Execute price changes** and sign changes as needed.
- Perform additional duties as required, but not limited to: **stocking, freight processing,** price changes and cart retrieval.



Do I put all of these keywords in my Profile?

No, your profile can include keywords that describe your strongest skills that match the job description you are targeting.



Take the Extra Step: Stay Away From I, Me and My

Professional resumes are written in third person, they do not include “me” or “my.” Resume content includes short descriptive sentences that can be read and understood quickly.

An example of a Profile targeting a position in customer service and as a cashier is:

Profile

Experienced cashier with a track record of success providing excellent customer service. Consistently respond in a courteous, respectful and helpful manner completing all transactions promptly and accurately.





Checklist for Success: Describe Your Work Experience

- ☐ Write work experience in chronological order, the most recent experience is at the top.
- ☐ Include a volunteer job or any work that is off the books, it represents work experience.
- ☐ Make sure the dates you worked are correct. Unless you are a recent grad, there is no need for months in dates; use only years.
- ☐ Check names of companies and locations for accuracy and correct spelling.
- ☐ Limit work experience to no more than ten (10) years. Earlier work may not be relevant and employers focus on current skills. For example, if you have experience as a bookkeeper the accounting software you used twenty five (25) years ago is very different today, or you may have relied on hard copies only at that time.
- ☐ Go back to an earlier point if the specific job, or industry, is relevant but in most situations do not include jobs more than fifteen (15) years ago.
- ☐ If you worked long term for one employer, don't cut the time to shorten the work history. For example if you worked for Enterprise Rent a Car from 1999 – 2008, don't change the starting year to 2005 or 2010. Employers like stability too.
- ☐ Bold job titles and make sure that readers will understand them. For example, for a job title like "Clerk 3" make File Clerk or Assistant Bookkeeper.
- ☐ Highlight accomplishments or significant responsibilities in bullet points; be selective and clear. Avoid jargon.
- ☐ Use words that represent action or activity such as operated, provided, completed, planned, built, saved and led.
- ☐ Use numbers, dollars and percentages to highlight accomplishments whenever possible. Say, "Cleaned 15 floors each shift," instead of, "Cleaned Floors."
- ☐ If you have the same, or similar jobs, don't repeat the same responsibilities, choose one or two accomplishments for each that stand out and include specifics such as, "Supervised 14 cashiers," or "Tracked \$10,000 each day."
- ☐ Use present tense for a job you are still working in, past tense for jobs you no longer hold.
- ☐ Check carefully for spelling and grammar. Employers may automatically say no to a resume that has these errors.



Below you will find a sample work experience section for Bill Smith:

Sales Associate/Cashier | ABC Audio, Southchester, NY | 2016 - present

- Operate busy register assisting more than 200 customers during each shift.
- Accurately account for cash of \$1,500 per shift and handle credit card transactions.
- Provide excellent customer service, responding to questions about items promptly and courteously earning more than five complimentary customer comment cards.
- Follow detailed plans to stock merchandise on shelves and in the storeroom.

If you have a LinkedIn profile make sure that your resume is consistent with information posted there. The dates for jobs should be the same and general information about work should give the same picture. Your LinkedIn profile may go back earlier than your resume. See Chapter 2 for more information about LinkedIn.

How do I describe gaps and non traditional roles?

If you have a big gap in employment (more than 6 months), think about any volunteer activity, off the books work, or individual responsibilities. Include them on the resume.

For example, if you organized events for a community organization you could include:

Tag Sale Chair | Southchester Community Center, Southchester, NY | 2019

- Solicited \$10,000 worth of goods for annual fundraising sale.
- Organized team of 20 volunteers for set up, operations, breakdown and cleanup.
- Tracked sales and input information into QuickBooks for financial reporting.

Or if you were a caregiver for a relative:

Senior Caregiver | Private Family, Southchester, NY | 2016- 2018

- Administered physical therapy resulting in full recovery.
- Coordinated and contacted healthcare providers including doctors, nurses, acupuncturists, pharmacists and physical therapists.
- Advocated for client, using research and repeated follow up to ensure appropriate care and obtain increase in services



If you were incarcerated there is no need to write the name of the correctional facility, you can identify the work using the name of the employer:

Cook | Central Cafeteria, Elmira, NY | 2016 - 2019

- Prepared breakfast and lunch following rotating menu.
- Minimized food waste by identifying and using excess dairy products.
- Trained two cooks on cafeteria standards for meals and food safety.

What about education?

Put education in a separate section on your resume. For recent grads, this section will be at the top of the resume. If you just completed a training program for a specific career, you may want to put this on top.

Be specific and correct with the name of any school you attended and the city and state where it is located. If it is a recent degree or completed program, include the date of completion. If it was completed more than 15 years ago, you do not have to put a date. You should also indicate any special achievements during school and any activities you were involved in.

Bill's education looks like this on his resume:

Education

High School Diploma | Southchester High School, Southchester, NY

Member of Varsity Track Team, Vice President of Video Club

If you just completed a degree or training program for a specific career, you may want to add this to your Profile. Here's an example of including recent education in your Profile.

Service professional with Security Guard License and a record of success interacting with the public and internal customers. Ability to demonstrate excellent oral and written communication skills, including drafting required reports.



What about a Skills section?

A skills section is helpful if you have relevant experience or education that matches requirements and software in a job posting. The Skills section is another place to highlight keywords.

Here's a sample from Bill Smith's resume:

Skills

- Proficient with POS systems
- Excellent interpersonal and communications skills
- Certified pallet jack operator
- Inventory database input

Don't simply create a long list of non-specific, soft skills such as team player, hard working, friendly and outgoing. These are too generic. Be specific if you are going to include a Skills section, or leave it out.

Interests

These can include personal details that you might have in common with an interviewer or that relate to the job you are interested in. Don't make up interests just to complete this section.

Some interviewers like to talk about things you have in common. They also like to see outside interests that show job related skills like creativity and responsibility. You can say, for example, that you like to cook, read biographies, write poetry, listen to music, garden, play sports, travel, or play computer games. Think about your hobbies and how those hobbies make you smarter or better. Watching TV is not a good example!

If you did not include volunteer work in your work experience, you can include it here. A good example of what to include may be that you help seniors at a local community center or have participated in a walkathon to raise money for a worthy cause.

Bill chose to include the following in his resume:

Interests

Running, auto repair and restoration, and reading mystery novels.



True Stories: Stick to a Page or Two

A software professional arrived at a resume writing session with a 12 page resume. He was convinced that all of the experience he had must be included. You can't include everything in a resume, no one wants to read it all, and employers will ask questions. The resume was cut down to two pages, and he landed a job in a few weeks. The best resumes are easy to read, and should never be more than two pages. If there is a second page, it does not have to be full, in fact it's easier to read if it is not.

References

The actual names and contact information for references do not belong on a resume. Employers may ask for references in applications or when they are ready. There is also no need to include the line, "References will be furnished upon request." It's old fashioned.



Take the Extra Step: Get a second opinion

Once you have completed your resume, ask someone else to read it. Another person can check for errors that you may miss when you read the same thing so many times. A second opinion can also help make sure that what you wrote is easy to understand.

Congratulations—you now have a resume! But...don't forget to update.

When you have finished your resume you may breathe a big sigh and say "I'm glad that's done." Sorry, it's not done. A resume needs to be a living document. You know how to change it so you can tailor it with the right keywords for different jobs. If you add skills, volunteer work or certifications, think about the best way to include these in your resume. If your resume is posted on a job site, like Indeed, update it once in a while. Look at the keywords and make some changes to match postings. Resumes that are updated can rise to the top in a search and get a second look.



I was asked for a cover letter. What's that?

A cover letter provides an introduction to a candidate. It is either a separate document or can be included in the body of an email. A good cover letter can be just as important as a good resume.



Checklist for Success: Customize That Cover Letter

Your cover letter does not have to be too long and fancy but must include the following items:

- ☐ The specific posting you are responding to.
- ☐ Address the letter to a specific person if you know the name, or "Dear Hiring Manager" if you do not.
- ☐ A short statement that says why you are qualified for the job, or bullet points that match some of the requirements for the position.
- ☐ 3-5 bullet points with keywords that match your education and experience with specifics of the job.
- ☐ Confirmation of your contact information, so employers don't have to search for it.
- ☐ A thank you.

It is important that you use proper letter format, spelling and punctuation. It is a good idea to have someone else read your cover letter before you send it out.

In Microsoft Word:

- choose NEW and you will see RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS as one of the selections below the search box.

Using Google Docs:

- click on FILE then NEW, then FROM TEMPLATE to find LETTERS, they are not specifically identified as Cover Letters.

The cover letter we recommend includes bullet points where you can include information that matches the job posting. This draws the reader to content that connects your skills and experience with the job opening. See [Cover Letter](#) sample at the end of this chapter.



Email, Mail, or Fax?

Most resumes and cover letters are delivered by email. You can also use U.S. mail, fax or you can drop them off in person. When you are responding to a posting that asks for a resume, the posting will say how to send it. Follow these instructions! For example, if the instructions say that the resume and cover letter must be included in the body of the email, don't send them as attachments.



Write It Down: Correct Email Addresses to Send Resumes

When you speak to someone and they ask you for a resume, make sure you have a pen and paper to write down an email address. Thank them and repeat the information to make sure that you are sending the resume to the right place. This sounds like, "Thank you, I just want to confirm that I will be sending the resume by email to suzysmith@abcaudio.com."

When you use email to send a resume and cover letter, you should also keep your email brief. In the subject line write the reason for the email, for example "Response to 4/10/21 Craigslist Posting for a Sales Associate." When you are attaching your resume and cover letter, always open the attachment before you press send to make sure you have included the right document. Also make sure that your resume and cover letter are clearly labeled. Save the document with a title that includes your name and resume and/or cover letter. A good document title would be "Bill Smith Resume 2021."

Included below is a sample of this format using what Bill Smith might write in an email:

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing in response to your job posting for a Sales Associate on Craigslist on April 10, 2021. As you will see from my attached resume, I have more than 5 years of experience in customer service in both retail and restaurants. I strive to provide excellent customer service and have been recognized for my efforts.

I can be contacted at (914) 234-5678 or by email at billsmith914@gmail.com to discuss my qualifications for this job.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bill Smith



It is a good idea to include a personalized note in an email even if the job posting does not ask for a cover letter.

If you are instructed to drop off a resume in person, it should be folded in a business envelope with a cover letter included. On the outside of the envelope, the name or title of the person receiving it should be printed or typed clearly.

Now that I have a resume, why do I have to fill out an application?

Even though you have provided a resume, many employers will also ask you to complete an application. Yes, you must do this! Application forms ask for information that is not typically included on resumes. The job experience section also asks for information that may not be on your resume. Read the instructions carefully. Online applications often offer the opportunity to upload a resume. If you want to do this, the resume has to be available on the hard drive of the computer you are using or on a portable flash drive. To use this option, click the Browse button that shows up and follow the same steps you would use to attach a document.



Write It Down: Keep Track of Resumes You Send Out

Each time you send out a resume, write it down in your notebook so that you know where it has been sent. This way when someone calls and says, for example, "I received your resume. I am from Apple Hardware Supply" you won't respond "Who?"

Always carry at least five (5) extra copies of your resume to an interview, even if you sent one electronically. Carry them in a folder or large envelope with a piece of cardboard that will keep it neat. Even if you already sent your resume, you may be asked to speak to a different person who does not have a copy. You can just give them one of the resumes you are carrying. You look prepared and they do not have to search for your resume.



