



# Job Seeker Handbook

A guide to dealing with job loss and job search strategies for your new career



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## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE & ARIZONA WORKFORCE CONNECTION OVERVIEW

The Employment Service and Arizona Workforce Connection programs through the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) offer this Handbook to help you navigate the steps involved in:

- Searching for a job;
- Creating effective applications and resumes;
- Preparing for that all-important job interview.

Remember, as you start your journey to a new career, Employment Service and the Arizona Workforce Connection are here to help.

Employment Service is a network of public employment offices providing placement services for job seekers and labor force recruitment services for employers. Employment Service provides job search assistance, job referral and placement assistance for job seekers, reemployment services for Unemployment Insurance claimants and recruitment services for employers with job openings.

Arizona Workforce Connection Career Centers(One-Stops) are part of a nationwide One-Stop system providing employment, education, training and counseling through 16 separate agencies. Employment Service and Arizona Workforce Connection are two of those agencies. They offer a variety of computer services, including a job bank and a job-matching service that will match you with the right job. You can even use this service to apply for jobs in other states. One-Stops also offer a variety of education and training programs to help you become more competitive in the current job market.

Arizona Workforce Connection provides career counseling, education, training and career development through the One-Stops. You can:

- Identify job experience, skills and interests;
- Receive career assessments that help you choose, change or modify your career goals;
- Get information about jobs, required qualifications, physical demands;
- Find job openings and assess potential career moves.

If you are looking for work, seek assistance today! Find a One-Stop or Employment Service office near you, using the job seeker web page, <https://www.azdes.gov/employment>. This web page also provides other information specifically for job seekers: online resources, special assistance and contact information.

Be sure to register at the Arizona Job Connection website (<https://www.arizonajobconnection.gov>) to take advantage of all connections with Arizona jobs and other employment services. For additional information, call the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Employment Administration, at 602-542-3667.

## ARIZONA WORKFORCE CONNECTION

Your local Arizona Workforce Connection office provides a number of resources and services to enhance your job search efforts.

Each office has a resource center that is equipped with valuable information and assistance to serve the needs of job seekers.

These include:

- Self-directed or staff-assisted employment search;
- Resume and cover letter development assistance;
- Applications and referrals to statewide and local employers;
- Job development and placement services;
- Labor market information;
- Job-search workshops;
- Job clubs;
- Career fairs;
- Education and training information;
- Help with filing an Unemployment Insurance claim; and
- Resource library.



## BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

There are positive aspects to job searching. Once you have begun, you will discover your resilience in the face of adversity, find your strengths and become a more valuable candidate for hire. You will learn:

- To identify your strengths;
- That your skills are adaptable to other occupations;
- That your confidence increases and your fears decrease;
- About companies that would be a good fit for you;
- About educational or on-the-job training that could be an advantage and new training that will make you more valuable to an employer;
- How to successfully interview and sell your skills;
- More about the needs and trends in the labor market;
- How to become more employable to potential employers;
- New skills that will make your resume more impressive;
- How to use volunteer work and temporary jobs to improve your professional skills and fill a gap in employment;
- How to effectively use your contacts as job resources; and
- How to sell your value and yourself to employers.

## NAVIGATING THROUGH JOB LOSS

Experiencing a job loss can create both emotional and financial stress. Having an effective job-search strategy will keep you focused, less stressed and ultimately more successful in securing new employment.

A positive attitude will be one of the most important elements in finding a new job. Yet, at the time of a job loss, it can be very difficult to maintain a positive attitude.

What are some of the ways that you can overcome negativity?

Before you begin your job search, reflect honestly on your situation. Dealing with the emotional and financial impacts of a losing a job may be as demanding as looking for a new one; however, confronting reality is one of the best ways to reduce stress.

By addressing the negative feelings resulting from your job loss, you will reduce the stress factors and unknowns that are present but may not yet have surfaced. Once you have identified your emotions, you will be able to bring all issues into the open and begin to address them.

The same process is essential in addressing the financial effects of your job loss. Job loss affects the entire family. By involving the whole family in discussing ways to reduce expenses, you will be able to arrive at a workable budget on which everyone can agree. This discussion also helps the entire family understand and invest in the success of your job search.

You may also identify the need for support services such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), health insurance and unemployment compensation. An Employment Service Specialist can provide information on benefits and services that may be available.

Finally, give yourself credit for facing your problems honestly and taking the steps necessary to minimize the negative aspects of job loss.

Write down ways that you can:

- Strengthen your ability to cope with being unemployed;
- Reduce your stress;
- Interact with people who understand what you are experiencing; and
- Connect with knowledgeable people who can suggest better or different ways to help you reach your career goal.

Keep this self-help list handy to encourage you when you feel discouraged. Add to it as you discover or invent new ways to help yourself.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR SEARCH

Looking for work is a full-time job. Applications, resumes, interviews, and rejections can seem overwhelming, especially if you have not looked for work in a year or two – or 20. You will find that the job market and job searching are radically different: more competition for fewer jobs and a rapidly changing market marked by changing job requirements. If you are not keeping up with current information, you may miss the opportunity you are looking for.

