



WRC Career Kit

FIND YOUR PATH



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# About the Career Kit

WRC Career Coaches are here to guide you through your job search, including identifying potential jobs/careers, executing a job search, creating your resume, and sharpening your interviewing skills. Whether you are looking for part-time or full-time work in your field or starting a whole new career, this guide will serve as a road map for you and your Career Coach as you go through this process. Your Career Coach will use the Career Kit to guide you through this journey.

## The process

Finding a job or changing careers is a process. Your Career Coach will review the job search process with you and spend time exploring the areas that pertain to you and your search.

### Step One: Getting Started

- **Employment Guide Roadmap | determine your path:** This section describes the search process. The first step is to determine where you are in the search process.
- **Getting Ready on the Inside:** Prepare to get started on your journey.
- **Complete the Goals Worksheet/Checklist**

### Step two: Exploring Careers

- **Determine your financial and scheduling needs**
- **Identify your interests and job values**
- **Make a list of your skills**
- **Use online career exploration tools if you are looking to change or explore careers**
- **Set up interviews with professionals in jobs of interest**
- **Understand the local job market**
  - Hot Jobs list
  - Employer Database
  - EmployFlorida.com
  - The WRC COVID-19 Resources page | Companies Hiring During Pandemic
- **Compile a list of target jobs**

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### Step three: Preparing for a job search

- Craft a winning resume
- Create a cover letter
- Collect professional references
- Using LinkedIn for your job search
- Use networking skills to enhance your search
- Develop and rehearse your quick pitch

### Step four: Searching for target jobs

- Research target companies/jobs
- Popular job search websites
- Resources at WRC
- Using Social Media
- Job Fairs
- Job Search Tracking Log

### Step Five: Preparing for interviews

- Mock Interviews
- Dress for Success
  - WRC Career Closet
- Thank you notes
- Job Offers: Evaluating, Negotiating, Accepting

### Additional information for Career Coaches

- Sample report from Career Source Suncoast Florida “Future Plans” tool.
- Sample report from the Florida Department of Education “My Career Shines” tool.

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**Note:**

*All of the forms in this kit are in the accompanying Excel workbook or PDF file. You can also access all forms online using the links provided [here](#).*

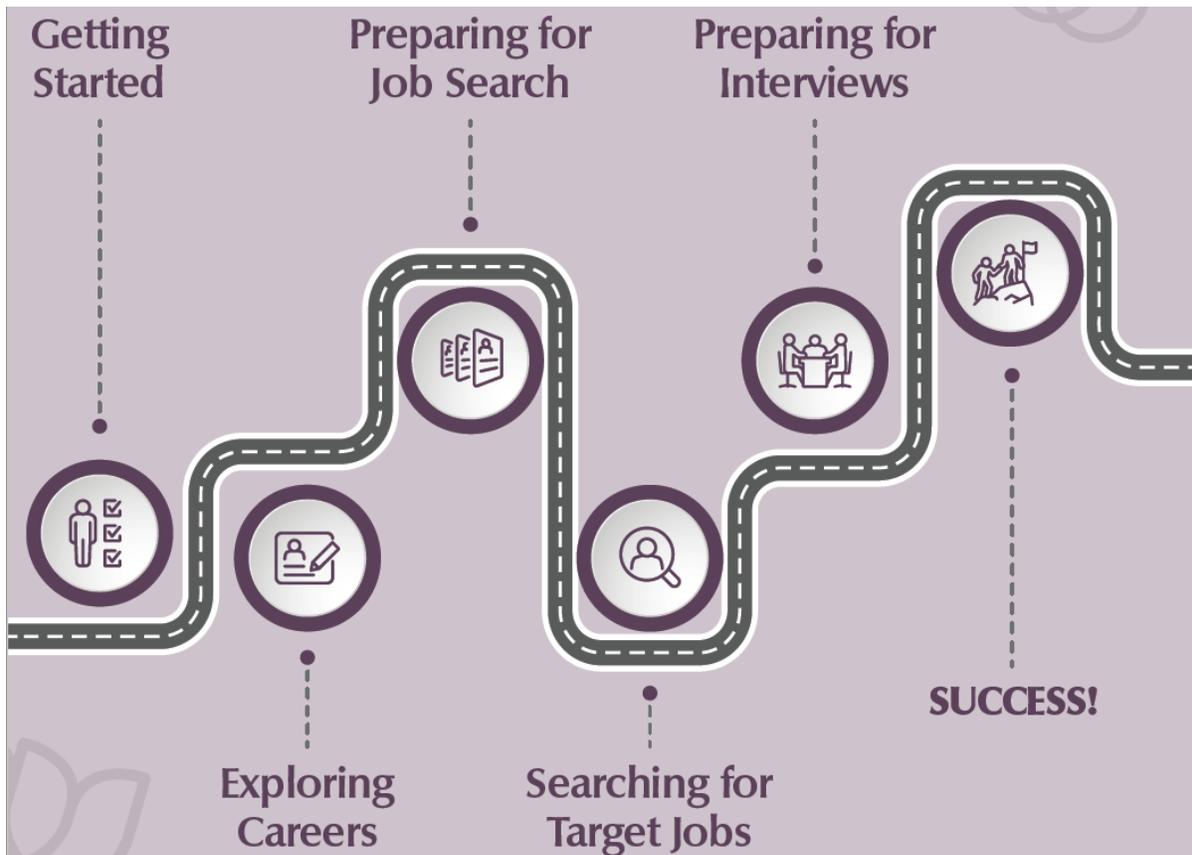
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# Step One | Getting Started



## The Employment Guide Roadmap | Determine Your Path

You don't need to work through every step in this process. Determine where you are in the process and start there.





**Action:** Complete the Career Search Action Items Worksheet with your Career Coach. Not everyone will go through all of the steps in this process. Place a checkmark by the steps you want to take during your search, then use the checklist to track your progress.

### Career Search Action Items form

	TARGET DATE:	DATE COMPLETED:
<b>A. Determine Financial and Scheduling Needs:</b>		
Household Expenses Worksheet	_____	_____
Paycheck Calculator	_____	_____
Employment Benefits Checklist	_____	_____
Target Work Scheduling Form	_____	_____
<b>B. Identify Personal Interests and Job Values:</b>		
Personal Interests Form	_____	_____
Job Values Form	_____	_____
<b>C. Hard and Soft Skills:</b>		
Hard Skills Summary Sheet	_____	_____
Soft Skills Summary Sheet	_____	_____
<b>D. Exploring A New Career/Defining Target Jobs:</b>		
Online career Exploration Tool (Select)	_____	_____
Online Career Exploration Tool (Complete)	_____	_____
Interview professional(s) in job(s) of interest	_____	_____
Research local job market: (EmployFlorida, WRC Hot Jobs List, Employer Database)	_____	_____
Target Jobs List	_____	_____
<b>E. Preparing for Job Search:</b>		
Resume Template	_____	_____
Draft Cover Letter	_____	_____
Professional References Template	_____	_____
LinkedIn Profile	_____	_____
Networking Plan	_____	_____
Quick Pitch	_____	_____
<b>F. Targeted Job Searching:</b>		
Research Target Companies; Create Company Summary	_____	_____
Job Search Tracking Log	_____	_____
<b>G. Preparing for Interviews:</b>		
Draft Interview Answers	_____	_____
Practice with Mock Interviews	_____	_____
WRC Career Closet	_____	_____
Thank You Notes	_____	_____
Update Job Search Tracking Log	_____	_____
<b>H. Job Offers:</b>		
Acceptance Email/Letter	_____	_____

## Getting Setup for Success

One key to a successful job search to get organized!