Chapter 5 To Do List

- _____ Pick a clear, professional resume format
- _____ Use a professional email address
- _____ Find keywords to include in your resume
- _____ Edit any cover letters each time you use one
- _____ Have someone else read your resume and cover letter to check for spelling, grammar and make sure it is clear

Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|---------------------------|---|
| First Find - Email Basics | FirstFind.org Located under Web Skills |
| Applied Digital Skills | applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/s/en/home Located under Learn Job Seekers |



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.



Resume Sample

Bill Smith

11 Main Street, Southchester, NY 11233 | (914) 555-0100 | billsmith914@gmail.com

Profile

Experienced cashier with a track record of success providing excellent customer service. Consistently respond in a courteous, respectful and helpful manner completing all transactions promptly and accurately.

Experience

Sales Associate/Cashier | ABC Audio, Southchester, NY | 2016 - present

- Operate busy register assisting more than 200 customers during each shift.
- Accurately account for cash of \$1,500 per shift and handle credit card transactions.
- Provide excellent customer service, responding to questions about items promptly and courteously earning more than five complimentary customer comment cards.
- Follow detailed plans to stock merchandise on shelves and in the storeroom.

Crew Member | McDonald's, Southchester NY | 2013 - 2016

- Took and fulfilled orders accurately, processed cash and credit card payments.
- Regularly assigned to drive-through window during high volume late night shifts.
- Cleaned eating areas and bathrooms to standard when assigned.
- Worked closely with an effective team recognized for sales and quality records.

Food Server | Benny's Burgers, Northchester, NY | 2011 - 2013

- Described and offered specials to customers each night.
- Took correct food and drink orders, made beverages.
- Closed out checks after meals with cash or credit cards.
- Provided excellent service that resulted in requests from regular customers.

Education

High School Diploma | Southchester High School, Southchester, NY

Member of Varsity Track Team, Vice President of Video Club

Skills

- Proficient with POS systems
- Excellent interpersonal and communications skills
- Certified pallet jack operator Inventory database input
- Inventory database input

Interests

Running, auto repair and restoration, and reading mystery novels.



Cover Letter Sample

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing in response to your job posting on Craigslist for a Sales Associate. After reading your description, I am confident that my experience and abilities in providing excellent service are a perfect match for this position.

I would bring to your organization a broad range of skills, including:

- Success at working in busy store settings during holiday rush periods.
- Knowledge to respond to and satisfy unusual customer requests.
- Accurate completion of monthly inventory and restocking.
- Flexibility to work varied shifts, weekends and holidays.

I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this position with you. If you have questions or would like to schedule an interview, please contact me by phone at (914) 555-0100 or by email at billsmith914@gmail.com. I have enclosed my resume for your review, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bill Smith



A photograph of an older man with glasses, smiling and talking on a mobile phone. He is wearing a yellow and black striped shirt. In the background, there is a window with greenery outside. In the foreground, a laptop is partially visible, and his hand is near the keyboard.

6

**How Do You Use
Networking to
Find Jobs?**

How Do You Use Networking to Find Jobs?

Some job seekers send out hundreds of resumes or fill out dozens of online applications and never get one response. You may be one of these people. Spending all your time applying for jobs online is simply not the best way to find a new position.

Yes, you can increase the likelihood of hearing back from employers by following Job Search Toolkit advice to complete online job applications from Chapter 9 and use Chapter 5 to improve your resume or cover letter. But all this effort is skipping one of the best ways to find a job: networking. Surveys show that from 40% to 80% of successful job offers start with networking.

Networking Does Not Require a Business Card

Networking is something we do every day. When you ask a friend to recommend the best place for pizza, you are networking. Ask someone else for the name of a reputable mechanic to fix your car and you are networking. Tell someone the best place to buy a chocolate cake and you are networking.



Write It Down: Make a List

Your networking activity will be more efficient if you start by making a list of the people to tell you are looking for work. This includes friends, family members, former bosses, co-workers and people you come in contact with.

Use the [Networking Activity](#) worksheet (In the Worksheets section) to keep you organized and help you make connections. When you add Uncle Jay to the list, you may realize that he works for ABC Audio, a company you would like to work at, and Sarah, who cuts your hair, lives with a guy who manages a food service operation. Include notes on information you are looking for.



Here's an example of the start of your list:

| Networking Activity | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------|---|
| Contact / Tel or email | Company/Title | Date | Action/Follow Up/Next Steps |
| Uncle Jay Peterson 914-333-2222 | ABC Audio Purchasing Agent | | |
| Sarah Henderson 914-222-3333 | Hair Salon, Hairdresser | | Get contact info for the guy she lives with who manages a food service |
| Leo Henry 914-111-2222 | Best Buy Sales Manager | | |
| Gina Washington ginaw@westside.com | West Side Apartments Leasing Agent | | |

If you already have a job, don't tell the entire world you are looking for new work. Keep in mind how this information could get back to your employer; they might not be happy and could make work hard for you because they don't think you're loyal.



True Stories

An engineer who wanted to move to a different company in a different city reached out to former co-workers, teachers and even people who had interviewed her in the past. She was selective in networking, kept the search confidential, and it led to a job with a new company in a new location.

Make the Calls

Plan before you make networking calls so you can make the best impression and get your questions answered. Every conversation should be professional even if you are speaking to a good friend or relative. If you haven't spoken to Uncle Jay in a few years, he may still think of you as a grouchy teenager. Remember to be professional; you are looking for information to help you get a job.



Checklist for Success: Have a Plan for Your Call

Make notes before your call and be prepared to write down information:

- ☐ Write the name, phone number and date of the call at the top of your page.
- ☐ Sit up and smile, you may be nervous but you always sound better when you smile.
- ☐ Be polite and professional with everyone you talk to.
- ☐ Start with a polite greeting, "How are you doing?" and listen to the response:
 - For a friend or relative follow with something like, "Since you saw me last I started working. I know you work for ABC Audio. I'm interested in working for a company like ABC."
 - If you are asking for contact information for someone else say, "I remember you telling me about Sal, who you live with, and how he manages a food service. I'm interested in learning more about jobs in food service. Can you give me his number or pass on my contact information?"
 - For someone you used to work with, you can say "I hope things are going well at Best Buy. Since we worked together at Target I started a job search and wanted to know who I should talk to at Best Buy about working there."
- ☐ Write down any names and contact information, confirm spelling, phone numbers and email addresses.
 - Add the names and contact information you gather from any calls to your Network Activity chart.
 - Prepare to contact these new names. For these calls, after the greeting say, for example, "My Uncle, Jay Smith, who works at ABC Audio told me you would be a good person to talk to about jobs at Fremont Supply Company."
- ☐ Follow up on any direct information about how to apply for a job.
- ☐ End every call by thanking the person for their time. For example, say, "Thank you for taking time to talk to me today. I enjoyed learning more about ABC Audio."

Most networking calls won't lead directly to information about an open job but will lead to other people to talk to, expanding your network. The more people you talk to the more likely you are going to get to someone who is hiring. When a job opening occurs hiring managers often ask themselves, "Who do I know?" and ask people around them before a job is posted.

Practice your networking techniques. Rehearse your lines for your call in front of a mirror or with another person. You can practice with a friend or relative, and they may recommend other people to network with as they listen to what you are doing.





Take the Extra Step: Meet In Person

If you know someone pretty well, try to meet in person. You could call Uncle Jay and ask, “Can we meet at the bagel place on Monday morning for coffee?” In person meetings are more likely to lead to a longer conversation about work and careers, and potentially more names to connect with and career ideas to think about.

Get the Big Picture

Networking conversations with people in jobs or careers you are interested in are also called informational interviews because they give you a chance to learn more about a job or career.

Here’s a list of questions to choose from for informational interviews:

- What experience did you have to get your job?
- What is a typical workday like?
- How much training/supervision do you receive?
- What do you like/dislike most about your work?
- What are the toughest situations you handle?
- What do you wish you had known about your job before you started?
- What does it take to succeed at this type of work?
- What do you see as the major concerns or trends in the field today?
- What are the opportunities for advancement in this job?
- What recommendations do you have for my job search?
- Who else should I talk to? Can I tell them that you referred me to them?

Don’t forget to take notes to remember all the information you get.

Send the Email

If you don't have a phone number or can't reach a person by phone for networking, sending an email is the next best thing. Use the email to set a time to talk or get answers to your questions.

Talking, by phone or in person, gives you time for a two way conversation, so it's your first choice.

You could write:

Gina-

Hope your day is going well. You were very helpful when I looked for apartments.

I am looking for a new job and interested in working as a leasing agent. Can we set a time to talk about what it's like to work at West Side Apartments? If yes, can I call you on Tuesday, February 16 at 10 am?

Thank you,

Bill Smith

(914) 555-0100 | billsmith914@gmail.com

If you are using the email to get information you could write:

Leo -

Hope your day is going well. It was great working with you at Target.

I am looking for a new job and would like to learn more about openings at Best Buy. How should I apply? Do you know who I should be calling where you work?

Sincerely,

Bill Smith

(914) 555-0100 | billsmith914@gmail.com

Networking conversations help you learn how your skills and experience can fill company needs. For example, if you find out that a company is adding a new location and you have worked on grand openings, share this information in person, in a cover letter, and make sure it's on your resume.



Join a Group

You can add to the people you know and increase knowledge about a job or career by joining groups such as:

- Professional Associations such as the American Culinary Federation or Hispanic Business Professionals.
 - To find a professional association, search on the internet with the name of the profession and “professional association”
 - Look for virtual and in-person events
 - Check for local chapters and look for events in your area
- Alumni associations from your high school and college
- Community groups that involve your interests, such as an environmental committee, a park clean-up crew or food bank (See Chapter 3, Are You Volunteering?)



Take the Extra Step: Volunteer at an Event

When you volunteer at a professional association or alumni event you have a chance to work alongside other members and meet more people. This might be staffing the sign-in table or working on a set-up or clean-up crew. These interactions give you more opportunities to find out about other people’s career paths and get advice for your own.

Don’t Overlook the Neighborhood

Networking opportunities can be as close as right outside your front door or at the bus stop. Let’s say you’re at a neighborhood block party and you meet a neighbor. After chatting about the food the conversation might go, “Carl, it’s good to meet people in the neighborhood. It’s a nice place to live. You know, I’m looking for a new job right now. I have experience as a painter. Can I give you a call to see who you might know that could connect me to a job?” When Carl says yes, agree on a time and date and say, “Great, I’ll call you on Tuesday at 10 am at 914-111-2222.”

Don’t monopolize the conversation at a social event with work; schedule the networking for another time.

Put Your Online Profile to Work

Chapter 2 focused on making certain that your online image is work-ready. You can build your online image from employable to active and engaged in your industry or career path. These activities connect you to your skills and experience and expand your network.

If you are not active online and an online business presence is not expected for the type of work you do, skip these steps and stick to networking in person, by phone and using email. For example, if you are a cook, a LinkedIn profile, Twitter account and Instagram postings are unlikely to add to your job search success. But if you are a pastry cook, photos of your creations on Facebook or Instagram will boost your image and give potential employers a look at your beautiful creations.

For work that would not be featured in a photo shoot, check social media for people in similar roles, or jobs you are targeting. If you find LinkedIn profiles for people with the kind of job you want, you need a profile too. Use the recommendations in Chapter 2 to build your profile.



Checklist for Success: Share Across Platforms

Manage your social media image by sharing information and participating in conversations on multiple platforms.