Because of the fast pace, changing job requirements and competition in the current market, it is important to find employment specialists who will inform and guide you during your job search.

Studies show that most people will change jobs much more frequently today than in the past, partly because of the economy and partly due to technological and scientific advances. For this reason, you need to learn the current techniques of job searching and consider this education as a valuable and evolving lifetime development of skills for present and future use.

The traditional method of looking for work involves reading job ads, physically visiting employers and sending out countless resumes. While these are still options, there are many alternatives that may be more effective. This Handbook outlines various activities and strategies that will help you succeed. Your job search will provide a wealth of information – from writing a contemporary resume to addressing selection criteria in job postings to knowing how to handle yourself in an interview. These are a few of the specific job-search skills that will help you secure your next career. Think of this as an opportunity to take your career to the next level or in a new direction.

The job search will test your self-knowledge, research skills, organization, persistence, and powers of persuasion. Finding the job you want must be a planned, systematic effort. Your career depends not just on knowing your qualifications, but on how well you market them.



## WHAT COMPANIES LOOK FOR

- Ability and Sustainability:** Provide specific examples of your ability to perform the job and how you sustained your work performance in completing projects.
- Teamwork:** Emphasize that you work well as a team member and cite examples.
- Initiative:** Self-starters identify tasks that need to be done and handle them without being asked. Be able to give examples of your accomplishments as a self-starter.
- Enthusiasm:** Showing enthusiasm for the company and the position demonstrates a good attitude that will carry through to the workplace. Hiring managers may find your enthusiasm contagious, increasing your chances for the position.
- A Strong Work Ethic:** Demonstrates that you will work hard until the job is done. It also suggests that you will not be satisfied until the job is done right.
- Flexibility:** Shows that you can adapt to changes in the workplace — new rules, new software, etc.
- Problem-Solving Skills:** During the interview, use an example that shows how you identified and solved a problem and the positive results.

## WHY PEOPLE DON'T NETWORK

- Fear of rejection.
- Embarrassed to let anyone know you lost your job.
- Don't want to ask someone for help.
- Don't know who to talk to.
- Don't want to impose on friends and family.
- Don't feel comfortable asking for job leads.
- Don't have time.
- Afraid people will see you as vulnerable, not in control.
- Feel that sending letters and resumes is adequate.
- Heard that everyone applies online, so there is no need to go anywhere or see anyone.

## NETWORKING

Networking is simply developing contacts who can help you in your career search. Recruiters estimate that 70 to 80 percent of all jobs are obtained through networking. Networking expands the number of people who have an interest in helping you find employment.

Today's job search is all about connections – with career counselors, employment specialists who know the job market, trainers who provide workshops to help you succeed, company representatives, employees in similar occupations, other job seekers, friends, neighbors, and people you meet each day. If these people know what you are looking for, they can let you know if they hear of a job that becomes available.

Create a list of these contacts in My New Network (p. 18). Include information they may be able to provide. Stay in touch with them regularly to ask if they have heard of any job openings. When they do give you leads, follow-up with a thank you note or email. This shows your appreciation and will probably encourage them to send more leads your way.

Locate the nearest One-Stop or Employment Service office to take advantage of the resume, job search and interview workshops: <https://www.azdes.gov/employment>. Participate in a Job Club to meet other job seekers, employment professionals and company representatives. Learn about local employment trends, companies that are hiring and job leads shared by other job seekers.

Visit the One-Stop at least twice a week or more to check on daily job listings and job fair announcements.



## GETTING STARTED

Start by identifying one or more types of positions that you will focus on during your job search. You'll need to do some research to help you identify companies that hire workers with your skills and to match your skills to their requirements.

1. Determine the type of work you want. Visit mySkills myFuture (<http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org>) and My Next Move (<http://www.mynextmove.org>) to identify opportunities in your current occupation. These websites will also suggest alternative occupations based on your transferable skills.
2. List your education, career assessments, work experience, interests, skills, and talents.
3. Create a list of matching and transferable skills and work experience required in the jobs you are seeking.
4. Research services offered without charge. The Department of Economic Security's Employment Administration offers services through:
  - Employment Service offices: <https://www.azdes.gov/employment>
  - Arizona Workforce Connection Career Centers: <http://www.servicelocator.org> and
  - Arizona's Rapid Reemployment Initiative: <http://www.jobcentral.com>
5. Local One-Stops and Employment Service offices connect employers with job seekers. Employment professionals are dedicated to helping you learn about the current job market, find opportunities in your field and develop strategies to find a job. One-Stops and Employment Service offices offer the following:
  - Registration at <https://www.arizonajobconnection.gov>, the statewide database that connects you with employers' job postings.
  - Career assessments and interest inventories.
  - Workshops that include Resume Writing, Interviewing Techniques and Job Search Strategies. Many One-Stops also offer additional workshops – take advantage of them all.
  - Weekly Job Clubs where participants share experiences, successes, job leads, and referrals; counselors share employment trends and companies that are hiring, and employers, who attend to talk about their hiring needs, accept applications and/or interview prospective employees.
  - Meetings with employment professionals to help you find local job opportunities.
  - Help in creating your resume, cover letters, and practicing your interview skills.
  - Information on available training and education.