1. Take notes at all meetings; via zoom, phone, or face-to-face.
2. Create a To-Do list.

A To-Do list will help you remember the large number and variety of activities involved in the job search process. It also enables you to prioritize tasks to determine what is most important. This tool records the steps you must take to achieve your goals. Keep it handy at all times, everywhere, and start every day by reviewing and updating it to plan your day.

3. Keep track of your appointments with a paper appointment book or calendar.
4. Organize your files so you can easily access your notes, Career Kit forms, job postings, applications, and the specific resume and cover letter you used.

Whether you use folders on your computer or paper files, it's essential to access information easily and quickly when it's needed.

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## Getting Ready on the Inside

Changing jobs or careers can prove to be an exciting new adventure. When one door closes, you may be just about to open a whole new door with opportunity and joy awaiting you! At the same time, these changes are often stressful and filled with uncertainty and anxiety. You must have the support you need to feel resilient and prepared to move ahead. The Women's Resource Center provides many services, including affordable counseling and mentoring, to help you regain your confidence and rebuild hope for a great future. Information can be found on the Women's Resource Center website or at any of the three centers located in Sarasota, Bradenton, or Venice.



# Step Two | Exploring Careers



## Determine Financial and Scheduling Needs

Before exploring careers or searching through job listings, it is essential to review your income and benefits requirements and scheduling needs so you can select positions that will work for you. The Employment Needs Worksheets help you to determine what you require.



**Action:** Complete the Household Expenses Worksheet, Employment Benefits Checklist, and Target Work Scheduling Forms.

### Financial needs: Household Expenses Worksheet

Use the Household Expense worksheet to estimate your monthly expenses. This list includes most of the standard household expenses; however, you may have additional costs you will need to add to the bottom line.

It is essential to review your bank statements and other documents to be sure you haven't missed anything.

For the expenses that may only occur during specific months (for example, car maintenance), try to estimate the total annual costs and divide the amount by 12 to calculate an average monthly cost.

Household Expenses Worksheet

<b>Housing:</b>		
Rent/mortgage payments	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
HOA fees	\$ _____	
Lawn maintenance	\$ _____	
Trash pickup	\$ _____	
Homeowner's insurance	\$ _____	
<b>Utilities:</b>		
Gas	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
Electric	\$ _____	
Water	\$ _____	
Trash pickup	\$ _____	
Cable Television/Internet	\$ _____	
Online Subscriptions/Fees	\$ _____	
<b>Food:</b>		
Groceries	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
Eating out	\$ _____	
<b>Clothing:</b>	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
<b>Entertainment:</b>	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
<b>Transportation:</b>		
Car Payments	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
Maintenance and Repairs	\$ _____	
Gas	\$ _____	
Insurance Payments	\$ _____	
Taxes & Registration	\$ _____	
Busi. Fines/Fees	\$ _____	
<b>Child Care:</b>	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
<b>Health Expenses:</b>		
Medical insurance	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
Dental insurance	\$ _____	
Medis (Prescriptions/OTC)	\$ _____	
Deductible/Co-Payments	\$ _____	
<b>Other:</b>		
Cell Phone	\$ _____	Monthly Costs: \$ _____
Personal Care (hair, nails)	\$ _____	
Gifts/Donations	\$ _____	
Credit Cards, Interest *	\$ _____	
Loans	\$ _____	
Travel	\$ _____	
Education	\$ _____	
Target Savings	\$ _____	
<b>TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES:</b>	\$ _____	

**Note:** Interest on credit cards is often remarkably high. Tracking the interest can be an effective deterrent to building credit card debt.



## Paycheck Calculator | Take-Home Pay

Now that you know how much you need to cover your living expenses, the next step is to calculate how much money will be deducted from your paycheck for federal taxes.

Florida has no state or local income taxes; therefore, only federal taxes will be withheld from your paycheck.

Federal taxes are calculated based on your income level. Also, FICA taxes will be withheld to cover Social Security and Medicare. Every pay period, your employer will withhold 6.2% of your earnings for Social Security taxes and 1.45% of your earnings for Medicare taxes.

**Here is An Example: With an income of \$15.00 per hour:**

WEEKLY PAYCHECK CALCULATOR: Example Income \$15.00 per hour		
<b>Gross Weekly Pay (Before Taxes): \$15.00 x 40 hours) =</b>	<b>\$600.00</b>	
Income Taxes Details:		
Federal Income	\$49.51	8.25%
State Income	\$0.00	0.00%
Local Income	\$0.00	0.00%
FICA and State Insurance Taxes:		
Social Security	\$37.20	6.20%
Medicare	\$ 8.70	1.45%
Total Taxes taken out of weekly paycheck:	\$95.41	15.90%
<b>TAKE HOME PAY</b>	<b>\$504.00</b>	<b>84.10%</b>

### Calculate Salary Requirements/Take-Home Pay:

Click on this link for a handy calculator to use when considering salary requirements and calculating take-home pay: <https://www.adp.com/resources/tools/calculators/salary-paycheck-calculator.aspx#spcg>

Based on the above information, make a note of the target compensation (hourly, weekly, or monthly pay rate), you will need to cover your living expenses.

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## Employment Benefits Worksheet



In addition to the income you need to cover your living expenses, you may want to consider the job benefits that could offset some of your costs – they can often add hidden value to your job.

### Benefits Worksheet



**Action:** Place a checkmark in the boxes for the benefits that will be important to you during your job search.

For example, medical/dental insurance can save you thousands; flexible hours could save you money on childcare; working close to home or commuting reimbursements could save more as well.

### Benefits Worksheet



Employee Benefits:	I must have this benefit	I would like to have this benefit	I don't need this benefit	Notes
Medical Insurance				
Vision/Dental Insurance				
Short Term/Long Term Disability Insurance				
Flexible Hours				
Paid Time Off (PTO): Vacation, sick time, personal time, parental leave)				
Reimbursement for Commuting (gas, bus, parking)				
Telecommuting				
Free Meals				
Overtime Hours				
Tuition Reimbursement				
Uniforms/Protective Clothing Provided/Reimbursed				
401K/Savings Plan				
Retirement/Pension Plan				



## Desired Schedule Worksheet

In addition to calculating your financial needs, it's essential to identify any scheduling needs or restrictions you may have.

Regular business hours for some jobs will likely be from 8 AM to 5 PM. Other positions, such as retail stores, may require working from 10 AM to 6 PM, evening hours or weekends. Restaurants may require early or later hours to accommodate breakfast or dinner shifts. Working in the healthcare field may require an ability to work flexible hours or overnight shifts.



**Action:** Complete the Target Work Schedule form and consider these when exploring your career options and reviewing job listings.

Target Work Schedule			Notes
<b>Work Patterns:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Rotating Shifts?			
Available on Weekends?			
Available before 8:00 AM?			
Available after 5:00 PM?			
Available on call?			
Fluctuating Hours?			
<b>HOURS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
<b>Total Hours Available:</b>			

# Personal Interests and Job Values



In addition to determining your financial and scheduling needs, it is essential to consider your interests and job values. Review and prioritize them so you can target the right jobs for you.

## Personal Interests

To pinpoint the personal interests that may be relevant to a career, think about any meaningful tasks you enjoy doing and those you're good at.



**Action:** As you consider your interests, think about the following examples and check those you've enjoyed the most and those you would like to do.

### Personal Interests Worksheet

Personal Interests	I have experience in this	I would like to do this	Notes
Helping Others			
Using Creativity (ideas, design, innovation)			
Working with Children			
Working with the Elderly			
Teaching or Training Others			
Working on Environmental Issues			
Working with My Hands			
Working in the Arts/Entertainment			
Working with Animals			
Working in Non-profits/Community Service			
Working in a Healthcare Setting			
Working Outside			
Working with Computers			
Working with Machines			
Working in Kitchen			
Others (list below)			



## Job Values

Consider what you valued the most in previous jobs and what you need or want in your target job.