- ☐ Share industry-related articles and blogs on platforms you use including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google+
- ☐ Recommend a business book, share a book review or personalize your recommendation. For example, a post could say "Ö^ccj *A@ *•Ä[} ^ by David Allen has helped me focus and tame my to-do list."
- ☐ Add relevant comments about articles and posts. These should be positive, and expand on content or examples. You might write, "Great article Glenn," or "I've seen this work in many customer service situations."
- ☐ Retweet content that highlights developments in your industry
- ☐ Write relevant posts and content. These must not be negative and should link to sources for facts such as, "Excited to see construction of new hospital wing at Southchester General Hospital."

When you share information and comment, you demonstrate knowledge and your name will show up in more searches. This can draw the attention of employers and people you have lost touch with who can then be added to your networking list.



Like and Follow

Open the social media sites you use and Like or Follow employers that you might want to work for. These can include industries that you are focusing on. For example, if you want to work with older adults in a company like Atria Senior Living, follow the company on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Company and organization pages keep you up to date with useful information:

Products New products, promotions, special events and locations help build your knowledge about the employer.

People Companies highlight employees for recognition and accomplishments; you may find someone to connect with to learn more, and will gain knowledge about the work culture and what the employer values.

Jobs Employers may post individual jobs and hiring events.

On Twitter and Instagram, follow people in your industry who are leaders, influencers and executives, or the authors of business books that impact you. These will all give you good ideas, insights, information to share and a picture for others of your interests.

What are Facebook Friends For?

When your Facebook profile is workplace-friendly, you can use the site for networking for your job search.

Look at your list of Facebook friends to see if anyone is working for a company or in a job you are interested in, or might know someone who is. Add these people to the contacts in your [Networking Activity](#) worksheet to call or send a private note.

In addition to following companies on Facebook by Liking them, you can check and sign into job sites like Simply Hired from the platform. Once you have joined professional associations, check for their Facebook page and Like these too. This helps keep up to date on information and events that you can post and comment on.

You can also join alumni groups on Facebook. They provide great opportunities to connect with people you went to high school or college with and learn about events. You can connect, share information and join discussions. Note that membership can show your age if the graduation year is in the group title. If you are sensitive about your age don't Follow the group after you join, just check the Facebook group page regularly for networking and to keep up to date.





Take the Extra Step: Share a Good Business Book on Facebook

Commenting on a business book that you find valuable is a good way to change the conversation away from the usual cute cat pictures. If you read ***How to Have a Good Day*** by Caroline Webb, recommending it on Facebook could be a starting point that leads from one of your connections to an employer who values positive motivation.

What's the Best Way to Add Connections on LinkedIn?

Once you join and complete your profile on LinkedIn, you will be prompted to add connections. Do not automatically link to your email address book. This will send LinkedIn connection requests to everyone with a generic message.

Send personalized requests for connections to:

- Co-workers and former co-workers
- People you went to school with
- Friends
- Family members
- Bosses and former bosses
- People who work for you or worked for you in the past
- People you meet through networking
- Members of groups you are in
- Customers and clients

A personalized request can be as simple as, "Brad- I enjoyed working with you at ABC Audio and would like to connect on LinkedIn." Don't send a request for information, an interview or a job in the connection request. The first request is just a personalized request to connect.

Accept invitations you receive to grow your network. These don't have to be from people you know. Don't accept requests to connect that are not business related. If someone asks to connect on LinkedIn because they liked your photo and would like to "get to know you better," stay away. LinkedIn offers you the option to Ignore or Accept requests to connect.



Join LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups provide information, connections and potential job openings by sharing content and creating conversations.



Checklist for Success: Joining LinkedIn Groups

Get started and keep up with LinkedIn Groups:

- ☐ Make a list of potential groups that can include:
 - Industries or professions; for example, “food service”
 - School alumni
 - Regional affinity; for example, “Hudson Valley Professionals”
 - Company alumni groups for people who had been employed by the same employer; for example, Target Alumni Network
 - Interests related to work or personal passions; for example, “sustainable energy”
- ☐ On your profile page use the search box to type in the group type and pick “groups.”
- ☐ Pick a group from the list that you are interested in
 - It should not be too small. If you search “Home Depot Alumni” and one of the groups on the list has 20 people, you have not found the real Home Depot Alumni Group
 - Read About This Group to see if joining makes sense
 - Click on Request to Join

The Group Administrator will respond to your request

Once you join a group it will be listed under Interests on your profile page. You will receive updates and can join a conversation, learn about events and reach out to members to connect.

Show Off Your Skills, Get Endorsements for Them

When you complete your LinkedIn profile you will be able to include up to 50 skills. Click on “Add a New Skill” from your profile page. LinkedIn will suggest skills based on your profile and you can type skills into a search box.

After you list your skills, look for ways to endorse your connections. Endorsing someone for skills is easy, it only takes a few clicks. Go to the profile of one of your connections, scroll down to Skills & Endorsements and click on the skills that you have seen them demonstrate.



Endorsing other people usually prompts them to endorse you. You can also ask for endorsements by sending a message via LinkedIn to a connection, email or call them. It's a short request, "Gina, hope all is well with you, since we worked together at a call center can you endorse skills on my LinkedIn profile for customer service and telephone skills? Thank you, Glen."



Take the Extra Step: Get a Badge for Your Skill

If you have specific software skills show off your knowledge by earning a Badge on LinkedIn. Under Skills & Endorsements on your profile page, click on Take skill quiz to find a list that ranges from Adobe PhotoShop to QuickBooks and Microsoft Office Suite programs. Take the quiz and if you earn the badge it can be displayed on your LinkedIn page to show your expertise.

Get Recommendations

LinkedIn Recommendations are strong statements about your work from coworkers, customers and bosses. They are an important part of a complete profile. Call connections who can describe the quality of your work or send them an email to ask for a recommendation.

This request should be specific and personal. You can help them with a detailed ask, "Can you write a LinkedIn recommendation for me describing the work we did to get the XYZ project done?" In the Recommendations section of your LinkedIn profile page you will be able to click on "Ask for a recommendation" to send a request for a recommendation by LinkedIn message. LinkedIn will prompt you with questions to write the request.

Add LinkedIn Connections to Your Networking Activity

You can ask your LinkedIn connections questions related to your job search. You can send a direct message, "Hi Jenny—I'm looking for a job in customer service. Are there any jobs at ABC Audio where you work or do you know anyone else hiring?" Use the same content you would for an email request.

For people you don't know well, or worked with long ago, LinkedIn is a good place to start a networking conversation. Start by sending a message, "Joe—Thank you for connecting with me on LinkedIn. I enjoyed working with you at Prime Security. I see you are at ABC Audio now. I'm looking for a new job with a good company and would love to find out about your work. Can we talk next week? If so does Tuesday at 10 am work for you?"



Six Degrees of Separation

Another way to use LinkedIn for networking is to check out the connections of the people you are connected with. When you find someone in the kind of job or company you are interested in, you can ask the person you know to make the introduction. This sounds like, “Joe- I see that Sal at Epic Home Construction is one of your LinkedIn connections. Can you introduce me to Sal? Epic Home is a company I would really like to learn more about and could be a great place to work.”

It’s also valuable to search LinkedIn for people who work at companies you are targeting. Type the name of the employer into the search box and choose People. When you see the names you may find people you know and will also see if some of your connections are connected to people you will want to meet.

Check Your LinkedIn Messages

LinkedIn will send you an email when you have a message. Respond promptly to messages and requests to connect. Keep up with these conversations and use the prompts in the message to organize them so you don’t get buried. Just like your email inbox, you don’t want something important lost in hundreds of messages.

Messages will come from connections and also potential employers interested in learning more about you.



Take the Extra Step: Find Alumni

Alumni are generally very happy to help someone who went to the same school. You already have a common connection whether you graduated in the same year or twenty years apart. Search for alumni by putting the name of the school in the search box and choosing People. Use LinkedIn to send a networking note including, “As an alumnus (for male, alumna for female) of XYZ college...” in your customized content.

Check Out LinkedIn Job Postings

You may have created your LinkedIn profile because you found posted jobs you are interested in on LinkedIn. To search for jobs on LinkedIn, type the job or industry in the Search box and click on the option for jobs. For example, type “Customer Service” and you will find many pages of listings. The LinkedIn algorithm connects these with the content of your profile. On the top of the page of listings you will find buttons to click on that offer options to narrow the search.

When you read job postings on LinkedIn look at the entire page. If you have a connection to someone at the company, or one of your connections does, it will be included for you on the page. Look on the right side of the page for a sentence like, "See how you're connected" or "You are connected with someone at ABC Audio." If it's a 2nd or 3rd connection you can send a note to your connection that says, "Joe- I just applied for a job at Epic Home Construction and I see you are connected to Sal Smith who works there. Can you introduce me to Sal so I make sure my resume gets to the right person?"

Once you have decided to apply to a job posted on LinkedIn, read the instructions carefully and follow all of them.



True Stories: Stop Burying Your Head in a Screen

A sales person arrived at each job search coaching session with an update on the applications he had submitted online. Each week the job search coach asked, "Who have you talked to, who have you been networking with for your job search?" The coaching sessions become rich with information about the people he was meeting by using networking. Within a few weeks of the change in job search focus, from online applications to networking, he was offered and accepted a new job.

Stay Up to Date

Update your profile to keep current and included in the community. Updates increase the potential for your name to catch the attention of an employer.

Keep Track of Networking

It's exciting to make all of these connections and with each one you are broadening the circle of people who know you are looking for a job. As this list grows it can be tough to keep track of people. You don't want to contact someone twice with the same request and you don't want to answer a phone call or email message from someone responding to your request by asking, "Who are you?"

Use the [Networking Activity](#) worksheet (in the Worksheets section) to keep track of networking.



Here is an example of these notes:

| Networking Activity | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------|---|
| Contact / Tel or email | Company/Title | Date | Action/Follow Up/Next Steps |
| Gina Washington ginaw@westside.com | West Side Apartments Leasing Agent | 4/20/21 | Got phone number and name, Harry Lawrence, to call about service jobs, call by 4/23/21 |

Scheduling

When networking, always have your calendar handy so you can write down the date and time of interviews and networking appointments. Keep notes that include correct names and contact information.

When you schedule an interview write down all of the following information:

- The date and time of the appointment
- The exact address including any floor or department
- The name, including correct spelling, and title of the person you will meet
- The name and correct spelling of the company

Share the Good News

When you get a new job, whether or not it was through networking, send a note to everyone you networked with along the way to share the good news. Thank them for their time and advice. Keep up the connection; strong networks help with work information, not just job search. If you have a LinkedIn profile, update it with the new job information.

Return the networking favor. If you know someone is looking and you hear about an opening that is right for them, you tell them.

Good luck with your networking. It's a very important skill.





Chapter 6 To Do List

- _____ Make a list of people for networking
- _____ Set networking meetings using phone or email
- _____ Keep track of networking on your calendar and [Networking Activity Form](#)
- _____ Network by phone, email and by meeting people
- _____ Decide if you need to be on LinkedIn, if so, create or update profile
- _____ If you are active on social media, use it for networking to expand your online presence



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.



A man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a pink polo shirt, is looking down at his work. He is sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard. The background is a blurred office environment.

7

**How Do You
Respond to Job
Postings, Help
Wanted Signs and
Reach Out to
Potential Employers?**

How Do You Respond to Job Postings, Help Wanted Signs and Reach Out to Potential Employers?

Spread your job search energy, and use it wisely. Remember, finding a job is hard work, it takes more than spending a lot of time in front of a computer screen to get hired. Increase your chances for success by including multiple activities and approaches in your plan. In this chapter, we will provide tips for checking out job openings in your local community - from Help Wanted or Now Hiring signs, to local newspapers and small publications, to local websites. Your next job may be closer than you think.