## YOUR POWER INTRODUCTION

This is sometimes called an “elevator speech.” It should be 30-45 seconds long, scripted, and rehearsed out loud until you can confidently deliver it to anyone anywhere, including in an elevator.

“My name is John. I have 15 years experience as a (job title) in the \_\_\_\_\_ industry with (degree and/or training) in \_\_\_\_\_.

I have directed/worked on numerous projects including (fields related to the project such as production, software, quality assurance, research and development).

During my 15 years in the \_\_\_\_\_ industry, a major accomplishment was the (name of project) \_\_\_\_\_ that was completed on-time and under budget.

I am seeking a \_\_\_\_\_ position in the \_\_\_\_\_ field.

“Do you know of companies that may need my skills and experience?”

OR

“Do you know of anyone who works in the \_\_\_\_\_ field?”

If yes, “May I give that person a call and say that you referred me?”

## YOUR ACTION PLAN

- Determine the type of work you want. Visit [www.myskillsmyfuture.org](http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org) and [mynextmove.org](http://mynextmove.org) to identify your transferable skills and alternate occupations.
- List your education, career assessments, work experience, interests, skills and talents.
- Locate job openings. Register at <https://www.azjobconnection.gov> and create and post your resume online. Visit your nearest Arizona Workforce Connection One-Stop Career Center and take advantage of its free workshops.
- Ask about education or training that may be available.
- Meet with Employment Service Specialist to learn what job openings may currently be available.
- Ask business representative if they know of companies seeking candidates with your skill sets.
- Register and post your resume on all free job-search sites and request email notification of any jobs in your occupation(s).
- Start networking. Meet other job seekers at the One-Stop Career Centers.
- Join the One-Stop Job Club and/or join other clubs in your area.
- Join organizations that include people who share your interests and/or your occupation.

## YOUR ACTION PLAN

Your job search plan should be detailed and specific. It must be broken down into weekly and daily actions and activities. By keeping a weekly planner and a daily calendar, you schedule your time efficiently. You will feel more confident, motivated and won't waste time trying to decide what to do next. Your plan should be developed for a full day, just as if you were employed full-time.

### DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Schedule time each day to apply for jobs. For each application you submit, keep a copy of your resume, cover letter, and the job description. Create a document or spreadsheet with date of application, name of company, contact information, job title, and date for follow-up phone call or visit. Follow-up within two workdays and leave space for notes on the follow-ups.
- Tailor your resume and cover letter to match what each employer is looking for.
- Make note of every business that could use your skills. Be creative and think broadly of ways you could fit in with a company.
- Schedule time to research companies that you may want to work for. Check these companies' websites frequently for new job postings.
- Check your phone messages and email frequently. Follow-up with employers immediately.
- Stay informed; read news about local and national business activities and events.
- Keep track of all job-search expenses because they may be tax-deductible.
- Think long-term. Expect to be job searching for one to four months, depending on the type of job you want.
- Make a budget for the next few months.
- Develop a plan of action for next week's job search.
- Take a few days off. The less tired you are, the less stressed and more positive you will be during job interviews.

### ACTIVITIES

Career counselors and job seekers have found that the following actions and activities contribute to a successful job search. Select several to include in your Action Plan, adding additional activities each week. Although you want to structure each day with activities that will lead you to employment, it is equally important not to become overwhelmed.

- Register and post your resume on many career websites. If available, request that daily job postings be emailed to you automatically. Check these job postings daily.
- Check on social media sites such as <http://www.linkedin.com>

- ❑ Attend all upcoming job fairs. Job fair flyers are usually posted in One-Stops and on the Job Seeker home page of the DES Internet (<https://www.azdes.gov/employment>). Check on the job fair sponsor's website to learn which companies will be there, research the companies that interest you and make a list of those you want to visit. Attending job fairs lets you network with company representatives and meet other job seekers. Exchange names and contact information with those who have similar interests. List these contacts in My New Network (p. 18).
- ❑ Local One-Stops and Employment Service offices frequently host job fairs. Be sure to take advantage of these, too.
- ❑ Ask One-Stop counselors about education or training opportunities that will advance your skills. Schedule time to research available education courses and training.
- ❑ Attend one or more One-Stop Job Clubs on a weekly basis and exchange contact information with other attendees.
- ❑ For job-search websites, professional organizations, and local and national publications visit: <http://www.acinet.org>  
Sign up for free emails, including lists of upcoming events.
- ❑ Ask five to seven people to be professional or personal references for you. If they agree, give them an updated copy of your resume.

## NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- ❑ Create a support group. Pick five people who are also job searching (even if not in your field) to join an informal "support group."
- ❑ Visit a One-Stop at least twice a week. They are perfect places to meet with job counselors, attend workshops, exchange ideas and job leads with other job seekers, and keep up-to-date on new job postings.
- ❑ Join a service organization that matches your interests.
- ❑ Volunteer with a nonprofit agency or school in a position that uses your professional and technical skills. Even if you don't get paid, it will look great on your resume and these new contacts can serve as references.
- ❑ Sign up with temporary agencies for short-term jobs in your field. This work can help supplement your income, enable you to use or increase your professional skills and show prospective employers your determination.
- ❑ Conduct informational interviews. An informational interview is a meeting between you and a professional where you ask questions about a company, occupation, or industry. Never ask for a job during an informational interview. Use the interview to learn which of your skills are assets, where you might need more training or experience, and how you might get future job leads. Be sure to send a thank-you note immediately following an interview.
- ❑ Join a professional organization. Network with people in your career field to gather information about employers.