**Action:** Check the job values you must have in a job and those that would be nice to have in the Job Values Worksheet.

### Jobs Values Worksheet

Job Values	I must have	It would be nice to have	Notes
Challenging Work			
I'm Good at Doing This!			
Training (They pay me to Learn!)			
I have an Opportunity to Advance			
I Like My Boss			
I Like My Co-Workers			
I Like the Work Schedule			
The Location is Convenient			
I Believe in the Product, Service or Company			
The Work is Interesting			
The Work is Fun			
I Can Be Creative			
I Can Travel			
I Don't Have to Travel			
People Recognize Me for My Work			
Stable Work, Little Worries About Layoff			
They Offer Benefits (Health and Dental)			

**Remember:** Job benefits can add hidden value to your job!

- For example, you may accept lower pay if the job provides on the job training. It means you're getting paid to learn.
- Ask yourself if employment is urgent (to pay the bills) or essential for other reasons. If it's urgent, be ready to take a job that pays well. If it is not critical, consider volunteering to fill the gap in your resume while searching for your ideal job.
- Health/dental insurance can save you thousands of dollars. Free meals can add up to significant savings on food.
- Being close to home or getting a stipend for parking can save you on commuting costs.
- Flexible work hours could help you save on child-care costs.
- Uniforms can save money and time related to work clothes.
- Refer to your financial needs in the Household Expenses Worksheet to see if benefits may offset some of your expenses.

# Make a List of Technical and Interpersonal Skills



Before you begin searching for a job, it’s essential to make a list of your strongest (core) skills so you’ll know what to emphasize in your job search (See Sections on Preparing for Job Search, Searching for Jobs). You should consider all of your skills when creating your Skills Summary.

If you don’t have a lot of formal work experience, it doesn’t mean you don’t have any skills!

- Do you have any hobbies?
- Have you developed any skills on your own?
- Have you organized a fundraiser for a school or club or another group within your community? Have you volunteered in the office at your church or club?

Even if you haven’t had formal training from a school or on the job, employers need your skills!

## Technical Skills

You typically gain technical skills through training or education. These skills are easier to teach, measure, and convey than others and are the most conventionally understood. Technical skills can be highly job-specific and are often explicitly outlined by recruiters.



**Action:** Check the core skills you currently have and the skills you see listed in your target jobs. Think about gaps in your skill sets and identify how you can strengthen them.

For example, are there classes at a local community or technical college?

### Technical Skills Summary

Hard Skills Summary	My core skills	Skills listed in my target jobs	Notes
Administrative Skills			
Banking			
Computer Programming			
Computer Repairs			
Cosmetics			
Customer Service			
Data Entry			
Data Processing			
Delivery Services			
Events Planning			
Finance and Accounting			
Food Services: Food Preparation			
Food Services: Hosting			
Food Services: Inventory/Stocking			
Food Services: Serving			
Healthcare: Billing			
Healthcare: Patient Care			
Healthcare: Recordkeeping			
Healthcare: Scheduling			
Interior Design			
Retail Customer Service			
Retail Management			
Sales			
Second Language/Translating			
Social Media Marketing			
Teaching			
Typing			
Writing			
Others (list below)			



## Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are your “people skills” that affect how you work with or relate to others. Although they are different from technical skills, they are just as important in the workforce.

Candidates with strong interpersonal skills are in high demand for many different types of jobs. Regardless of the position, employers want workers who can work effectively with everyone, including their managers, co-workers, and customers. How do you determine your soft skills?

Consider the compliments you’ve received in previous jobs. When did co-workers or supervisors or customers compliment the work you were doing? For example, did people tell you that you were a great team player? Or perhaps your previous bosses commented on your timeliness or attention to detail.



**Action:** Evaluate the different jobs you've done. Look at job listings for positions you've had in the past or job listings that describe the ideal opportunity for you. Look at the “required” or “preferred” skills on the listing. Are they part of your core skills? For example, if you worked in healthcare billing, was your billing always accurate and on time? In that case, you likely have skills with attention to detail and motivation.

### Interpersonal Skills Summary

Soft Skills Summary	My core skills	Skills listed in my target jobs	Notes
Dependability: Always showing up on time, rarely misses a shift.			
Responsibility: can complete a task and accept feedback or criticism			
Confidence: willing to take on something new; learn a new skill			
Flexibility: open to new ideas; can and will change as needed			
Initiative: gets things done without being prompted or supervised			
Independence: doesn't need ongoing instructions or guidance			
High Energy/Strong work ethic. Works with a positive attitude; willingness to work hard to get the job done			
Detail Oriented: can process a high level of detail with minimal errors			
Goal-Oriented: can set and achieve individual or help with group goals			
Trustworthy: follows procedures, rules, and policies without supervision			
Resourceful: solves problems, generates new ideas			
Writes clearly and concisely			
Verbal communication/phone etiquette: Speaks clearly and politely, uses the appropriate tone			
Interpersonal skills: gets along with others; is friendly and courteous			
Conflict Management: works well under pressure; remains calm and shows respect during conflicts			
Others (list below)			

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## Career Exploration Tools



Listed below are a few examples of online tools that can help you determine potential careers. These tools can be useful if you are planning to enter the workforce for the first time or if you want to change from an existing career to a new one.

### **If you'd like to improve your technical skills**

If you are not comfortable using technology, consider taking a free or low-cost course at a local library or Adult & Community Enrichment at Suncoast Technical College. Use these links to learn more.

[Manatee County Library Tech Training](#)

[Sarasota County Library Courses](#)

[Adult and Community Enrichment](#)

The WRC Career Center also offers access to computers, tutors, and coaches that can help you with these tools.

### **Career Source Suncoast**

Career Source Suncoast is a great local resource if you are considering a career change. The web site has a career explorer tool that you can use to explore careers, investigate local companies, and search job listings for Manatee, Sarasota, and surrounding counties.

To access these services, go to the [Career Services page](#) on the Career Source Suncoast web site. [www.careersourcesuncoast.com/career-services](http://www.careersourcesuncoast.com/career-services)

#### **Career Explorer**

The Career Services page contains a tool called **Career Explorer**, which includes five self-assessment tools: Job Skills, Personal Skills, Work Interests, Tools & Technology, and Work Values. The tool is concise and won't take a long time to complete.



### To access Career Explorer:

1. Go to the [Employ Florida](http://www.EmployFlorida.com) website. [www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com)
2. Register or Sign in. To Register, click on Not Registered and complete the application. This will take about 15 – 20 minutes.
3. Click on the Career Services on the left-hand menu, and then select Career Explorer.
4. Click on each of the tools and follow the instruction online.

### Local job market research

To find detailed information about the local job market, go to the above Career Sources Suncoast site. Follow the steps below to obtain specific information about jobs that are currently available in the area. The reports include the top employers posting positions, the number of jobs available, the supply and demand (number of applicants compared to the number of positions), the skills required, salary data, and the educational requirements.

#### To access local job market research:

1. Go to the [Employ Florida](http://www.EmployFlorida.com) website. [www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com)
2. Register or Sign in. To Register, Click on Not Registered and complete the application. This will take about 15 – 20 minutes.
3. Click on the Career Services on the left-hand menu, and then select Job Market Explorer.
4. Click on Florida and then select County.
5. Click on Occupation Family and select All or a specific job family.
6. Continue to click on each of the options to customize your search.
7. Scroll down to see your results.

### Future Plans

Career Source Suncoast also offers **Future Plans**, a self-administered online program that helps individuals discover their aptitudes, interests, and values. Future Plans will help you choose the educational pathway that will lead you to your best in-demand



career choices. The tool requires a longer time commitment but will provide beneficial information for individuals seriously considering longer-term goals for a new or different career. Your Career Coach can share a sample report with you.