Most people search for jobs on the internet, but you shouldn't spend all your time online. Also check out some print newspapers that have help wanted ads, or you may find job listings in your PennySaver or other locally distributed publications. These are often delivered to homes and you can find them in the library.

Help Wanted and Now Hiring signs can be found in storefront windows or business entry ways, community bulletin boards, community centers and laundromats. Keep your eyes open for these signs.

When you see a sign that says "Help Wanted, Apply Here," make sure you are ready to meet someone who may hire you. If you are not dressed for an interview, come back later in interview clothing. You may be asked to fill out an application, so make certain that you have your [Personal Data Form](#) that you will address in Chapter 9.





Write It Down: I Found an Ad for a Job That Looks Great. What's Next?

Write down the information from the ad or sign in your notebook, including the date of the ad and where you found it. If it is in your own newspaper, you can cut out the ad and paste it into your notebook. If you found more than one ad to paste in your notebook, make sure to leave space between them for notes.



Take the Extra Step: Snap a Picture of the Help Wanted Sign

Use your smartphone to snap a picture of the help wanted sign. Write the information down later in your notebook. If you don't have your notebook with you, taking a photo is a better choice than writing down information on a little slip of paper that is easy to lose. Taking a photo also makes it simple to share the information with a friend or someone who is helping with your job search.

Read the ad or posting to find out how to apply for the job. You may be asked to send a resume by email. You may be asked to call for an appointment, or the ad may ask you to apply in person. Sometimes ads will ask you to apply online. Go to Chapter 9 for details about completing online applications.



Checklist for Success: Send it to the Right Place

If you are emailing or faxing a resume, make sure you have the right email address. Check it and write it down in your notebook.

- ☐ Send it from your own email account. If you are using a computer at a friend's home or at the library, be sure to open your own email account to send a resume online.
- ☐ Make sure you have the correct email address or fax number.
- ☐ If you are faxing your resume, put the date and newspaper on a fax cover sheet.
- ☐ If a job posting or ad asks for a cover letter, write one specific for the job. Don't write, "I'm interested in a job." Do write, "I'm interested in the customer service position posted in the PennySaver on September 1, 2021." Provide the same information when you send an email.



True Stories: That's Not the Job That Was Posted

A construction company posted a job for an administrative role and received more than one cover letter expressing interest in a different job. One even read, "I am interested in the job opening you have for a chef."





Checklist for Success: Make the Appointment

When an ad says to call, have your calendar and notebook with you before you pick up the phone. You should:

- ☐ Make sure you have a good connection on a cellphone or on a landline. (Make sure the ringer on your cellphone is off if you're calling from a landline and your cellphone is near by.)
- ☐ Call from a quiet location. Turn off the TV or radio and tell others that you are making a call about a job and cannot be interrupted.
- ☐ Write any questions you want to ask about the job below the ad or posting information that is in your notebook.
- ☐ Be prepared for a screening job interview. Employers may treat the first phone call, even if it's to make an appointment, as the first interview.
- ☐ Sit up straight, smile and make your call with confidence.
- ☐ If you are asked to come in to fill out an application or schedule an interview, check your calendar to make sure you are available and then write down the date, time and location.
- ☐ Ask for the name and job title of the person you will meet and write this down too.
- ☐ Write down the date, time and location in your notebook *and* on your calendar.
- ☐ Write down any new information you receive in your notebook, such as the name and job title of the person you speak to on the phone.

What's the difference between a Job Fair and a Hiring Event?

Job fairs are organized for a group of employers and can be for a targeted audience. Employers are invited to set up a booth or table and meet potential candidates. Employers might have specific hiring needs when they participate in job fairs, or they may be there to spread goodwill. Targeted audiences could, for example, be veterans, recent graduates or the formerly incarcerated. Job fairs could be in person or virtual. These may also be called Career Fairs. Treat a job fair just like applying in person. Don't be disappointed if you learn that the employer is not hiring; it's still a good chance to practice your networking skills.

Sometimes employers will host a job fair by themselves, no other employers involved. When the announcement includes a list of positions they are looking to fill at this job fair, it is not for information only, it's more like a hiring event.

Hiring events are set up by one employer or a Career Center to find candidates for specific jobs. Employers may post flyers that include a list of open jobs at their location, online or work with a



Career Center. Hiring events can be at an employer's location, a Career Center, a separate location if space is needed or the hiring event can be virtual. Career Centers may have hiring events that include more than one employer. These may also be called Recruitment Fairs. When you go to a hiring event treat it like applying in person for a job.



Checklist for Success: Applying in Person

If the ad or posting invites you to apply in person:

- ☐ Note the days and hours when it is possible to apply.
- ☐ Decide on a date and time to apply and write it in your calendar along with the location. Go early if there are multiple days and times when a company will be taking applications. You don't have to be the first, but you don't want to be the last.
- ☐ Check online to see if you can learn any information about the company.
- ☐ Review Chapters 10 and 11 to get ready for an interview.



Write It Down: Here's What Your Calendar Might Look Like Now

| Job Search Calendar Week of September 20, 2021 | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------|--|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| Pick up Penny-saver; check for jobs that meet skills and background | 10 AM Head to Broadway with resumes and dressed for interviews | 9 AM Make networking calls | 9 AM Follow up on networking calls | 11 AM Fill out application at ABC Audio, 222 Main St, Flushing | | 7 PM Review last week's activities and make plan for the new week |



Hit the Street

While you will see Help Wanted signs in storefront windows, there may be other places on the same block looking for employees too. Pick a busy street. You can go into different businesses and ask if they are looking for help. Practice before you head out to say something like, "Good afternoon, my name is Pat and I am looking for a job as a cashier. Do you have any openings?"



Take the Extra Step: Be Ready for an Interview When You Walk In

When you head to the street to ask potential employers if they have job openings, dress for an interview, bring your resume or [Personal Data Form](#) and be prepared for an interview. You may even meet more than one person for an interview.

Find Targeted Employers

Make your search specific by creating a list of potential employers to contact. Conduct an internet search that includes the type of employer and location.



Write It Down: Here's What the steps would look like if you are looking for a food service job in senior living locations

Follow these easy steps:

| |
|---|
| Type, senior living westchester ny into a search box. |
| Review the individual locations and compiled lists of multiple locations. |
| Write a list in your notebook of the ones in locations that work for you. |
| Write down employer names, locations and phone numbers. |

Once you have a list you can call and ask about job openings as you would in person. This might sound like, "Good afternoon, my name is Chris, I am looking for a job as a cook. Do you know who I should be speaking to at the Atria?" Have your notebook out so you can write down the contact information, or be ready because you may be transferred to Human Resources. While you may also be told to apply online, your call may be picked up before a job is posted, and it's good networking practice.

Work With a Temp Agency

Many employers use temp, employment or staffing agencies as a primary source to fill part-time and full-time jobs. These jobs can range from warehouse work to legal services. You will find postings by agencies when you are looking for jobs on the internet. You can also contact these agencies directly.



Write It Down: Steps to Find Local Agencies

Look for agencies in your geographic area using similar steps as finding targeted employers.

| |
|---|
| Type, temp agencies westchester ny into a search box. |
| Review the list of agencies. |
| Write a list in your notebook of the agencies in your location that place temps in your occupation. |
| Write down agency names and phone numbers. |

Once you have a list, you can call and ask about applying for the jobs they are filling for employers. This might sound like, "Good afternoon, my name is Chris, I am looking for a job as a receptionist. Can I speak to someone about applying for openings through Brooke Street Staffing?" Have your notebook out so you can write down the contact information and any other instructions. Be prepared for a potential telephone interview.

Responding to signs, and targeting and visiting employers can lead to a job placement. It's one of the techniques to use. Successful job searchers use a variety of techniques: networking, responding to postings and online searches.





Chapter 7 To Do List

- _____ Check local publications for help wanted ads.
- _____ Be on the lookout for posted help wanted signs.
- _____ Pick a business area to ask employers if they are looking for help.
- _____ Be ready for an interview by phone or in person whenever you connect with a potential employer.
- _____ Keep track of your activity so you can follow up; write it down in your notebook.



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.



8

**Where's the Best
Place to Go on the
Internet to Find
Jobs?**

Where's the Best Place to Go on the Internet to Find Jobs?

Most job seekers turn to the internet for their job search. Millions of jobs are posted by hundreds of thousands of employers. Once you are comfortable searching for these jobs, it is easy to apply for jobs online.

Searching for jobs online can be a good idea, but it should only be one part of your job search. Since applying for jobs online is so easy, every posting can get a lot of responses. Sitting and applying for lots of jobs may seem productive, but don't forget that your application is probably one of hundreds for each job. When you apply for jobs online it can feel like sending your information into a giant black hole. Sometimes you get an email acknowledging receipt of your application. More often you don't hear anything at all. So it's important that you remember to network, visit employers in person, and look for help wanted signs.

Seven Steps for Using the Internet for Job Search

Step 1: Be Prepared



Checklist for Success: Gather the Information You Need

- ☐ Have your [Personal Data Form](#) out; it has information you will probably need if you fill out an online application.
- ☐ If you have a resume make sure it is accessible in a file on the computer you are using or saved on a flash drive.
- ☐ If you have a cover letter make sure it is accessible, and can be customized, on the computer you are using or saved on a flash drive.
- ☐ Have your notebook to track your search activity and write down login and password information.



Step 2: Go Directly to a Company Site

(Skip to Step 3 if you don't have a company in mind.)

If you are targeting a specific job at one company or a few different jobs at the same company, start your search at the employer's home page.



Take the Extra Step: Apply Directly on the Company Website

You will find job listings in a variety of places. The best way to apply is directly to the employer. Many companies feature job openings on their website or encourage resume submissions, even if they are not hiring at the moment.

For example, if you are interested in working at:

- Home Depot - Go to [homedepot.com](https://www.homedepot.com). At the bottom right side of the home page you will find "CAREERS" under the heading "ABOUT US."
- CVS - Go to [cvs.com](https://www.cvs.com). At the bottom right side of the home page you will find "CAREERS" under "CORPORATE INFORMATION".

Note that the language and location is not always the same. For example if you are looking at the Walgreens homepage ([walgreens.com](https://www.walgreens.com)) you will find "Careers" under the heading "Company Information."

Take your time looking at a company website to spot the word "Careers" or "Jobs." If you found it a year ago, don't assume it is the same now, employers change these.

Find the company's web address by typing the company's name into a search engine. If you type in "jobs" and the name of the company into the search box of a search engine, look for a link that includes "jobs" or "careers" in the title and the name of the company.

For example, in a search for "jobs Home Depot" go to: careers.homedepot.com

Once you click on careers you will be directed to search for jobs by location and type of position. Then you are on your way, using the instructions in Chapter 9.



Step 3: Go to a Job Search Site

There are so many job sites to choose from, and it may be tempting to look at lots of them. However, when you look at every available site you will find jobs repeated and spend too much time looking at postings that are not relevant to your search. Focus your time on no more than two sites, maybe one more if it is for a specific career or skill set.