## ROLE PLAY

While you are job searching, practice using your "power introduction" (p.5) and answering interview questions. Find someone who is also looking for a job and set up regular times to practice interview techniques.

In order to really feel confident, you'll need to spend time developing answers to tough questions. Write out your answers and memorize them. Then recite your answers in a role-playing situation until you are prepared, comfortable and confident.

## TOUGH QUESTIONS

- ❑ What is your greatest weakness?
- ❑ Tell me about yourself?
- ❑ Why would you like to work for our company?
- ❑ Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
- ❑ What do you consider your greatest strengths?
- ❑ Why do you think we should hire you?
- ❑ Why did you leave your last job?
- ❑ How long have you been looking for a job?
- ❑ You haven't worked in a year. What have you done since your last job?

(See also "Interview Questions", p. 13)

## RESUME TIPS

**Tip 1: Use titles or headings that match jobs you are applying for.**

### Old-Style Resume:

- Accounting/Record-keeping
- Administrative
- Computer Skills

### Contemporary Resume:

- Managed (number of) A/R and A/P Accounts
- Utilized Computerized Accounting Applications
- Administered Department Recordkeeping

**Tip 2: Use a design that highlights your most important information.**

Your resume design should highlight important information about work experience, skills and education. At a glance, employers have an image of your skills and abilities.

**Tip 3: Create content that catches the employer's attention.** Your resume

contents and the descriptions of your skills and abilities can determine how many interviews you generate.

**Tip 4: Analyze ads and job descriptions to identify key words.**

A powerful resume contains key words employers recognize.

*(continued)*

## DEVELOPING YOUR RESUME

The hardest part of writing a resume is getting started. Developing a “master resume” is a good way to assess and review your work experience, skills and education.

When writing your resume, remember to:

- Be honest. State your abilities accurately.
- Target your audience. Highlight skills and activities relevant to the job.
- Keep it brief. Limit your resume to one or two pages and use fewer words for ease in scanning.
- Write and rewrite. Create several versions of your resume as needed to apply for different positions.
- Be accurate. Proofread your resume for content and format. Ask an employment professional at the One-Stop for assistance.

In most cases, resumes should be skill-based. The focus should be on what you can do and not where you did it. The resume is your sales brochure so you want to provide information that reflects why you are the best person for the job.

Create a “Master Resume” listing your skills, talents, interests and the information you learned in a resume workshop. Your master resume should then be tailored to each position you apply for.

### 10-SECOND GLANCE

Employers receive hundreds of resumes and your focus must be to make sure that your resume captures the attention of the employer within a 10-second glance. A great way to do this is to use job titles and skill headings that relate to and match the job you want.

Your resume should show that you are qualified for the job. Remember that the resume's purpose is to get an interview. Your objective or summary should grab the reviewer's attention by immediately addressing the skills the reviewer is looking for. The resume should be simple, clean and inviting. It should not look busy, cluttered or confusing.

Match what the employer is looking for with the skills you want to use in your next job. Describe past job activities that highlight the skills this employer is seeking. Do not spend a lot of time describing work you did in a past job if you have no intention of doing it again.

### TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Using your “Master Resume” as a guide, select those skills that pertain to each position. Incorporate transferable skills, power words (p. 9) and the specific words in the job description itself.

Chances are some of your skills do not exactly match the job description. mySkills myFuture (<http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>) is an excellent source for identifying transferable skills. For example, if you worked as a waiter or waitress and you are applying for a doctor's office receptionist, you might describe your previous work as “trained for and provided excellent customer service in a fast-paced environment.”

Using the transferable skills and alternate occupations that you have identified, create alternate resumes for different occupations.

- Research the companies you may want to work for.
- Identify key skills these companies are seeking.
- Compare your skills to those sought by the company.
- Write down the key words used on their website and incorporate them into your resumes and cover letters.

## POWER WORDS

Use descriptive words to motivate and persuade your audience. A partial list includes:

Achieved	Conducted	Fostered	Organized
Adapted	Demonstrated	Generated	Programmed
Addressed	Designed	Implemented	Recommended
Administered	Developed	Improved	Reorganized
Arranged	Devised	Initiated	Represented
Assessed	Directed	Launched	Researched
Assisted	Edited	Maintained	Scheduled
Authorized	Evaluated	Marketed	Screened
Collaborated	Formulated	Motivated	Supervised

## QUANTIFY STATEMENTS

In addition to using power words, quantify your statements. For example, “a team” should be “a six-member team”; a department should be “a 26-member department.” If you managed accounts receivable and payable, state how many accounts you managed. If you completed projects on time and under budget, say so.