**To access Future Plans: (Google Chrome is the preferred browser)**

1. Log on florida.futureplans.org.
2. Click on Sign-in.
3. Click on Register, and enter the invitation code: MAV7X26E
4. Follow the prompts and complete the required information.

Be sure to remember your username, password, and the answer to your security question. Keep your access information confidential.

Click on Contact Us for the Future Plans® Help Desk.

**Florida Department of Education**

The Florida Department of Education web site contains another career exploration tool, “My Career Shines,” which also includes a series of tools and reports that you can use to explore careers in Florida. Your Career Coach can show you a sample Career Shines report.

**To access My Career Shines:**

1. Log onto [My Career Shines website](http://www.floridashines.org). www.floridashines.org
2. Click on Find A Career at the top of the page.
3. Select My Career Shines for College Students and Workforce.
4. Create an account to access the tools and reports.

**Career Onestop**

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Career Onestop has tools to assess your interests and skills and information to match your skills to specific occupations.

1. Log onto the [Career Onestop website](http://www.careeronestop.org). www.careeronestop.org
2. Click on Explore Careers.



## Interviews with Professionals in Jobs of Interest

It is beneficial to interview people that have worked in careers you are interested in exploring. They can provide very detailed information about the day to day work patterns, career paths, and typical work environment for the jobs that interest you. They can also give you the pros and cons that you may not think about in your online research. If you don't know anyone personally, you may find them by asking people within your network for referrals. Refer to the Networking Section of this manual and, rather than requesting information about job openings, request information about professionals you could interview to learn more about the careers you are targeting.

When you've identified someone, send them an email requesting a brief interview. Plan and organize a list of questions and offer to email them in advance.

### Sample questions:

- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What are your day-to-day job duties and responsibilities?
- What do you love about your work? What is not so enjoyable?
- How did you prepare for your career: degree, certification, apprenticeship, etc.?
- What was your career path?
- What talents and abilities are needed to be successful in this career?
- What lessons have you learned during your career journey?
- What challenges do you see for this industry in the next 3 – 5 years?

*Remember to send a thank-you email message immediately following your meeting and add them to your network!*

## Understand the Local Job Market

The Sarasota and Manatee area is a high growth, vibrant region with career opportunities across many sectors. Healthcare is the largest employer, and Manufacturing is one of the fastest-growing sectors with high-paid positions. There are also opportunities in the Trades and new Construction. Keep in mind the supply and demand within the local market will

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impact your chances of getting specific jobs. For example, typically, there are far more nursing, hospitality, and educational jobs than corporate jobs. Therefore, the competition is much higher for administrative assistant positions.



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**Note:** *The “Trades” or a trade job generally refers to any job whose duties require advanced training and skills gained through means other than a bachelor’s degree. For example, many jobs in the construction industry, such as plumber or electrician, require you to have significant experience and training before you can work.*

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With the 2020 pandemic crisis, Service, Food, and Hospitality jobs have been negatively affected, while Delivery, Warehouse, and Online Learning & Technology jobs are increasing.

We’ve yet to identify the long-term effects of COVID on the labor market. The resources below provide additional insights into the critical question of *Where Are the Jobs?*

- **[Hot Jobs List](#):** This resource captures the highest demand jobs in the region, organized by education level. It also indicates which occupations qualify for CareerSource educational scholarships for those that are eligible. Click [here](#) to access the scholarship site.
- **[Major Employer Database](#):** This spreadsheet has a list of major employers in the region, organized by industry and county, with direct links to the employers’ job opening websites. It also has the Sarasota Herald Tribune’s list of top companies to work for and links to all the local chambers of commerce membership directories.
- **[Employ Florida](#):** This Department of Economic Opportunity page includes labor Market Facts and Area and Industry Profiles.
- **[Companies Hiring During the Pandemic](#):** WRC has added a [COVID Resource Page](#) to its website with direct links to companies that hiring during the crisis.



## Compile List of Target Jobs

If you have completed the previous sections, you will have:

- Identified your financial needs
- Listed your preferred/required employment benefits
- Outlined the days and hours you can work
- Defined your interests and job values
- Made a list of your technical and interpersonal skills
- Searched the internet for career/job ideas (if applicable)
- Assessed the local job market

It is now time to compile a list of the companies and specific jobs you will target in your job search. Using the information above, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- What industries or specific companies are most likely to be interested in someone like me; see me as a strong candidate? Do their required and preferred qualifications match my skills summary?
- What organizations offer jobs that are consistent with my interests and job values?
- Are these organizations close enough to my home? Will it cost too much to commute?
- Will the starting salary be enough to meet my financial needs?
- Is there stability with these job types?
- Do they typically offer the employment benefits I need/desire?
- Do they typically offer jobs that would work with my schedule?





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# Step Three: Preparing for a Job Search



## Crafting a Winning Resume

Your resume should typically be a one-page document that summarizes your work history, skills, and education. It should be a concise summary of how your qualifications are a good match for the job(s) you are seeking.

Using a simple font (typically sized 11 or 12) will ensure that your resume is easy to read. Basic fonts like Arial, Courier New, Calibri, Verdana, and Times New Roman work the best. Remember to always proofread before sending it!

There are two types of resume formats: chronological or functional.

### **You typically use a functional resume when:**

- You're just beginning your career. You may have the skills required and relevant experience outside the realm of paid work, such as volunteering and internships. In this case, place your skills at the front and center of your resume, rather than your work history.
- You have large or multiple gaps in your work history: If you were unemployed for a long time, or you left the workforce to care for children or family members, you may want to emphasize what you can do, rather than your work history.
- You've changed jobs frequently: The emphasis on long term employment within the same company has diminished in recent years; however, too many job changes can be a red flag for some hiring managers. In this case, you may want to call more attention to your skills and areas of experience and list them at the beginning rather than outlining them in chronological work history.

### **We commonly use chronological resumes:**

- They make the progression of your career more natural to follow.
- It's easier for the reviewer to understand your skills and accomplishments.
- As it emphasizes work history, the chronological resume is the most effective format for candidates with a stable work history and secure experience in a specific field. By



showcasing your work history in a clear and concise order, you quickly show the reviewer that you have the knowledge and skills for the job.

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**Note:** *There are other variations that a WRC Resume Developer or WRC Career Coach may recommend depending on your experience and work history.*

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## Resume Worksheet

Use the Resume Worksheet to gather the information you'll need to draft your resume.



**Action:** Complete the Resume Worksheet to prepare for drafting your resume. Whether you are writing your resume yourself or with the help of a Resume or Career Coach, take the time to collect all of the following information before you begin.

## Contact Information

- Enter your name, address, phone number, and email address that you check most often.
- Enter your LinkedIn URL.

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email Address	
LinkedIn URL	



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**Note:**

- *Be sure to use a professional email address for the job searching process. If you don't have one, create a new one to use in your job search process.*
  - *If you include your LinkedIn profile information, ensure that the profile is up to date.*
- 

### **List your Career Objective, Skills Summary, or Areas of Expertise**

Career Objective statements at the beginning of a resume have been used for many years but are not required. It's a matter of preference. For some reviewers, it's an excellent introduction to the candidate, while others may perceive it as dated or "old fashioned." Keep in mind that the Career Objective statements may seem too specific if you want to target more than one industry or position. If that is the case, you should either exclude it from your resume or be prepared to customize it for each job type you are targeting.

If you include a Career Objective statement, use it as a brief overview of your experience (your technical skills) and your career goals. Include a few of your interpersonal skills in this section as well. As an alternative, you can use this space for a short profile with a title and a few skills (for example, "Experienced Receptionist with advanced computer skills and proven abilities to multi-task.")



## Technical and Interpersonal Skills

- Refer to your Skills Summary from Section Two, “Exploring Careers.” Which of these skills do you have, and appear in your target job listings? Be sure to include some of these skills in your cover letter and resume.