The chart below has information about seven sites that our job search coaches recommend:

| Name of Site Web Address | Do You Need an Account to Use? | About |
|--|--|--|
| Craigslist craigslist.org | No account needed or available. | The site for local classifieds includes lots of jobs that can be searched by type of position and location. People often stay away from Craigslist because they are afraid of scams. But it's frequently used by local employers and usually allows you to apply directly from a job post. (Click on <i>Reply</i> at the top of the posting and you will be directed to email but read the entire posting first to see if there are different instructions to apply.) It's easy to spot jobs that are not legitimate. Stay away from the post by a "friendly guy looking for a personal assistant a few mornings a week" or the one promising an income of "\$1,500 a week, no experience needed." |
| Indeed indeed.com | Allows job search, and uploading a resume, without setting up an account. Setting up an account includes details for job search and the option of having potential jobs sent to your email. | Indeed collects jobs from thousands of job boards, newspapers, company career pages and industry associations. Candidates can click on APPLY and follow the directions for each position they are interested in. Indeed offers the ability to search by specific key words for jobs. The mobile app for Indeed is one of the easiest to use on a smartphone or tablet. |
| LinkUp linkup.com | There are no accounts or ways to join. When you click on a job you will get an option to receive Job Alerts for similar positions. To sign up for Job Alerts all you have to do is enter your email address. | LinkUp pulls job openings from company websites. The site has a very clean design without lots of ads. Enter your zip code on the home page, and then use the filters available on the next page to look for jobs you are qualified or interested in. LinkUp is easy to use but it is not the site to find advice about a job search or samples of resumes and cover letters. If you sign up for LinkUp Job Alerts you won't get advertisements or solicitations for other services such as services to write your resume. |
| SimplyHired simplyhired.com | You can create an account to organize jobs and get alerts about postings. No need to register at all but you may be directed to create a profile or log in for the specific application. | SimplyHired pulls job posts from all around the web, other job boards, company websites and social media. The number of jobs posted on the site is in the millions and is updated daily. At the end of each posting it will tell you where the job was originally posted. When you click to apply you will be directed to that site. It's easy to search by job type and location, and you can sign up to receive emails about similar jobs. When you search for postings there will be advertisements at the top of the list, which can look like job openings but are not. Read carefully before you click. This site does not include advice about resumes or cover letters. |



| Name of Site Web Address | Do You Need an Account to Use? | About |
|---|---|--|
| Snagajob snagajob.com | You must become a Snagajob member in order to apply for jobs on the site. Members can get personalized Job Alerts and have access to other information. | Snagajob is the largest job site for hourly jobs, and includes full and part-time openings in pretty much every industry. Since these jobs turnover frequently there is a steady stream of new opportunities. Snagajob allows search by location, category (shift, temporary, full or part-time, etc.), position, industry and company. You must sign up for a membership in order to apply for any of the jobs posted, and the process requires a number of steps to input information about your background and interests. There are a lot of ads on the site and pop-ups during the process. You don't apply for jobs directly, so the process can require extra steps. |
| Google google.com | No account, log in or registration. | Google is a leader in internet searching; search by job title and location - the results provide job postings drawn from around the web. The search may automatically default to your location; change this if needed. |
| LinkedIn linkedin.com | It depends; you may need an account for some job postings. See Chapter 2 for more about LinkedIn profiles. | LinkedIn has millions of job postings from entry level to executive, culinary to corporate. LinkedIn job postings tend to get fewer, better targeted responses than for positions posted on the jumbo job boards. If you have a LinkedIn profile, job postings will show you potential people connections you have with the employer and will rank your qualifications based on your profile. But not all jobs require a LinkedIn profile, the posting will give you the details. Learn more about networking and LinkedIn in Chapter 6. |

There are also job search sites that target a specific type of job. For example, you can look for health-related positions at [Health Care Job Sites](#). If you are interested in government or civil service positions, look at [USA Jobs](#) for jobs in the federal government, or [State Jobs NY](#). [The Idealist](#) lists jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities in the non-profit world.



True Stories: From Corporate World to Making an Impact

A job seeker was ready to take his corporate skills as an administrative assistant at a financial institution to a new level. While the pay was good, the job was full of stress working in a very high pressure environment. He searched Idealist and found Office Manager roles in small non-profits. He landed one that meshed with his personal beliefs and that had a small staff, which allowed him to gain exposure to programs too.



Step 4: Choose Your Site(s)

Say you sign up on any of the relevant sites detailed in Step 3 and add a few that you have heard great things about from friends or family. This tactic is more likely to keep you in front of a computer than land you a job.

With job alerts and notifications from several sites, you are likely to see the same jobs popping up. Even if you don't see repeats you will have an email inbox full of multiple emails with long lists of jobs to scroll through; too many emails and you may skip over one you really want to read and reply to.



Checklist for Success: Limit Your Sites

- ☐ Pick one or two sites that you find the easiest to navigate. These should be ones where you have found jobs that interest you and are in your geographic area.
- ☐ You may need to sign up for more than two or three to see which ones are best for you.
- ☐ Check the kind of notifications you receive from each site. Cancel your account or membership if the jobs and information are not a match, or you are getting too many advertisements.
- ☐ Whenever you sign up for a job search site, read every screen carefully.
- ☐ Look for any boxes to authorize emails from advertisers and educational institutions. Uncheck them so you can focus on the task of finding a job.
- ☐ If given an option, don't check that you want to receive promotional emails about products "you might be interested in."
- ☐ If you like a site but you're receiving too much junk email, go back to your account or profile settings and change your preferences.
- ☐ Avoid free trials for resume assistance or premium memberships to job search sites. The free resume help is likely to come with an offer of further assistance for a fee. The one month free membership offer may seem like a good idea, but won't be if you give your credit card information and are charged if you do not cancel in time.

Step 5: Go Mobile

Most of the job search sites have a mobile app you can use on your smartphone.

| Do's and Don'ts For Using Job Search Apps on Your Phone | |
|--|--|
| Do | Don't |
| Download an app to keep track of applications if you use a calendar on your phone. | Use your phone to edit your resume. |
| Check application status. | Send a cover letter that can't be edited. |
| Scroll through job alerts and updates. | Start an application on the phone, unless you can check, review and save all the content; otherwise, switch to a computer or tablet. |

Step 6: Apply for Jobs

When you find a job that looks like a good match, click on the job title. Read all of the information and if it still sounds good, follow the instructions to apply. You may be asked to attach a resume by the job search site or you may be asked to apply directly to the employer.

Have your [Personal Data Form](#) nearby to help you. Make sure your resume and a cover letter you can customize are on the computer you are using or a flash drive you can plug into the computer. Follow the instructions in Chapter 9 for completing online applications. Following all of the instructions is one of the most important parts of the process. Don't assume that every site is the same—they are not.

Step 7: Keep Records

Use the [Record of Applications Completed](#) (in the Worksheets section) or your notebook to write down the jobs you apply for. You should write down the job title, company and date you apply. You can also print out the posting to paste into your notebook if that helps. While you will probably get an email confirmation after you submit an application, you will also be receiving other job search related emails and it can get buried. Keeping a log will help you identify which site you get the best response from.

You should also write down any login or password information that you create for any job search site or to become an applicant for a particular company. Employers will commonly ask you to set up an account as a candidate so you can go back and finish or change an application, or apply for a different job without re-entering all of your personal information. Use the [Job Search Site Registrations](#) (in the Worksheet section) to keep a record of those login/password combinations for each site.





Take the Extra Step: Schedule Your Online Time

It is so easy to get caught up on the internet and lose track of time, so schedule your internet time on your calendar the same way you schedule an appointment. Schedule at least some of your internet time during the weekend or in the early morning or evening hours, when you are less likely to be networking or directly contacting employers.

If you are not comfortable using the internet or become frustrated, find some help from a job coach, library staff member or take a class. Remember that employers often ask candidates to apply for a job using a computer online at a specific location. You may also see a sign in the window of a new store coming to town that says, “Now Hiring, Apply Online at abcaudio.com.”

Read Before You Click

When using the internet to look for and/or apply for jobs, make sure you read everything on the screen before you click submit, yes, OK or I Agree. Make sure you are not signing up for promotions, ads or services that will increase the information you receive but not move your job search forward.



Chapter 8 To Do List

- _____ Pick two job boards to focus on.
- _____ Find company websites to apply to.
- _____ Limit the amount of time spent online applying for jobs; schedule it.
- _____ Keep track of registrations, logins and passwords for every site used.

Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|-----------------------|--|
| Craigslist | craigslist.org Select your geographic area in the left-hand column |
| Indeed | indeed.com |
| Linkup | linkup.com |
| Simply Hired | simplyhired.com |
| Snag a Job | snagajob.com |
| Google | google.com |
| LinkedIn | linkedin.com |
| Health Care Job Sites | healthcarejobsite.com |
| USA Jobs | usajobs.gov |
| State Jobs NY | statejobsny.com |
| Idealist | idealist.org/en |



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.



A hand is holding a tablet that displays a job application form. The form has a dark blue background with white text. The title 'JOB APPLICATION' is at the top in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, there is a button labeled 'ENTER' and a link that says 'CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION'.

**JOB
APPLICATION**

9

**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 | | | |
|--|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Personal | | | |
| Name | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Phone | | | |
| Email | | | |
| Employment Desired | | | |
| Position Title | | | |
| Date Available | | Starting Wage Desired | |
| Available for Work (circle) Full-time Weekend Part-time On Call Temporary Seasonal Rotating Shifts | | | |
| Education | | | |
| 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](https://www.ssa.gov), 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 | ssa.gov 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.





10

**How Do You
Make the Best
Impression in an
Interview?**

How Do You Make the Best Impression in an Interview?

When does a job interview begin?

Job interviews often begin before you meet a potential employer. Think of them as starting when the employer reviews the application or resume. Next steps can be a telephone conversation, telephone or virtual interview, email exchange, in person interview or online assessment.



Checklist for Success: Creating Your Response to “Tell me about yourself”

Your telephone etiquette has to be work-ready. The interview process starts when you pick up the phone.

- ☐ When you are looking for a job, remember to ALWAYS answer your phone in a polite and friendly way. The voice on the line could be a potential employer. Never start by accusing the caller, “Why are you calling?”
- ☐ Your voicemail message must be work-ready. Record a work-ready message that is clear and simple and includes your name and phone number. While you are job hunting, leave off the cool music and casual message.
- ☐ Check for messages regularly and delete as needed so you never have a “full” mailbox.
- ☐ Have your Resume and/or [Personal Data Form](#) in front of you before you pick up the phone and be prepared to answer questions. Treat every phone call like an interview, it may be one even if you were not told beforehand.
- ☐ Take and make all calls in a good place to talk without a lot of background noise from the TV, music, pets, family or people passing on the street.
- ☐ Sit up straight and smile, you can hear a smile over the telephone.
- ☐ If you are employed and must talk during work hours use your personal phone and step out of your workplace to take, or make, a job search call.
- ☐ If an employer calls you and you are not prepared to speak, are in the middle of something, the phone connection is not clear, or it’s just too noisy, ask to reschedule the conversation. Say, “I’m really interested in speaking to you about this job but I am finishing up an appointment. Can we schedule this conversation later in the day or tomorrow?”
- ☐ If you are driving, only answer the phone with a hands free device and pull over to complete the call.
- ☐ Whenever you leave a message for a recruiter or potential employer, clearly state your name and phone number and when you can be reached. “Good afternoon, this is Bill Smith returning Sandra Foley’s call. I can be reached at 914-555-1212 and will be available the rest of today and tomorrow until 2 pm. Thank you, I look forward to talking to you.”





Take the Extra Step: Write Down Names, Titles and Contact Information

Write down the names, titles and contact information from voicemail messages you receive, telephone conversations and emails. Asking for the right person and knowing who you are talking to will make you look and sound more work-ready. Keep track!

Responding to Employer Email and Text Messages

Your first contact in the hiring process may be in an email or even a text message. Respond to these as soon as possible. Check your response for correct spelling and grammar; make certain your contact information is included and be enthusiastic about the potential opportunity.

Here's a sample of a response to an email:

Dear Ms. Foley,

Thank you for considering me for the Cashier position at ABC Audio. I am available this Wednesday at 1:30 pm, and I look forward to speaking with you to discuss this position.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information before we meet on Wednesday.