Visit your local One-Stop to attend a resume workshop and use the reference materials in the Center’s resource room.

## CONTENT

Every resume is different. There is no “ideal” resume. You can review various styles and formatting of resumes in a resume workshop, or research various styles online. Following are suggestions for organizing your resume.

- You may want to start with “Objective” as the first section of the resume. Be sure it relates to the position and is specific. Example – Objective: Seeking an accounting position that offers the opportunity to use my 10 years’ of accounting experience.

### Tip 5: Quantify your skills and accomplishments.

Quantifying, as it applies to the resume, gives specifics about your skills and accomplishments. It means saying exactly what you have done and what you can do. For example, don’t just say: “Managed Internet redesign team.” Instead say: “Managed Internet redesign project, completed on time and under-budget.” General statements are easy to forget and do not reflect your abilities.

### Tip 6: Use POWER words that match the level of the position you want.

This is important for developing the image you want to project to the employer.

### Tip 7: Identify and solve the employer’s hidden needs.

In today’s market, competition for jobs is fierce. While researching, try to identify the needs each employer may face. This will help you develop a job-specific resume which in turn will show how you can meet those needs.

### Tip 8: Emphasize the benefits of your skills.

Tailor your resume to the specific job description and highlight those skills and abilities that will benefit that employer.

*(continued)*

**Tip 9: Create an image that matches the salary you want.** As you write your resume, keep in mind the level of job and salary you want. Be sure to create an image that presents you at the appropriate level.

**Tip 10: Prioritize your qualifications by importance.** When creating statements for your resume, prioritize them by importance, impressiveness and relevance to the job you want. Strong statements using power words will affect every statement under it.

**Tip 11: Revise and target resumes and cover letters for each job you apply for.** You will secure more interviews by revising your resume and cover letter to address the specific skills requested in the job description.



- ❑ The second section might be “Summary of Accomplishments.” In this section, list the most important assets you would bring to that employer. These assets or strengths should also meet the criteria posted in the job description. For example, if you have a number of accomplishments in previous positions that highlight the skills the employer is seeking, include four or five bullet points under the heading. Each bullet will specify the accomplishment and its results. Examples: “Top sales associate for three years in a row”; “Increased profits by 25 percent”; “Brought project in under budget”; “Surpassed goals” and “Successfully developed. . .”

If your qualifications for the position are the most important asset you bring to that job, the second section could be “Qualification Highlights” or “Key Skills.” These headings allow you to use words, phrases, and language specific to the job or occupation.

- ❑ Include key skills and certifications, using industry language to identify each. Example: CAD for computer-aided design. If in doubt, spell out and then use acronym.
- ❑ Include key terms that your potential employer can search. Examples: “HTML programming,” “account manager,” “marketing research,” “strategic planning” or “certified public accountant (CPA).”

The third section should be “Work Experience.” Employer surveys reveal that employers usually prefer a chronological resume that lists the last employment first.

- ❑ Use the official name of the company, your position title and a short description of your responsibilities and accomplishments.
- ❑ Include the beginning and ending dates of employment. List both month and year. For example: 06/1999 to 12/2001; 12/01 to 10/03; 01/04 to present.

The final section is “Education.” Include your highest level of education. If you have a college degree, list the institution, the degree(s) and/ or certificate(s) as well as your major and minor. Do not use common abbreviations such as BS for Bachelor of Science. If you have not listed them elsewhere, include appropriate specialized training and certifications.

## FORMATTING RESUMES

- ❑ Use one of the standard typefaces such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, or Palatino, usually in font size 11 to 12 point.
- ❑ Use one-inch margins.
- ❑ Keep formatting simple; avoid graphics and shading.
- ❑ Use all caps for major headings; headings can be centered or left-justified.
- ❑ If your resume is more than one page, place your name at the top of each additional page: Doe, John 2; Doe, 2; or Doe, John and on a second line, Page 2

## SCANNABLE RESUMES

The scannable resume serves the same purpose as a traditional resume – to help you find a job! However, the design and format is quite different from the traditional resume. This type of resume should not have any of the formatting that is often found in the traditional resumes.

Because many companies now only accept applications online, job seekers need to know how to prepare a scannable resume to quickly and efficiently match job openings with qualified job seekers.

Searches are done using keywords and phrases that describe the skills and education required for the position. When developing a scannable resume, it is extremely important to use terms and familiar industry jargon (language specific to that industry) that describe your skills and experience. Researching the job description posted by the employer can help with the company-specific key words needed for the scan.

Scannable resumes do NOT have any of the formatting often found in traditional resumes. They do have the same major headings as a traditional resume: a header that includes your name, address, phone number, and email; qualifications summary and/or job objective; work experience; and education, including your degree(s) and any specialized training and certifications. If you have honors or activities you can include an additional section. Use the same organization as in your printed resume but left-justify everything and never use multiple columns.

When creating your resume, create two versions: one for mailing, faxing, emailing or handing out and one that is scannable in plain or rich text format (rtf). Save both to your hard or flash drive for later use. Do the same for a master cover letter.