Hard Skills	Soft Skills

- What are your top 5-10 interpersonal skills? (Examples: dependability, detail orientation, flexibility). It’s essential to select the skills you want to highlight without overdoing it. Try to keep this list relatively short and reference the additional skills in the bullet points under Duties/Achievements.
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What types of abilities to you bring to the workplace?
- Keep in mind that a computer may scan your resume for keywords in the job description; to have your resume rise to the top, it may need to contain the same keywords. Try to use the same language used in the job description.

## Professional Experience (list your most recent job first)

- Generally, resumes include the last 10-15 years of professional experience; however, it is good practice to maintain a record of all past positions.

- Tip: For dates employed, include only the year in the start and end dates.*
- Include all positions (paid work, internships, and part-time jobs)—even those that may not directly relate to your current field. These

Position #1	
Company Name	
City and State	
Dates Employed	
Job Title   Position	
Duties   Achievements	

- demonstrate transferable skills that can align with a future job opportunity.
- Think of your accomplishments and responsibilities. Don’t use a previous job description word for word; use it as a guide only. It may be helpful to use a separate piece of paper to brainstorm your duties/achievements, then hone and summarize them for the worksheet. Be mindful of the potential overlap between the technical

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skills section and the duties/achievements. Decide where you will place them in the resume without duplicating.



- Resumes are about accomplishments. Use verbs to indicate your achievements, for example, “Managed work for six people, including scheduling, work assignments...” Rather than “Responsible for managing six people.”
- Remember to document any awards or recognition earned during employment.
- Remember to include keywords here, for example, skills required for the job and those skills you feel confident backing up during a job interview.
- Include situations where you solved a problem at work. Describe what action(s) you took to resolve the issues or make improvements. Add quantifiable information when possible. Any time you include dollar amounts or percentages, it catches the reader’s attention. Consider the difference between the following two statements:
  - “During tenure with the organization, significantly increased sales.” (too vague)
  - “Within two years of hire, increased sales by 25%, resulting in a profitability boost of \$10M.” (specific)

## Education

If you graduated from high school within the past five years, and you have limited work experience, include your high school graduation on your resume. Highlight any academic or extracurricular achievements that may be relevant to the hard or soft skills listed on the job posting.

Name of School	
City and State	
Degree Obtained	

Name of School	
City and State	
Degree Obtained	

- If you have completed college courses but do not have a degree, list the name of the school, city, and state, and indicate the degree you are seeking and relevant course information.
- If you have completed multiple degrees (Associates and Bachelor of Science), list the highest degree first.
- If you received awards or were involved with organizations during college, include that information. If you have been out of school for more than five years, it may be less relevant to list your grade point average or awards. The emphasis of your resume should be on duties and achievements.



- If you completed some coursework but did not earn a degree, list all courses relevant to your target job(s)

### Continuing Education/Professional Development

- Include any additional training beyond high school or college. This could include certifications, continuing education credits, or seminars offered through professional associations or previous employers. List seminars, professional development courses, or certifications obtained.
- If you completed the courses or seminars at a distinguished or well-known institution, include that information.

Courses	
Seminars	
Certifications	

### Honors and Performance Awards

List any Honors or Performance awards, along with dates.

Honor/Performance Award	Date Received
Honor/Performance Award	Date Received

### Membership and Community Engagement

- List any volunteerism that directly aligns with your future career path. For example, if you are seeking bookkeeping roles and serve as the treasurer for the local Optimist Club, be sure to list that activity.
- List any memberships for organizations that may be relevant to the jobs you are targeting in your search.

*Item #1*

Organization	
Roles and Duties	
Dates of Involvement	

*Item #2*

Organization	
Roles and Duties	
Dates of Involvement	

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## Sample Chronological Resume

source: [www.thebalancecareers.com](http://www.thebalancecareers.com) with edits



**Jane Harrington** | (914) 555-1212 | [jane.harrington@email.com](mailto:jane.harrington@email.com) | [linkedin.com/in/janeharrington](https://www.linkedin.com/in/janeharrington)

**CAREER OBJECTIVE** *(See Resume Worksheet and Functional Resume format below; You may choose not to include Career Objective Statement)*

Administrative coordinator seeks management position with a top corporation that will allow her to utilize her organizational and leadership skills while coordinating workflow and overseeing company logistics.

### KEY SKILLS

- Blood banking
- Quality assurance
- AABB accreditation
- Compliant with FDA cGMP

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Administrative Coordinator**, Mannix Services, Naperville, IL 2016 – Present

- Analyzed monthly, weekly, and daily sales reports with 100 percent accuracy for the past two years
- Scheduled over 150 training classes, seminars, and conferences for three sites

**Administrative Secretary**, Minnesota Life Insurance, Barrington, IL 2014 - 2016

- Oversaw research and design of sales and training presentations, requiring fluency in PowerPoint, SlideShare, and Prezi
- Scheduled and assigned work for three-person training staff

**Facilities Assistant**, SBC Warburg Dillon Reed, Chicago, IL 2012 - 2014

- Balanced a \$7 million facilities budget
- Scheduled maintenance calls, staff meetings, office relocations, and construction projects for eight clients

**General Manager**, KSMR Radio 92.5 AM/94.3 FM, Winona, MN 2000 - 2012

- Directed a 36 member staff including a 7-member management team
- Oversaw disciplinary actions, budgeting, special requests, program schedule, and hiring
- Chaired a committee that received a \$100,000 grant for increasing station amenities

### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations**

St. Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

Project Management Certificate, Minnesota Continuing Education Center

### MEMBERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Volunteer and Foster Parent at Naperville Animal Shelter



## Sample Functional Resume

source: [www.thebalancecareers.com](http://www.thebalancecareers.com) with edits

Jane Applicant | (123) 456-7890 | [jose.applicant@email.com](mailto:jose.applicant@email.com) | [linkedin.com/in/japplicant](https://linkedin.com/in/japplicant)

### PHLEBOTOMIST

Successful track record in the blood-banking care environment; Results-oriented, high-energy, hands-on professional with skills in management, quality assurance, program development, training, and customer service.

#### Key Skills Include:

- Blood banking
- Quality assurance
- AABB accreditation
- Compliant with FDA cGMP

### PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### EDUCATIONAL

- Facilitated educational projects from 2016-2018 for 25 Northern California blood centers
- Tracked and reported quality assurance metrics for central office

#### PHLEBOTOMY

- Assisted team members in venipunctures, donor reaction care
- Provided licensed staffing to extend their capacity
- Managed the blood services regulations documentation (BSDs) while assigned to the self-contained bloodmobile unit (SCU)

#### COMPLIANCE

- Provided daily operational review/quality control of education accountability as it relates to imposed government regulatory requirements in a medical environment. Maintained 100% accuracy at all times

#### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

- Successfully supervised contract support for six AT&T Broadband systems located in the Bay Area before a career in phlebotomy
- Managed scheduling, quality control, payroll, special projects, and evaluations to ensure proper end-of-line and demarcation signal
- Reduced employee turnover by 15%. Introduced two-way communication to field employees, enhanced employee appearance, and spearheaded the expansion of employee (health) benefits

#### TECHNOLOGY

Chief point of contact for the AT&T telephone and the ABC-affiliated TV stations as related to complaints and diagnosing communication problems either at the site or remote broadcasting.

#### EDUCATION

Associate of Applied Science in EKG-Phlebotomy | San Jose State University, San Jose, California

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## Cover Letters



Cover letters serve as an opportunity to introduce yourself and sell your skills to an organization, so take your time in writing them. The letter should contain two or three paragraphs to explain what attracted you to the type of work, why you're interested in working for the company, and why you think you'd be a good fit. Some companies request and may value cover letters more than others, but a good cover letter can help you get noticed.