Sincerely,

Bill Smith

914-555-1212

billsmith@gmail.com



If you can't make the appointment that the interviewer requested, your email should look like this:

Dear Ms. Foley.

Thank you for considering me for the Cashier position at ABC Audio. I have a scheduling conflict for the date and time you requested. Please let me know if any of the following dates/times work for you (list available dates and times.)

Thank you again for your consideration, and I apologize for any inconvenience.

Sincerely.

Bill Smith

914-555-1212

billsmith@gmail.com

If an email includes instructions to set up the interview using an online platform, follow the directions carefully. Write down the date and time and save any access codes or information you will need to follow up.

Employers may also contact you by text. Respond with shortened versions of the emails above.

For example:

Ms. Foley, I am available for an interview on Wednesday at 1:30 pm and am looking forward to meeting you.

Never respond to a request for an interview from a work email or work number.



True Stories: That Wasn't a Real Job

If you receive an email that looks suspicious, there are no names of the company, they ask for a fee to sign up for a test or training program, don't say where the job is, or they are offering a huge bonus, skip it. If it looks phony it probably is. Check the company and person's name to see if they are real. LinkedIn is a good place to search. Check the sender's email address; if it's not from a company, temp agency or recruiter, delete it.



As soon as you make appointments, write them down in your calendar.

Here's what your calendar might look like now:

| Job Search Calendar Week of October 18, 2021 | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 11 AM Return call to Freda Mendez from Home Depot 914-222-3434 | 2 PM Phone Interview Sandra Foley, GM ABC Audio | 10 AM Write thank you note to Sandra Foley for Interview | 10 AM Interview for Inventory job with Howard Landon, Service Manager Miller Ford, 222 Main St, Southchester 914-333-3535 | 10 AM Write thank you note to Howard Landon and Mark Peyton for job interviews at Miller Ford |



Take the Extra Step: Know How to Get There

If your interview is in an area you don't know, take a practice trip to learn how to get there. Try to make the drive or take the bus or train near the time of your scheduled interview so you will learn about any problems with traffic or crowds.

When you know where you are going, it will be easier to be on time and be more relaxed for the interview.

What should I wear?

The way you look can make or break your chances of getting a job. Grooming and hygiene are probably the first things a potential employer sees. You want an interviewer to remember that you are qualified, neat and enthusiastic.





Checklist for Success: Dress for the Job You Want

- ☐ Hair must be neat. A haircut before an interview can help make sure your hair is neat. It's not the time to try a new hairstyle that you may be self-conscious about.
- ☐ Your face, hands and fingernails must be clean.
- ☐ Men should be shaved or have a neatly groomed mustache and/or beard.
- ☐ Wear a shirt or blouse. Stay away from tight, revealing sweaters or t-shirts.
- ☐ Pants or skirts should be a dark or neutral color.
- ☐ Avoid clothing with advertisements, jumbo logos or graphics.
- ☐ Wear clothing that fits the work environment; a jacket or blazer for a law office, work boots for a construction site.
- ☐ Keep jewelry to a minimum; it should not be distracting.
- ☐ Remove multiple earrings, gauges, and facial piercings, in case they are not allowed.
- ☐ Cover tattoos for conservative industries; banking, health care and some direct customer service positions; they are fine if you are interviewing for a bartender or barista. If you learn it's a tattoo-friendly workplace, you don't have to cover up for the second interview.
- ☐ Take off hats, hoods and coats indoors.



Take the Extra Step: Sit Down in Those New Clothes

If you do get a new outfit for the interview, try it on and sit down to make certain you can sit comfortably. If you are not comfortable or spend time tugging at your clothes, it will make you nervous. It will also distract the interviewer.

Model Workplace Appropriate Behavior

Your behavior makes an impression as soon as you walk in the door of a potential employer. Everyone you meet may have a say in hiring. Impressions carry forward throughout the interview process.

| Do's And Don'ts For Making the Best Impression When Interviewing | |
|--|---|
| Do | Don't |
| Prepare for an interview even if you are going to ask about openings, or drop off an application or resume. Someone may want to interview you immediately. | Stop by wearing sweats and in a rush on your way to play basketball, or take your child to school. |
| Use Chapter 11 of this Toolkit to prepare for potential interview questions. | Wing it, figuring you can answer any question. |
| Wear a mask properly if it is a workplace or community requirement, and make sure it's comfortable. | Put your mask on only if you are asked and wear it below your nose or adjust it constantly from the face covering part while talking. |
| Face the person and be polite to everyone you meet. | Assume the first person you meet is just a clerk and treat them rudely or suspiciously. |
| Smile and make eye contact whenever you meet someone. | Offer a handshake. |
| Know the name and title of the person you are scheduled to meet for any interview. | Walk in and say, "Someone called me for an interview, they were Stan or, Stuart, I'm not sure." |
| Speak clearly at a medium volume. Practice with a mask on. | Raise your voice so it can be heard 20 feet away. |
| Maintain good posture. Stand and sit up straight! Practice sitting straight in a chair with both feet on the ground. | Cross your legs so the interviewer can see the bottom of your shoes, slouch or lean forward looking like you want to leave as soon as possible. |
| Take a seat as directed by the interviewer or receptionist. | Pace in the reception area or sit down before the interviewer. |
| Listen attentively. | Interrupt the interviewer. |
| Bring something to read in case you need to wait. | Compulsively check your phone, play loud video games or complain about waiting for an interview. |
| Be energetic and friendly. It's natural to be nervous and you can even say, "I'm nervous." | Be critical, negative and jumpy. |
| Silence your phone and put it out of sight. | Take out your phone when it rings, or keep it on vibrate. The buzzing of vibrate can be heard and you will react when you hear it. |
| Treat a telephone interview just like an in person interview. Be prepared for questions, get dressed, sit up straight and smile. | Treat a phone interview like it's not real; stay in your pjs, be distracted by the TV or your cat, ask the interviewer, "I applied for so many jobs. What is this for again?" |
| Write down the details of any follow up appointments or emails. | Complain about how many interviews, or tests, a potential employer is asking for. |





Take the Extra Step: Bring 5 Copies of Your Resume

If you submitted a resume, bring 5 copies with you to an interview. Carry them in a folder so they are neat. When you meet a new person you can offer the resume in case they don't have it in front of them.

The Interview Process; Assessments

Many employers use assessments as part of the interview process. These may be skills tests like a typing test or math test. They can also be geared towards finding out your attitude about work or psychological tests. When you are asked to do these, usually in an email, note if there is a deadline to get it done. Use the link in the email to complete the process. Don't overthink the test or try to game it, thinking about what an employer might be looking for.

Can I really be interviewed by video, on my phone?

Yes, employers are increasingly using video interviews for all kinds of jobs. Video interviews were on the rise before 2020 and became commonplace when meeting face to face was difficult or no longer an option. You don't need fancy equipment for a video interview. You can use a computer, tablet or smartphone for these virtual interviews.

Virtual interviews may be conducted live using Facetime, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangout or Meet or Microsoft Teams. Employers also use specific software. There are lots of these and include Spark Hire, HireVue, VidCruter and JobVite to list just a few. These platforms allow for live video interviews and also one way pre-recorded interviews where candidates are given a question in writing, or in a video, and record their responses on the platform.





Checklist for Success: Ace the Virtual Job Interview

Prepare for virtual interviews, they are here to stay.

- ☐ Read all instructions very carefully and save the email with these and any links.
- ☐ Whenever possible practice using the format. You may find instructions for practice in the email. Use the device you would use for an interview. It's easy to Facetime yourself, set up a Zoom meeting, or Skype with a friend.
- ☐ Dress for an interview and not halfway. You may get up and the interviewer can then spot your sweats or boxers.
- ☐ Sit up straight in a chair. When you practice you can see how this looks.
- ☐ Have lighting behind your screen, not behind you. Too much light behind you will make it difficult to see you.
- ☐ Check your background. Interviewers know you will be home but they should not be peering into a messy room. Make your bed, organize the shelves, put away the dishes.
- ☐ Avoid the virtual background option unless you have a green screen and complete set up. You will look unnatural and can come off as fuzzy around the edges.
- ☐ Have your resume or [Personal Data Form](#) in front of you.
- ☐ Don't move around a lot or constantly adjust your screen; it's really distracting. Set it up and check well before the interview.
- ☐ Prop your phone or tablet on something; don't hold it in your hand so the video is unsteady.
- ☐ Close other applications on your device as they use up bandwidth, particularly on a PC, and can make the connection unstable.
- ☐ Check the volume on your microphone.
- ☐ Face the camera on your device and speak in a moderate tone.
- ☐ Put your phone on mute and make certain any person or pet in your household can't hop in and disrupt the process.



Interview by Chat?

Yes, there are employers who conduct interviews by Chat. Treat these just like a telephone interview; be prepared and answer questions completely (avoid abbreviations). Sometimes scammers may intercept a Chat function or a pop-up may occur on your screen unprompted. If you are asked for a social security number, W-4 or banking info, or any other mysterious offer, delete it. If you think it might be legitimate, then search the name of the company or recruiter and give them a call or send an email.

Thank you for your time. Can I have your business card?

At the end of every interview thank the person for taking the time to meet you. Ask for a business card so you can send a thank you note (See Chapter 12) and have contact information to follow up. For a virtual interview, get the contact information and correct title to send a thank you note.

Thank the person you speak to on the phone. Thank the person you meet when you drop off a job application. Good manners will always make a good impression.

Review your notes after an interview

Reread the questions and answers that you prepared in your notebook. You may want to change some of your answers. You may also want to add in any new questions that you were asked in the interview.

Workshops on interviewing

If you hear of a program about how to be interviewed, sign up and go to the class. Even if you have had 20 interviews, you may learn something new at a workshop.





Chapter 10 To Do List

- _____ Practice work-ready phone etiquette.
- _____ Respond to email and requests for an interview quickly.
- _____ Use your calendar to keep track of names, dates and times of interviews.
- _____ Pick an interview-ready outfit.
- _____ Learn the Dos and Don'ts for making a good impression.
- _____ Practice virtual interviews.



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](https://www.firstfind.org).





11

**What Questions
Do Interviewers
Ask During a Job
Interview and How
Do You Prepare
for Them?**

What Questions Do Interviewers Ask During a Job Interview and How Do You Prepare for Them?

You never know what questions you will be asked in an interview, but you can be ready to answer common questions. You should also be ready to talk about all the information on your resume or [Personal Data Form](#).

It takes practice to be comfortable responding to interview questions. Sometimes it takes several interviews to feel confident; it's like learning how to drive. Someone can show you the basics, but the more you drive the better you get.



Write It Down: What kind of questions will I be asked?

You should be prepared to answer different kinds of questions. One great way to prepare is to write down your answers to common questions. Once you have done this, you can practice your answers. Writing down the questions and practice increases your chances of having well prepared answers so you won't fumble, mumble or hesitate when an interviewer asks a question.

Use the [Interview Questions Form](#) (in the Worksheets section) or use a blank page in your notebook and write "Job Interview Questions I May Be Asked" on the top. Write down "Tell me about yourself." This is one of the most common ways that interviewers start an interview. Your response to this question can set the stage for a great conversation.



Tell me about yourself

Prepare 3-4 sentences that describe your value as an employee. This can be similar to the Profile section of your resume, the About summary if you have a LinkedIn profile, or the work-ready content you included on Facebook under “About You.”