### FORMATTING SCANNABLE RESUMES

- Use plain text or rich text format only, usually in 11 to 12 point.
- Use all caps for major headings.
- Do not use bold type, italics, underlining, etc.
- Do not use bullets or lines; use an asterisk (\*) in place of bullets.
- Avoid graphics, shading, and columns.
- Left-justify all text including headings.
- If your resume is more than one page, place your name at the top of each additional page: Doe, John 2; Doe, 2; or Doe, John and on a second line, Page 2

### MAILED OR PERSONALLY DELIVERED RESUMES

- Print your resume on a high-quality laser printer or inkjet. Do not use a dot matrix or low-quality printer.
- Use standard letter size (8½ x 11) on white or very pale-colored paper.
- Always send original printed documents, not copies.
- Use a flat envelope to mail or deliver your resume.
- Do not staple multiple page resumes.

## APPLYING ONLINE

More employers are using online applications to identify qualified applicants. Employers offer the following advice on how to make an electronic application outstanding:

- Follow directions.
- Tailor your application information to fit the position. Do not just copy and paste from your resume unless your resume fits the job description.
- Use key words and industry language. Use the job ad as your model.
- Include numbers and statistics if they apply to the job.
- Complete all fields, even if they are not required.
- If the company offers an assessment test online, take it (even if optional).
- Check spelling and grammar on your application, resume and cover letter before submitting it.
- Print or save a copy for your records so you can reference what was submitted to the employer if you are called for an interview.
- If a recruiter or human resources professional is identified on the website, follow-up with a personal note.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Resume.
- Pen with black ink.
- Note paper.
- Travel directions.
- Driver's license or photo ID.
- Social Security card.
- Letters of recommendation.
- References (include names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses).
- List of your strengths, skills and talents needed for the job.
- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- If unfamiliar with the location, make a trial run the day before.

Sometimes employers will want to interview you immediately after you have completed your application.

## APPLICATION SKILLS

Employers use applications to gather information about your qualifications and compare you to other applicants. Keep in mind that the application is a key marketing tool in the job-hunting process. Armed with this knowledge, here are the “do’s” and “don’ts” of completing job applications.

**Do:** Collect the information and materials you will need to complete your application: Social Security number, dates of employment, names, and addresses of former employers and references.

**Do:** Prepare a master application that is complete and has been checked for accuracy in content, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. You then have all necessary information in one document to complete employer applications.

**Do:** Read and follow instructions carefully. Always take a few minutes to review the entire application. Think of the application as your first test in following instructions.

**Do:** Print or write neatly with a black pen if you cannot type the application.

**Do:** State the date you can start as “immediately” (shows action), if you can start right away.

**Do:** Be specific about your skills and work experience. Describe what you did, what you can do and what you accomplished. Use power words (p. 9) to describe your duties.

**Do:** Keep your application consistent with your resume. Make sure all dates, names, titles, etc., on your application match the information on your resume.

**Do:** Proofread the document thoroughly when you complete it.

**Do:** Use positive words to describe why you left a position such as: contract ended; better job; seasonal employment; seeking advancement; mutual agreement; temporary employment; career growth/change; reorganization; relocation; business closed; or separated. Be ready to discuss this honestly in the interview if it comes up.

**Don’t:** Say, “I was fired” or “I quit” or talk about negative issues that caused a job loss.

**Don’t:** Give a dollar amount if asked about salary; say “open” or “negotiable.”



## PREPARING TO INTERVIEW

Being prepared for the interview lets the interviewer know just how serious you are about the position for which you are applying. Preparing for the interview begins with doing some homework. You applied for the job for a reason, so preparation is key in making sure you leave your interviewer with no doubt in his or her mind that you want that job.

- Researching enables you to find any information you can about the job description, the process to apply for openings, salary, and benefits, etc. You can get information online or go to your local library or One-Stop to read about the company, its history, the industry, company competition, the employees, and possibly the interviewer.
- Ask yourself why the company would want your skills and then prepare to emphasize those skills during the interview.
- If possible, learn all interviewers' names, titles, and addresses; call the office before the interview to verify spelling and all information needed for thank you notes.
- Bring a list of several questions about the company or the position that you can ask at the end of the interview. This reinforces your interest.

### BODY LANGUAGE

The first seven seconds of the initial meeting sets the tone. You must project vitality, confidence, and attention to detail in your dress, grooming, posture, facial expressions, and body language. To make a great first impression, take a deep breath and smile. Walk in to your interview confidently and shake hands firmly. Introduce yourself in a pleasant tone of voice, make eye contact, sit up straight and show your enthusiasm.

Maintaining confidence is not always easy, particularly when you are nervous. By role-playing with another job seeker, you will become less self-conscious and more natural.

### REHEARSE THE INTERVIEW

Practice with another job seeker to learn how a firm handshake can convey confidence, energy and sincere pleasure in meeting the person. Next, practice the entire introduction. Follow up by practicing interview questions and your responses.

### PRACTICE CHECKLIST:

- Smile;
- Introduce yourself;
- Shake hands;
- Use the employer's name;
- Listen attentively;
- Think before you answer each question;
- Show enthusiasm about working; and
- Be positive.