You will need to customize each letter for each application or resume you submit. Use the same font (style and size) that you use for your resume. As indicated in the Resume section, use a simple font like Arial, Courier New, Calibri, Verdana, and Times New Roman in size 11 or 12. Don't forget to proofread before sending it!

Cover letters are typically three paragraphs long.

### First Paragraph

It's essential to grab the reader's attention. Consider using some of the wording you use in your Quick Pitch in your opening sentence.

Be direct. State why you are writing: State the specific job listing, the person who suggested you write, or the situation that prompted you to send your resume.

*"I am writing in response to the opening for the <job title> with <Company Name> as advertised in <source>."*

*"Jane Doe suggested I contact you about the job, as she feels my skills would be a good fit for the position."*

Summarize the kind of professional you are. Include any keywords from the job listing that match your Skills Summary.

*"I am a detail-oriented, reliable professional with significant experience in food services. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my skills and expertise to support the mission of your organization."*

### Second Paragraph

This paragraph should link the employer's needs to you. Show the employer how your skills and accomplishments are relevant to the job they listed. Start with a skill or job listed in the job description. Don't repeat the exact wording from your resume. List some details about your experience to demonstrate how you are uniquely qualified for the position and can help their organization. State an accomplishment from a previous job. If you can, show how you added value to that last company you worked for.



Here are some examples of the statements you could include:

“In your job description, you mention you are switching from print to social media marketing entirely within the next year. At my last job, I initiated a social media campaign that increased gym memberships by 40%”.

*“As a coordinator at XYZ Enterprises, I have made the process for XX more efficient and increased my group’s output by XX percent over the past 12 months.”*

*“My work there included responsibility for X, Y, and Z.”*

*“To achieve company goals, I would develop measurable strategies and create and deploy tactics to achieve desired results”..... “My experience includes achieving desired results from XYZ company as its Social Media Coordinator.*

*“Before that position, my time in the <XX> industry taught me the importance of <soft skill>, <soft skill>, and <soft skill>.” Link this statement with the needs/requirements indicated in the job listing.*

Show the employer you’ve done your homework. If you learned about a recent merger or upcoming expansion or new client, etc., mention it in this section. Only do this if there is a logical, concise way to link your background with their mission.

### Third Paragraph

Include a professional statement of confidence: *“Based on my recent work in <hard skills>, I believe my experience makes me a strong fit for the <job title> position, and I would be happy to discuss it in detail with you. Please contact me at <email> at your earliest convenience.*

Make sure the email and phone number listed in the letter match the information at the top of your resume. Close the message with “Sincerely” and your first and last name.

### Tips for Cover Letters

- Write and send a cover letter with every resume you submit – even if it is not required.
- Minimize using “I” to start sentences. Don’t tell the hiring manager how helpful this job would be to you; focus on how you will meet the employer’s needs.
- Use the same font as in your resume to present a consistent, professional image.

- 
- Keep the letter to one page with three to four paragraphs. Anything longer will likely be skimmed by the hiring manager, which could reduce your chances of getting an interview.
  - Thank the employer and say you're looking forward to receiving a response.





**Sample Cover Letter** Source: [www.thebalancecareers.com](http://www.thebalancecareers.com) with edits

Joseph Q. Applicant  
123 Main Street  
Anytown, CA 12345  
555-212-1234  
josephq@email.com

September 1, 2020

Jane Smith  
Director, Human Resources  
Fit Living  
123 Business Rd.  
Business City, NY 54321

Dear Ms. Smith:

I'm writing to apply for the position of Social Media Manager for Fit Living, as advertised on your website careers page. I have three years of experience as a Social Media Assistant for Young Living, and I believe I am ready to move up to the manager position. Alternative opening sentence: "As a Social Media Assistant with three years' experience, I believe I would be an excellent candidate for the Social Media Manager position advertised on your website. (or "I believe my strategic approach to meeting and exceeding company goals would help your company achieve its desired objectives")

In your job posting, you mention you want to hire a Social Media Manager who understands the Internet and social media trends. During my time at Young Living, I was tasked with increasing follower numbers on Instagram. Within six months, I increased our followers by over 50 percent. Also, I identified follower engagement as an essential metric and raised it by 400 percent within the same period. Also, I am strategically expanding our following with the best influencers in our niche.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss social media marketing skills and people skills that I can offer your organization. I've attached my resume, and I am available for an interview between 9:00 and 10:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I can be reached by cell at 555-555-5555 or by email at [jqapplicant@gmail.com](mailto:jqapplicant@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Your Signature (*hard copy letter*)

Jamie Jones

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## Emailing Cover Letters



If you are emailing a cover letter and resume directly to a hiring manager or other contact within a target employer, keep the following in mind:

- **Follow Standard Email Format:** Your cover letter should include a subject line, greeting, two- or three-paragraph body, professional closing, signature, and contact information. The subject line should have the position you are applying for and your name.
- **Research Your Targeted Employer:** Learn the name of the hiring manager by calling the company or researching its website. Learning about the company and its corporate mission will also help you to match the qualifications you mention in your cover letter to the employer’s specific needs.
- **Use a Professional Email Address:** Remember, don’t use a “cutesy” personal email address for career search-related correspondence. Instead, consider setting up an email account dedicated solely to your job search so that you can easily keep track of new communication. (For example, [Jane.Jones@email.com](mailto:Jane.Jones@email.com)).

*source: [www.thebalancecareers.com](http://www.thebalancecareers.com)*



## Sample email letter with resume

**Subject:** Editorial Assistant Position - Jane Jones

Dear [Name of Hiring Manager or “Hiring Manager”]:

I would like to express my sincere interest in serving as an editorial assistant for your publishing company.

As a recent graduate with writing, editing, and administrative experience, I believe my knowledge and skills set may be of value to you and our company.

You specify that you are looking for someone with strong writing skills. As an English major at XYZ University, a writing tutor, and an editorial intern for both a government magazine and a college marketing office, I have become a skilled writer with a variety of publication experience.

My maturity, practical experience, attention to detail, and eagerness to enter the publishing business will make me an excellent editorial assistant. I would love to begin my career with your company and am confident that I would be a beneficial addition to the 123 Publishing Company.

I have attached my resume to this email and will call within the next week to see if we might arrange a time to speak together.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Jones  
111 Main Street  
Town, NY  
Email: janejones@gmail.com  
Cell: (555) 555-5555  
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janejones

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## Professional References



A professional reference is a recommendation from a person who can vouch for your qualifications for a job. It can either be a written letter of recommendation or a reference you provide on a job application. A useful reference has credibility and will say positive things about your abilities and personality traits.

### Who should you ask to be a professional reference?

- **Former Employer/Supervisor:** One of the best recommendations that you can add to your portfolio is a recommendation from a previous employer that speaks to your skills, and also shows that you're able to maintain a friendly relationship even after you've left a position.
- **Former Colleague/Co-worker:** It might not seem as important as a letter from a former boss, but a kind word from someone you've worked with can speak to a different—but still vital—set of skills, like how you work in a team, how you interact with others, and how you contribute to the work environment.
- **Teacher/Professor:** If you are a recent grad, ask a professor that gave you positive feedback or showed particular interest in your studies, particularly one that was within your major. Can they speak to how you handle hard work and learn new skills?
- **Reference from Volunteering or Internship:** A professional reference doesn't have to come from a previous job. If you completed an internship or volunteered, there may have been someone that could speak to your work ethic and bring light to some of your passions. This could add an exciting dimension to your qualities as a candidate.

### Who shouldn't you ask to be a professional reference?

- Your friends or family members might be willing to sing your praises, but that's not what a future employer would find relevant or useful in evaluating you as a candidate. Character references may not be harmful to have on hand in some instances, but that's not typically the case in a job search.