- Look at your skills, education and experience.
- Think about where you have worked, volunteered and gone to school.
- Write a brief answer to this question that includes:
 - The kind of work you do best
 - An example of your experience, education or success
 - Specific skills you have
 - What you are looking for in a job

For example, you are interviewing for a job in retail that requires work in a stock room and you have relevant experience. When the interviewer says “Tell me about yourself,” you could say:

“I am a hard worker who likes to work with a team to get the job done. I enjoyed working in a stock job where I also had to take inventory. This job used my math skills and ability to organize things. I am looking for a new job where I will be busy and can use my skills to keep track of things.”

This kind of answer gives the interviewer ideas for additional questions. The interviewer could ask, “How else have you used math at work?” or “How big was the team you worked with?” or “How often did you take inventory and how long did it take?”

If you had replied “I am a hard worker. I come to work on time and I need a job,” you would not sound confident or prepared. The interviewer would not have anything to ask about. The interviewer would have to try harder to get information from you.

Here’s a sample response to “tell me about yourself” for someone who wants to work in a healthcare related job:

“I have five years of experience in health care and pride myself on always providing excellent patient care. I feel especially proud of the number of patients and families who ask for me by name. I’m looking for a new job where I can exceed patient expectations and provide excellent care.”

And another for a candidate interviewing for a job as a Security Guard:

“I recently earned my New York State Security Guard License because I understand the value of protecting a business, its customers and employees. I’m very observant, while working in a residential building I knew the names of all of the tenants. I know that my skills and education will make me an asset as a Security Guard and I’m excited about starting this new career.”





Take the Extra Step: Practice Your Answer Out Loud

Once you are happy with your answer, practice saying it. You can practice with a friend or family member or someone else who is helping you with your job search. You could also rehearse by yourself in front of a mirror or record yourself on your phone, computer or tablet. Your goal is to be able to make this statement with confidence.

What other questions can I expect?

Other questions that you might hear will have certain themes, or there may be a group of questions about the same topic. Here is a list of those themes and some suggestions for good answers. Write down the questions for each topic in your notebook. Leave space for the answer you would use.

| Questions About Job Skills | | |
|---|--|---|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| What are your qualifications for this job? | Give specific examples of similar work you have done, job training or education. | For an IT Help Desk Job: I have a Google IT Support Professional Certificate and two years of experience in an office setting. |
| Do you have the experience or training for this work? | Know the details of the job you are applying for and how your skills relate. | For a bookkeeping job: I am highly organized and have expert skills in Excel and am certified in QuickBooks. |
| What were your responsibilities at XYZ job? | Think about the content of your Personal Data Form and resume. Expect questions to focus on previous work and have examples of success. | If you worked in Purchasing: I was responsible for receiving and organizing \$100,000 of goods each month for the manufacturing facility. |
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| What did you do for the two years you were not working? | Be prepared to explain any gaps in your employment history. Think about skills you may have gained during this time. | I was taking care of an elderly relative. I gained a lot of experience negotiating with health care providers. or: I took time off to finish my degree. I completed projects that demonstrated the skills I learned in class. or: I was able to take time off to be a stay-at-home parent. During this time, I built leadership skills volunteering to head my local scout troop. |

Avoid using words or terms that were specific to the other places you worked. The interviewer might not understand them. For example, the interviewer may not know what an “ADR Report” is.



| Questions About Your Education and Training | | |
|---|---|--|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| What was your favorite class in school? | Identify at least one class you enjoyed with information directly related to the job you are applying for. | For a Customer Service position: My English and public speaking classes where I gained skills to get my message across speaking and in writing. |
| Why did you decide to get a certificate as a Home Health Aide? | Know the requirements for the certification. | I get my job satisfaction out of taking care of people. With the HHA certification, I can contribute with more security for both myself and the patients I help. |
| What is the most important thing you learned in the training program? | Think about the content of your Personal Data Form and resume. Expect questions to focus on previous work and have examples of success. | For a job in manufacturing: I learned the safe handling of hazardous chemicals and passed the test without a problem. |

| Questions About Attitude Towards Jobs and Work | | |
|--|---|--|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| What did you like about your last job? | Focus on the positive, don't say, "The job was OK," or "It was work." | I worked with a team that always pulled together to beat sales goals. |
| What didn't you like about your last job? | Think of something that is not a negative about the product or people, such as your hours were cut. | Business got slow and my hours were cut way back. |
| Why did you leave your last job? | Have a specific reason, not one that bad mouths an employer or your boss. | I took an opportunity with more responsibility where I could grow and learn. |
| How do you handle a tough situation at work? | Identify a time when you worked through difficulty, think of the steps you took. Use specific examples in answers to demonstrate that you have done this and can do it again. | After a storm I worked with a team to clean out a foot of water in the storeroom. We created a plan, got the equipment we needed and tackled the job. |
| Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of? | Ideally this will show off the kind of work you are applying for. If you don't have specific experience, talk about an accomplishment that demonstrates important skills. | I was able to complete an important project before the deadline and under budget. or: I organized the sale at the community center that raised the money needed for the summer program. |
| Tell me about a time when you made a mistake. | You will want to talk about a mistake you corrected, or found and got the solution for, not something you gave up on. Never blame other people for your mistakes. | I realized an order sent to an important customer was missing an important item. I contacted the customer, told them of the mistake and got the item shipped out right away. |



Never focus on the negative. If you are asked what you didn't like, don't offer a list of complaints about the work, the workplace or the people. Do respond with a suggestion on what could have been improved. For example, don't say: "The boss yelled all the time" or "No one knew how hard I worked" or "It was too busy." You will sound more mature and professional if you say "I did not get a chance to use all of my computer skills" or "I wanted more responsibility."



Take the Extra Step: Be Prepared to Explain Why You Were Fired

If you were fired from a job, don't lie about it. Be ready to answer the question. Briefly state what happened and then explain that you learned from it. Note it will not happen again. Don't complain that you were treated badly or that your boss was wrong. For example, if you were fired for a poor record of attendance, you could answer "I did not meet the schedule requirements, but I have learned since then about the importance of coming to work on time and when I am scheduled."

| Questions About The Job You Are Applying For | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| Why do you want to work for this company? | Research the company so you can describe why you think it will be a great place to work. | I am excited about working for a company that will be growing from two locations to four in the next six months. |
| Why do you want this kind of job? | Identify something about the job that makes you happy, that uses your talents, skills and experience. | I enjoyed seeing a product from start to finish in my last job in project management and know I can use my skills and experience to contribute to the company. I am interested in this job because it will let me use my eye for detail and ability to get a job done. |
| Why are you the best candidate for this job? or Why should I hire you for this job? | Think about how your skills and experience will contribute to the company. | My passion for customer service will build repeat business. or: My high standards of patient care will produce outstanding healthcare outcomes. |





Checklist for Success: Learn About a Potential Employer

You should find out as much as you can about the company and job that you are interviewing for:

- ☐ Try to talk to people who work there.
- ☐ Find information about the company on the internet.
- ☐ Go to the company website and check out the history, products or services and leadership.
- ☐ Search the company or organization name to see if there is anything about it in the news.
- ☐ Pay a visit as a potential customer if the job is at a store, restaurant or other public location.

These activities will give you specific reasons to use when you describe to the interviewer why you want to work for the organization. For example, if your research includes recent awards that the company won you can say, "I really want to work for the Health Care Agency rated #1 in patient satisfaction in New York State."



Take the Extra Step: Find The Questions Companies Ask Online

If you type, "interview questions Kohl's" in a search box you will get a list of entries with tips and questions that Kohl's interviewers ask. Do the same for the company you are preparing to interview with. Even if the questions you get are a little different you will be well prepared.

| Questions About You | | |
|--|--|--|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| What are your strengths? | This is your opportunity to highlight skills that are related to the job you are applying for. | I am organized and hard working. or: It's important for me to see work done correctly. |
| What are your weaknesses? | Think of weaknesses that can also be considered a strength. | I am a perfectionist. or: I always expect my coworkers to work as hard as I do. |
| What are your career or job goals? or: "Where do you see yourself in 3 or 5 years?" | Goals you have for growth, contributions you can make to a company. Focus on work. An employer does not want to hear that your goal is to "work for about a year" or "make enough money to move out of the country" or "get married and have children." | If you are looking for stability not promotion: I would like to work for an organization where I can continue to be an important part of the team that contributes to success. If you are interested in career growth: I would like to gain the skills and experience to be promoted to Supervisor. |
| What would be the perfect job for you? | Your strongest skills and work experience. | A job where I can use my skills at organizing and with numbers where I can grow and contribute to the company. |
| What are your interests and hobbies? | Whenever possible, stick to activities that demonstrate job related skills and/or focus on active pursuits. | I volunteer in a soup kitchen preparing meals for the homeless. or: I like to spend time with my family outdoors. or: I like to fix things. or: I like to bake for family events. |



True Stories: I Scooped Ice Cream Too!

An interviewer at a pharmaceutical company spent a lot of time asking a recent college grad about a summer job at an ice cream parlor. Turns out the interviewer had spent a summer making sundaes, too. Be prepared for questions that may seem a bit off track but give an interviewer time to talk about shared experiences.



| Questions About Interpersonal Skills | | |
|--|---|---|
| Sample Question | Information to Include | Sample Answer |
| Tell me about a time when you worked well with a team. | This can be any team, at work or outside of work, but should include specifics of what you got done, not simply that it was a nice bunch of people. | I was on a team that set the record for sales for the last month of the year. We all focused on the goal and helped each other with every sale. |
| What do you do when there is a conflict on a team? | Your focus needs to be on how you found solutions using a specific example, not simply passed it on to your boss. | Once, my team members were complaining a lot about the way certain people were scheduled. We found out the reasons for the disagreement and worked on a way to do the schedule to meet everyone's needs. The situation made us all see that you have to talk about problems, not bury them or gossip. |
| Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a coworker. | Describe how you worked to resolve the situation, even if it wasn't perfect, never point fingers. | A coworker didn't agree with the way a process should be completed. I sat down and talked about the situation. We didn't always agree and the second time we had to get our boss involved, but I now know what I respect about the way this person does their job. |
| How do you handle a difficult customer? | Focus on the positives and good outcomes, never talk about all customers as a problem. Use specific examples. | Last week a customer received an order damaged. They were really upset, I listened and asked them how we could correct the situation. We did not have the exact part but I sent a replacement and will follow up to send the exact part. |



Take the Extra Step: That's a Good Question...Let Me Think About It

No matter how much preparation you do, you may hear a question that you never expect and it seems to stump you. Give yourself a minute to think by saying, "That's a good question, let me think for a minute." Gather your thoughts and respond. Interviewers will appreciate you not simply blurting out the first thing that comes into your head.

If you are asked questions that sound alike, you can use similar answers as long as you continue to answer with enthusiasm. Don't say "I already told you..." or "I answered that question already." Interviewers meet a lot of people and may repeat questions without realizing it. Don't point this out to them - just answer the question.



Here is an example of how these questions and answers might look on your [Interview Questions Form](#) or in your notebook.

| Job Interview Questions I May be Asked | |
|--|--|
| Sample Question | Sample Answer |
| 1. Tell me about yourself. | I am a hard worker who enjoys challenges and wants to find a job where I can use my customer service skills to help people find the products they want. I have a great attitude and can smile all day no matter how busy it gets. |
| 2. Why do you want to work for ABC Audio? | I know that ABC Audio has a great reputation for selling really good equipment, doing fabulous installations and making sure everything is in good shape with follow up service. I would like to be part of a company that provides such great products and service. |
| 3. What are your strengths? | I am a very friendly and outgoing person who gets along with, and can speak to, all kinds of people. This makes me really well suited for providing customer service. |
| 4. What are your weaknesses? | I don't know a lot about electronics but I love music and am a very quick learner. |
| 5. Why did you leave your last job? | I was ready for more responsibility and the next level up was not available. I took a part-time job that allowed me to finish school and look for a new opportunity at the same time. |
| 6. What did you like best about your last job? | I liked it when it was really busy and I just kept moving and got a lot done. I can work with more than one customer at a time, talking to one while the other is thinking or conferring with their spouse. |



True Stories: If You Could Be Any Animal?