You should always look your best when you go to a job interview. Visit the company to see what people are wearing so you can dress appropriately for the interview. You will find differences in the way people dress depending on the industry.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### What to Know

Expect employers to ask questions related to your skills, knowledge, training and work experience in order to see if they fit their job opening requirements.

Providing good answers on the spur of the moment is difficult. When unprepared, the simplest question can throw you off balance. Prepare by practicing frequently asked questions.

You can get sample interview questions and ways to answer difficult questions from the One-Stop Center or by searching the Internet. Practice role-playing with a friend or another job seeker until you feel very comfortable answering your list of questions.

### Sample Interview Questions

- Why do you want to work as a \_\_\_\_\_?
- What qualifications do you have?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- Give an example of any major problem you faced and how you solved it.
- Why did you leave your last job?

(See also "Tough Questions", p. 7)

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Think about your answer before you speak.
- Keep your answers brief, but be certain you answer the question thoroughly.
- Use examples, quantitative data, and anecdotes to illustrate your points.
- As you develop your answers, keep in mind the match between your skills and the needs of the company.
- Explain how you would do the job rather than just saying you can do it.
- When an interviewer asks, “Tell me about yourself,” talk about skills, abilities, and accomplishments – not your family, hobbies or interests.
- When the interview is coming to a close, finish by asking for the job. Tell the interviewer(s): “I like what I’ve heard about your company today. I would very much like to work here.”
- Your last question: “When will you be making your decision? How will I be notified, or may I call you?”
- Remember to thank the interviewer(s) for the time they spent with you.

## HANDLING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### TURNING NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

Interviewees many times trap themselves by answering an interview question with a negative response. Questions such as, “Why did you leave your previous company?” can turn into a five-minute rant about how poorly your former employer operated the business or treated you while you were employed there. Bad-mouthing your former employer reflects badly on you. Even if your boss was a jerk, the interviewer will not be impressed.

If the interviewer asks if you have a certain skill, never reply, “No, I don’t, I’ve never had to do that before.” Turn potentially negative answers into positive ones. Take time to think before you speak!

If you don’t have a certain skill set, it’s always appropriate to draw a parallel between something you have done that is similar. It is also okay to say, “...but I’m willing to take a night class or stay late after work to learn.”

### WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE COMPANY?

When asked, “Why should we hire you?” Focus on discussing accomplishments, work experience, and skills that will relate to the job and how they will contribute to the outcomes or mission of the employer.

### SALARY NEGOTIATION

Familiarize yourself with the rules for negotiating this sensitive subject. First, find out what kind of salary people in the same field or industry are making. Some companies post this information on their websites. You can also search the Internet for salary ranges in a particular field. Geography plays an important role in how much you can expect to make because the cost of living varies widely from city to city and state to state.

Never bring up the subject of salary until the interviewer does. Once the topic is on the table, be prepared to discuss it openly and honestly. Have a flexible salary range in mind, starting with what would be the very minimum you can accept to what you would hope to receive. What you currently make or made in the past might not have much bearing on the job you are interviewing for.



## THE INTERVIEW

Your answers to interview questions can make or break an interview. Research typical questions and write the answers. Practice with another person until you feel very comfortable answering your list of questions. Be sure you answer each question in the following order and that you describe only what you did:

- Describe the situation or task.
- Describe the actions you took.
- Describe the result of your actions.

### BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Tell me about a time when you had a conflict at work. What was the conflict? What were your actions? What was the result of your actions? (Always state what you did, not what we did.) Tell me about a time you worked with a group. What was your role? What were your actions? What were the results of your actions?

### EXPERIENCE-BASED QUESTIONS

- What makes you qualified to work in this position?
- How many years have you worked in this field?
- Why do you think we should hire you?

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Tell me something about yourself?
- Where do you see yourself working in three to five years?
- What didn't you like about your last job?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?

### QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

As the interview comes to a close, it is good to have some questions to show your interest.

- Does the company promote from within?
- What are your three top goals for this position in the coming year?
- What is the typical career path for someone in this job?

### CLOSING

If more than one person interviews you:

- Use each interviewer's name.
- Thank each of them for their time.
- Assure them you would be an asset.
- Tell them you would very much like to work there.
- Your last question should be: "When will you be making your decision? How will I be notified, or may I call you?" or "What is the next step in your hiring process?"

## SECRETS OF A POWERFUL INTERVIEW

Your answers to the interviewers' questions are your best marketing tool.

Again: Practice role-playing with a friend or another job seeker until you feel very comfortable answering your list of questions.

Be sure that your answers describe what you did, not what the group did.

All answers should follow the same format.

### The situation or task

State the problem. What was the situation? Was it typical of your job or had something gone wrong? (Do not place blame on someone else.)

### The actions you took

Walk through the specific steps you took. Mention the key qualities, professional skills, special knowledge and personal behavior that helped you solve the problem.

### The result of your actions

Recall the solution. How did things turn out? (If the project was not successful do not use it; find another example.)

Determine what the solution was worth. Quantify the solution - money saved, time saved, revenue generated. Specify your role even if the "team" all worked toward the solution.

## THANK YOU

### Letter

Writing a thank you note or letter after an interview can be the key to getting that job offer. A formal thank you letter or handwritten note is required. Be sure to draft that letter or note within 24 hours of the interview.