### How to ask for a professional reference

It might feel awkward to request professional references. Practice these dos and don'ts for best results:

- **Do:** Give plenty of notice before you need to submit your application; otherwise, you'll risk coming across as underprepared or unprofessional.



- **Don't:** Make it seem like they have no choice; ask if they would be willing to be a reference.
- **Do:** Provide a recent copy of your resume and a general description of the positions you're applying for. If they get a call from your potential employer, they'll know what to say about your relevant skills. And if they see the target job descriptions beforehand, they are more likely to include relevant skills and qualifications when they write your professional reference.
- **Do:** Keep it short and sweet without typos or errors. Respect their time and make a good impression.
- **Don't:** Forget to thank each reference. Send them a thank you note - especially if you got the job!
- **Don't:** List anyone as a reference unless you've obtained their permission first.
- **Do:** Make sure you have their up-to-date contact information as well.

### Sample request for professional references

Hello Susan,

I hope you and your family are doing well since the last time we talked. I am currently searching for a job and was hoping you would be willing to serve as a professional reference for me.

I think the skills and experience I gained while working at <company> would significantly enhance my job search process and, having worked <with/for> you for two years, I would appreciate your permission to list you as a professional reference for me. *OR <I would appreciate a written letter of recommendation highlighting my skills and experience>.*

Please let me know if you have any questions. I've attached my latest resume, contact information, and information about the jobs I am targeting in my search. I would be happy to answer any questions or explain further at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if you can assist me.

Thank you,

Jane Jones

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**Professional references template**



Use a format like this to track and submit your references.

<p>Your Name City, State (XXX) XXX-XXX Email Address</p>
Reference Name: _____
Company Title: _____
Relationship: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Reference Name: _____
Company Title: _____
Relationship: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Reference Name: _____
Company Title: _____
Relationship: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____



## Using LinkedIn For Your Job Search

There are many ways to improve your job search using LinkedIn. Many employers use LinkedIn to post job listings and contact potential candidates. At the same time, many job seekers use LinkedIn for connecting and networking with people in their targeted industry.

Effective networking is about building relationships. It is critical to take the time to develop your LinkedIn profile, add to your connections, and use them to aid in your job search.

The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the higher your chances of being found and contacted by a recruiter or employer. Recruiters use an advanced search tool to find candidates. Here are some examples:

Recruiters will use the “keyword” field to search for candidates with specific skills or tasks or responsibilities listed anywhere in their profile.

Recruiters also use the “title” field to search for candidates who have experience in the specific job title, and the “location” field to search for candidates within a particular county, city or zip code area.

Other fields include “school” for graduates from a specific college or technical school and “company” to search for candidates within a particular industry (for example, other hospitals or hotels within a specific area of target).

### **LinkedIn Profile**

Use your resume to create your LinkedIn profile (or vice versa). They both contain information about your previous employment with detailed information about your skills and experience, and they should be consistent. Having this information online in LinkedIn gives prospective employers and their recruiters easy access to your information.

Use the following link for details on how to set up your profile. Tutors in the WRC Career Center are available to assist you with setting it up. Check the Career Center calendar for more details.

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/learning-linkedin-3/set-up-a-new-linkedin-account-2>



### **Headline/Summary Section**

To enhance your profile, create a catchy headline. The summary section serves as a chronological resume, and it usually two to three paragraphs long. Take wording from your Quick Pitch (or vice versa), to keep your message consistent.

### **Go Public**

Make your profile public to make sure the world (recruiters, hiring managers, etc.) can find it. Also, customizing your URL will give you a link that's easy to share. If your name is available, use it. The format example is <http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourfirstnamelastname>. Include your LinkedIn URL on your resume as part of your contact information.

### **Photo**

Include a professional photo in your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn is a professional career and business platform, so wear something you would normally wear to an interview (for example, wear a blouse or dress in a solid color). LinkedIn suggests using a headshot with your face taking up 60% of the frame.

### **Industry**

Select an industry when you create your LinkedIn account. Recruiters use that field regularly when searching for candidates.

### **Experience Section**

This is essentially your online resume. Include current and past employment, education, industry, etc.

### **Connections**

LinkedIn connections will increase your chances of finding someone to help with your job search. You will want as many connections as you can get to expand your network, but the quality of your contacts is more important than the quantity. Make sure you only connect with people you know or people you would like to connect with to learn more about their company or specific job.



## Tips for Sending LinkedIn Invitations to Connect

source: [www.thebalancecareers.com](http://www.thebalancecareers.com)

- **Personalize your invitations to connect:** When sending a connection request, LinkedIn provides the generic message, "I'd like to add you to my professional network." Never use this message on its own; instead, personalize each request. Below are a few guidelines for writing an invitation to connect.
- **Introduction:** Begin with a self-introduction if you do not already know the person.
- **Why you would like to connect:** Explain why you want to connect with the person; perhaps you read an interesting article they posted, you both work for similar companies, etc. If you would like to connect because you want career advice, you can include this in your invitation. However, do not directly ask for a job or a recommendation until the person has accepted your request.
- **Mutual benefits:** Emphasize how potential contact could benefit from your connection. Something as simple as, "Please let me know if I can be of any help," will show the person the potential benefit of being your contact.
- **Say thank you:** Always end by saying, "Thank you."
- **Follow-up:** If the person does not respond in about a month, you can send one more request. After that, it is best to stop. Some people simply keep a small list of close contacts.

### What not to do when sending a LinkedIn message

- **Don't send a generic message:** Just as you wouldn't send the same cover letter with every job application, you shouldn't send the same message with every invitation to connect. Personalize your request, and you'll increase your chances of getting a response.
- **Don't ask for more than you're prepared to give:** Not ready to recommend this person, either because you're too busy or you don't know them in person? Don't ask them for a recommendation. It's that simple.
- **Don't stalk:** Once you've sent your initial message and followed up once without a response, let it go. Repeatedly sending messages won't convince them to connect with you -- just the opposite.

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## How to capitalize on your connections: recommendations and endorsements



A recommendation on LinkedIn is a written reference supporting you and your work. It is usually a few sentences or short paragraphs long and appears on your profile. LinkedIn provides a template for recommendation requests that you can edit and personalize as you'd like.

Endorsements from network contacts for specific skills are another option. They work very differently than recommendations. Anyone can visit your profile, read your skills list, and hit the “endorse” button for the skills they know you have. The best way to get some endorsements is to itemize a wide selection of expertise and specific experience on your profile, particularly those that apply to the job(s) you are seeking.

### Job Search Options

Search for jobs on LinkedIn by clicking the "Jobs" tab and then entering a keyword, country, and zip code.

Use the advanced search option to refine your search and to search by date posted, experience level, specific location, job function, company, and industry.

You can save job searches and receive emails about new job listings. You can also find job openings by searching for and clicking on specific companies. Many companies post job openings on their LinkedIn pages.

### Use LinkedIn Company Profiles to Learn About Employers

LinkedIn company profiles are an excellent way to view essential information about companies you are targeting in your job search. They also provide information about job openings, current, and future projects, new hires, and people who you may already know at the company.

LinkedIn company profiles also provide substantial insight into a company's culture—events they celebrate, causes they support, and the mission and values within the organization.



## Networking | Create a Networking Plan

Networking can be very intimidating. Most people don't think they have many contacts and are hesitant to ask for help in their job search.

According to Jobvite's 2019 Job Seeker Nation Survey, 50% of job seekers heard about jobs from friends, while 37% say they also learned about jobs from professional networks. You are five times more likely to get an interview if referred by an insider. Therefore, networking can be an essential part of your job search. Here are some tips and strategies:

### Identify your current network

- Start by making a list of your current network connections. See the list of current network examples below.
- Ask each of them if they know of any possible job openings or of other people who may be able to help you. You may be surprised by the people they know!
- Call, email, or text them with a brief message regarding your job search. See the email example below.
- Keep a journal of all networking activities, including a list and copy of any networking requests you send out. Track all follow-up/action items related to each contact.