Some interviewers ask questions that don't seem job related at all. These may be looking for creative answers, identifying how someone reacts to change or an unusual situation, or to see problem solving. One interviewer always asked, "If you could be any animal what would you pick and why?" He could not describe a job related reason for the questions, just that he "liked it." Don't try to figure these out, take a deep breath and answer the best you can.

There's an app for that!

You can find lists of potential questions, some recommendations for responses, and the potential to customize your answers on apps created for your smartphone. Two free ones to check out include [Job Interview Prep Questions](#) (Apple) and [Interview Questions & Answers](#) (Google Play). If you install one of these apps, you can check the content and use it for preparation at home or on the go. If the apps mentioned here don't work for you, search for others. There are many free options available, so you don't have to pay for an app like this.



It's your turn to ask questions

At the end of an interview you will probably be asked, "Do you have any questions?" Prepare to answer this question too. If you have questions about the job or company, this is the time to ask them.

Some questions might include:

- What are the hours for this job?
- Who would I report to?
- When do you need someone to start work?
- How much does the job pay?
- How do people get promoted?
- How many people work here?
- How many people are you hiring?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

There is no reason to be afraid to ask questions, including those about how much the job pays. You will sound more organized and ready to work if you ask good questions. You don't want to ask questions that the interviewer is not prepared to answer or could put them in an uncomfortable position. For example, don't ask,

- Did I get the job?
- How did I do?
- When can I start?

Asking about the interview process or when you will hear from the employer is better than asking, "When is my next interview?" Don't put the interviewer on the spot. You may be asked to meet someone else or schedule another appointment, but don't push if it is not offered.

You should always be prepared to ask at least one question. If you cannot think of one about the job or the company, you can always ask the interviewer one of these questions:

- Why do you like working here?
- How long have you worked here and why have you stayed?

These are good questions because people like talking about themselves. You can also gain some good information from the answers.

**Always ask for a business card from an interviewer.
You will need this to write a thank you note.**





Chapter 11 To Do List

- _____ Research the company or organization you are interviewing with.
- _____ Make a list of potential questions and answers, write them down.
- _____ Prepare questions that you can ask the interviewer.
- _____ Practice questions and answers face to face, using a mirror or recording on your phone or computer.

Quick Links to Resources

| Resource Name | Web Address |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Job Interview Prep Questions | Apple App Store |
| Interview Questions and Answers | Google Play store |



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](https://www.firstfind.org).





12

After an Interview: Next Steps

After an Interview: Next Steps

There are some things you should do to follow up with an employer after an interview. The steps that you take can affect your chances as a candidate.

Send a thank you note

Write a thank you note to anyone who interviews you as soon as possible after an interview. You can send an email or a typed or handwritten note through regular mail. Whichever format you use, make sure your note is short, includes a thank you for the interviewer's time, expresses interest in the job, and says something about your experience or education that makes you a great candidate. A typed letter or handwritten note can really impress since they take a bit more time than an email.

Here is an example of a note:

July 8, 2021

Dear Ms. Monroe,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the position of receptionist. I enjoyed our conversation. Working for the XYZ Company sounds very interesting.

The plans for a new product launch are exciting. I have worked on product launches and know that my communications skills will be an asset for a launch. This job is a perfect match for my skills and experience.

I look forward to speaking to you again.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones

914-322-3232

Remember that this is a business letter. Put the date at the top for a letter or handwritten note and include "Dear" at the beginning and "Sincerely" at the end, even if you are using email. Double check to make sure that the names, addresses and titles are spelled correctly.



Use simple note paper or a card that is blank inside for handwritten notes. Make sure that your writing is easy to read. When you send the note by email, write the letter in the body of the email. Do not send the note as an attachment.



Take the Extra Step: Send a “Thank You” note to every interviewer

If you have been interviewed by more than one person, each person should get a thank you note. If you were not able to get everyone’s business cards, you should have their name recorded in a notebook and always call to ask for their contact information and be able to send everyone a thank you note.

Use the [Job Interview and Thank You Notes form](#) (in the Worksheet section) to keep track of your thank yous.

Follow up calls

At the end of an interview an employer may tell you to call back to follow up. If they do, ask about the day and time you should call. Make sure you have the correct phone number and the name of the person to speak to before you pick up the phone.

You can also ask when to call to check on the status of your application. Be polite – calling once a week for two or three weeks is enough, unless they tell you to call back in three weeks. And don’t forget to make the calls from a quiet location.

Here’s what the call will sound like:

“Good afternoon, this is Chris Fenton, I applied for the cashier position and was interviewed by Ms. Monroe last Tuesday. I am following up on the status of my application.

Thank you for your time and the update.”

If an employer is really interested in hiring you, they will contact you. Your application may be put aside and then pulled out again at a later date. They probably have a lot to do, in addition to interviewing and hiring, so sometimes calling to remind them you are still interested is helpful. There’s a line between calling a few times and calling so much you become a bother to a potential employer.

Never call an employer and demand to know why you have not been hired.

Congratulations! You got the job!



When all your hard work pays off and you are offered a job, it is time to celebrate. It is also time to find out or confirm some important details.



Checklist for Success: Get the Details About the New Job

Ask or make sure you have the answers to the following questions:

- ☐ How much does the job pay?
- ☐ What are the hours?
- ☐ What day should you start? At what exact time?
- ☐ Where should you report?
- ☐ What is the name of the person you should report to?
- ☐ What should you wear to work?
- ☐ Are there any special equipment or materials you have to bring to work?
- ☐ What documents will you need to bring with you or is there paperwork to fill out in advance? (Paperwork may be online)
 - Expect to fill out a W-4 for federal taxes and a State tax withholding form
 - Be prepared to submit documentation of your eligibility to work in the U.S. for a Form I-9
 - Bring a direct deposit form from your bank so your pay can go directly into an account you pick



Write It Down: Documents You Will Need on Your First Day of Work

It is a good idea to write these things down in your notebook. If you forget to ask some questions, it is okay to call back and ask.



True Stories: Tell Your Network You Got the Job



After you start your new job share the good news with the people you spoke to during your job search. Keep in contact with your network; now you know how important this is to share work and job search advice. Advice from your network can also help you decide if, and when, you need to start another job search.

I didn't get the job. Now what?

Do not think you are a failure if you do not get the job. Remember, there can be lots of good candidates for each opening.

You may get an email telling you that you did not get the job. Don't call or go to the job site and ask why you were rejected. Think about the interview you had and ask yourself if you could have been better prepared for some of the questions. Think about how you will fix this for future interviews.

Were You Ghosted?

You may also never hear back from an employer after an interview. Call to follow up once or twice if you never hear, but don't bug the employer. The job search may have been put on hold or someone else may have been hired; you may also be considered for another position. You can contact the employer about another position at a later date.

It's important that you continue your job search to reach your employment goal. Remember that you gained valuable experience from the interview process, and this experience will help you as you keep looking for a job.



Take the Extra Step: Keep Sharpening Your Interview Skills

Every job interview is a potential learning experience. After an interview, review what went well and what you can improve. Think about the questions that were easy and if there were any you struggled with. Go back to the list of questions and answers you prepared and make changes, add questions, and practice any that tripped you up.



Chapter 12 To Do List

- _____ Send thank you notes after interviews.
- _____ Follow up with phone calls.
- _____ Get details when you get a job offer.
- _____ Tell your network when you get a job offer.
- _____ Keep networking.



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](https://www.firstfind.org).



Worksheets

| Interview Questions | |
|--|--|
| 1. Tell Me About Yourself | |
| 2. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? | |
| 3. Why are you interested in this job? This company? | |
| 4. Question | |
| 5. Question | |
| 6. Question | |
| 7. Question | |
| 8 Question | |
| 9. Question | |
| 10. Question | |
| 11 Question | |
| 12. Question | |



Job Interviews and Thank You Notes

[illegible]

| Networking Activity | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Contact / Phone or email | Company/Title | Date | Action/Follow Up/Next Steps |
| | | | |
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Personal Data Form

| Personal | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Name | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Phone | | | |
| Email | | | |
| Employment Desired | | | |
| Position Title | | | |
| Date Available | | Starting Wage Desired | |
| Available for Work (circle) Full-time Weekend Part-time On Call Temporary Seasonal Rotating Shifts | | | |
| Education | | | |
| 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 _____ Yes _____ No | Degree or Certificate Earned |
| Military Service and Training | | | |
| Foreign Languages | | | |
| Occupational License, Certifications, Registrations, Professional Affiliations, etc. | | | |
| Employment History (list most recent employment first) | | | |
| Employer Name/Organization: | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Dates Employed | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year | |
| Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? _____ Yes _____ No | Phone | |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary | |
| Employer Name/Organization: | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Dates Employed | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year | |
| Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | | |



| | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| Employer Name/Organization: | | |
| Address | | |
| Dates Employed | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year |
| Job Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| Volunteer History | | |
| Volunteer Activity/Organization: | | |
| Dates Volunteered | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year |
| Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| Volunteer Activity/Organization: | | |
| Dates Volunteered | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year |
| Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| Volunteer Activity/Organization: | | |
| Dates Volunteered | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year |
| Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| Volunteer Activity/Organization: | | |
| Dates Volunteered | From: Month/Year | To: Month/Year |
| Title/Major Responsibilities/Skills, Knowledge and Abilities | | |
| Supervisor/Leader | Contact? ____ Yes ____ No | Phone |
| Reason for Leaving | | Ending salary |
| References | | |
| 1. Name | Relationship | Phone/email |
| 2. Name | Relationship | Phone/email |
| 3. Name | Relationship | Phone/email |



| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Ardsey | 914-693-6636 | Mount Vernon (Central Library).... | 914-668-1840 |
| Bedford Hills..... | 914-666-6472 | New Rochelle | 914-632-7878 |
| Bedford Village..... | 914-234-3570 | North Castle (Armonk) | 914-273-3887 |
| Briarcliff Manor..... | 914-941-7072 | North Salem | 914-669-5161 |
| Bronxville..... | 914-337-7680 | Ossining..... | 914-941-2416 |
| Chappaqua..... | 914-238-4779 | Peekskill..... | 914-737-1212 |
| Croton | 914-271-6612 | Pelham..... | 914-738-1234 |
| Dobbs Ferry..... | 914-693-6614 | Port Chester-Rye Brook..... | 914-939-6710 |
| Eastchester | 914-793-5055 | Pound Ridge..... | 914-764-5085 |
| Greenburgh..... | 914-721-8200 | Purchase | 914-948-0550 |
| Harrison | 914-835-0324 | Rye..... | 914-967-0480 |
| Hastings..... | 914-478-3307 | Scarsdale | 914-722-1300 |
| Irvington | 914-591-7840 | Scarsdale | 914-722-1300 |
| Katonah | 914-232-3508 | Somers..... | 914-232-5717 |
| Larchmont | 914-834-2281 | Tarrytown..... | 914-631-7734 |
| Lewisboro | 914-763-3857 | Tuckahoe | 914-961-2121 |
| Mamaroneck..... | 914-698-1250 | White Plains..... | 914-422-1400 |
| Montrose | 914-739-5654 | Yonkers | 914-337-1500 |
| Mount Kisco | 914-666-8041 | Yorktown..... | 914-245-5262 |
| Mount Pleasant | 914-769-0548 | | |

Questions?
Contact the
Job Coach