### Email

An email does not substitute for a formal thank you letter. However, there are times when an email followed by a thank you letter or note can be helpful. If an employer is making a quick decision to hire, timing is very important. An email following the interview conveys your interest in the position. The formal letter or note will further reinforce your interest.

### Group Thank You

If your interview is with several people, be sure to remember each of their names. Send a note or letter to each person who participated in the interview panel. Try to personalize your comments to each person. Interviewers may read all of your letters or notes.

If you are not able to obtain a business card from each panel member during the interview, ask the administrative assistant at the conclusion of the interview to provide those names and their titles along with their addresses.

## THANK YOU

After a job interview, writing a thank you note is a must! Some employers may think less of those interviewees who fail to follow up promptly. Plan to send out your thank you notes as soon as possible after the interview (preferably within 24 hours).

In general, typed thank you letters are recommended. However, some hiring managers still prefer hand-written thank you notes. Either one is acceptable.

Consider the “personality” of the organization and the rapport you felt during your interview. If your interview was informal and you achieved a rapport with the interviewer, a handwritten note is fine. When you are not sure what to write, review thank you letter samples to get ideas. You can also use a thank you letter template as a guide (research online or ask an employment professional for samples).

- Your thank you letter should identify the interviewer(s) by name and position title. If more than one person interviews you, send a personalized thank you to each person.
- As with your resume and cover letter, keep your audience in mind.
- Address any issues or concerns they may have shared during the interview.
- Discuss briefly how the interview confirmed that you are a good candidate. Communicate your interest in the position.
- Express thanks to the interviewer(s) for considering you. State that you are looking forward to hearing their decision.

A thank you note or letter to the people you talked with reinforces the fact that you want the job. Note: Even if you do not want the job, write a thank you letter and respectfully withdraw your application. That employer will remember you favorably if another job becomes available.

Remember to proofread! If in doubt about the correct names, spellings or titles of your interviewers, call the office to double-check. Your efforts will be worth it!

## FOLLOW-UP

Some applicants think the interview is over when they leave. Following up after the interview separates the amateurs from the pros. Some applicants believe that they will bother interviewers by following up. Not true! Some interviewers purposely wait to make job offers. To gauge the applicant’s interest, interviewers observe who does follow-up and how many times. Pros know that landing that job is achieved in the follow-up. Send a thank you note immediately, then wait a couple of days and make that call!

## YOU'RE HIRED!

### CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW JOB!

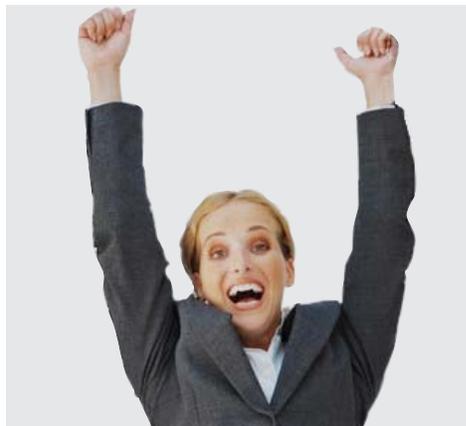
One of the hardest tasks you will ever face is finding the right job. To win this job, you sharpened your self-knowledge, research skills, organization, persistence, and powers of persuasion. You successfully marketed yourself through planned, systematic efforts.

Now that you've achieved that goal, it's time to prepare for your bright new future. To continue your success, you must assess the skills you developed during your search and determine how they can help you in the years ahead.

Write yourself some notes:

- What was most successful?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What did you do that worked?
- What did you do that did not work?

Make a file and keep these notes with copies of your resumes, cover letters and contact names. Update this file each time you are promoted, acquire a new skill or receive an award. Remember to help others succeed because they will join the network that brightens your own career path.



You've succeeded in your job search and you've also gained some valuable skills.

- You have increased your confidence and reduced your fears.
- You have improved your ability to interview and sell your skills.
- You know more about the needs and trends in the labor market.
- You are now more employable to potential employers because you are employed.
- Your skills are current. Update your resume regularly as you gain skills, additional responsibilities, awards, and accomplishments.
- Seek out any additional training or experience you need to move up your career ladder.
- Don't forget the people in your network. They helped you succeed. Let them know you are now employed, thank them for their support or help and stay in touch. Continue to add to your network contacts.
- If your new supervisor leaves, ask if you can use him/her as a reference. Ask for a letter of reference and updated contact information and stay in touch.

## MY NEW NETWORK

As you actively pursue your Job Search, everyone you meet is a potential source of information. Keep a list of people you meet in workshops, job clubs, and informational interviews. Be sure to include counselors, employment specialists, and trainers who may be helpful in your job search. Note where you met them or why you would like to contact them again. Keeping a list of websites you found helpful is also a good idea.

### MY NEW NETWORK

Name, Phone, Email:  
Notes:







Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI & VII), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008, the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics and retaliation. The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program or activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible. To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact your local office; TTY/TDD Services: 7-1-1. • Free language assistance for DES services is available upon request.