*Your current network may include:*

- Former co-workers
- Colleagues
- Neighbors
- Friends
- Teachers
- Acquaintances
- Alumni Associations
- Members of your club(s) or church

### Expand your network

Expanding your network may be easier than you expect. Here are some steps you can take to identify new contacts:

1. Attend career workshops and job fairs.
2. Browse networking sites. Attend events or send messages to members and organizers.

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- a. Meetup has a category for “career and business events” with a wide variety of career-focused groups that meet regularly. Attend an event or send messages to members or organizers. <https://www.meetup.com/find/career-business/>
  - b. Eventbrite is an event-based site with listing pages for free and paid events. You’ll find conferences, classes, fairs, festivals, discussions, etc. <https://www.eventbrite.com/>. Type “women’s networking groups Sarasota” on your phone to see what networking events are coming up.
  - c. Use LinkedIn: See the guide on using LinkedIn for your career exploration and job search.



3. Look for organizations in your target industry and follow them on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Subscribe to their newsletters. Many organizations put on annual or even more frequent events and will invite newcomers. You can also find contact information to send an exploratory email.
4. Alumni  
Your college or technical school can be a good source of contacts. They often host events and conversations that could be a great place to introduce yourself or meet new contacts.
5. Local Organizations
  - a. For more places to find networking events, think local: your library or religious institution may host events.
  - b. You may also find events open to all at community organizations and through your local chamber of commerce.



## Send emails to referrals, asking for assistance or advice

### *Sample message*

Dear Ms. Chang,

I was referred to you by Susan Wilson from the Sarasota Memorial Hospital in Sarasota. She mentioned you as a possible source of information on jobs in the local healthcare industry.

My goal is to secure an entry-level position in a doctor's office or hospital. I would appreciate hearing your advice on how to uncover job leads and any other information regarding an effective job search.

Thanks so much, in advance, for any insight and advice you would be willing to share. Please let me know how and when it would be convenient for me to contact you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Smith

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## Compose and Practice your Quick Pitch



### What's a “quick pitch,” and how can it help your career?

A quick pitch is a quick synopsis of your background and experience. It's an excellent way to share your who you are and “pitch” information about your skills and expertise quickly and effectively with people who don't know you.

This speech is all about you: who you are, what you do, and what you want to do.

A quick pitch is a great way to gain confidence in introducing yourself to network contacts, hiring managers, and company representatives. Done right, this short speech helps you introduce yourself to career and business connections clearly and compellingly.

### When and how to use a Quick Pitch

Use your quick pitch at:

- job fairs and career expos
- networking events
- online in your LinkedIn headline/summary
- in your Twitter biography

Your quick pitch can also be used during job interviews, especially when you're asked about yourself. Interviewers often begin with the question, “Tell me about yourself.” Think of your quick pitch as a super-condensed version of your response to that question.

### What to say

- **Your quick pitch should be brief.** Limit it to 30-60 seconds. You don't need to include your entire work history and career objectives. Your pitch should be a short recap of who you are and what you do.
- **You need to be persuasive.** Even though it's a short pitch, it should be compelling enough to spark the listener's interest in you.
- **Share your skills.** Your quick pitch should explain who you are and what skills you have. Try to focus on skills that add value in many situations. This is your chance to brag a bit



— avoid sounding boastful but share what you feel you bring to the table.

**Refer to your Skills Summary.**

- **Practice again and again.** The best way to feel comfortable about giving a quick pitch is to practice it until it comes naturally, without sounding robotic. Practice giving your speech to a friend or record and review it yourself. This will help you know whether you're staying within the time limit and giving a coherent message. The more you practice, the easier it will be to deliver it when you're at a career networking event or job interview.
- **Be positive and flexible.** You often aren't interviewing for a specific position when you deliver your pitch, so you want to appear open-minded and flexible. Don't lead with the stuff you'd rather not be doing. (For example, if you don't want to travel a lot for work, that's completely legitimate – but don't volunteer that information right off the bat.) This is your chance to make a great first impression with a potential employer. Don't waste it.
- **Mention your goals.** You don't need to get too specific. An overly targeted goal isn't helpful since your pitch will be used in many circumstances, and with many different types of people. But do remember to say what you're looking for. For instance, you might say, "a role in accounting" or "an opportunity to apply my sales skills to a new market."
- **Know your audience.** You may want to have a few versions depending upon the audience. Think about which skills to emphasize based on the contact and specific jobs you are targeting with them. Think of the hiring manager/recruiter as your "customer," and your quick pitch should be a marketing pitch that highlights how your skills and experience and goals match their needs. You may also want to have a more casual, personal pitch prepared for social settings.
- **Don't speak too fast. Avoid rambling.** Yes, you only have a short time to convey a lot of information, but don't try to fix that by speaking quickly. This will only make it hard for listeners to absorb your message. Try to stay on track. Give the person you're talking to a chance to interject or respond.

Use these examples as guidelines in crafting your quick pitch. Make sure it includes details on your background, as well as what you'd provide an employer with.

### Sample Quick Pitches

- *My name is Kim Miller. I recently graduated from college with a degree in communications. I worked on the college newspaper as a reporter, and eventually, as the editor of the arts section. During that time, I did a lot of research and conducted interviews for over 20 articles. I'm looking for a job that will put my skills as a*

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*Journalist to work. I'm attending this job fair to identify leads and submit my resume or application.*



- *My name is Kathy Logan, and I have a decade's worth of experience in accounting, working primarily with small and midsize firms. My skills include managing account receivables, accounts payables, bookkeeping, tax preparation, and basic audits. If your company needs an extra set of hands, I'd be thrilled to speak with someone about the opportunity.*
- *My name is Joan Wells. I create illustrations for websites and brands. My passion is coming up with creative ways to express a message and drawing illustrations that people share on social media. I'm currently looking for a new opportunity in the Sarasota area. I'd like to hear about current or upcoming openings in your company.*



**Action:** Draft your Quick Pitch.

Write your Quick Pitch	
<i>Introduction   Who you are</i>	
<i>Skills and Accomplishments   What you can do/have done</i>	
<i>Goals   What you want to do</i>	
<i>Closing</i>	



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# Step Four | Searching for Target Jobs



## Research Target Companies

You've done all the preliminary work. Now you are ready to begin searching and applying for specific job openings!

Refer to the Target Jobs list you created in Section Two of this Guide (Exploring Careers, Understanding the Local Job Market). Before applying for specific jobs within the companies that interest you, it's essential to learn as much as you can about them. In addition to the company's website, [Glassdoor](http://www.glassdoor.com) [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) contains information about companies, including employee reviews and salary tools. [LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com) [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) also has a search feature to find information about specific companies, along with details about their leadership, management, and individual employees. These are just two examples of the many sites you can use to research your target companies.

As part of your research, review the following information and take notes for each target company. This information will be useful not only to prioritize your target companies but also when you are preparing for interviews with them.

- **Mission, Vision, and Values:** Can be found on the company's website. Researching this will give you more insights into what the company does and will be useful when you prepare questions to ask the interviewer(s).
- **Culture:** Look for an "About Us" link that will provide useful insights into the company. Look for information describing what drives their decisions about their goals and how they treat their employees. Find out what the office environment is like. Is there an emphasis on teamwork? Is the office more conservative or casual? This information will not only help you prepare for the interview, but it will also help you decide whether you will fit in with the company. You can also find this information on LinkedIn or GlassDoor.



- **Key Products/Services:** What does the company produce? What kind of services do they provide?

- **Size and Location(s):** Where is the company headquartered? Would you be working in the main office or a satellite location? How many people work in the local office? How long have they been in the area?
- **History/Recent News or Announcements:** How long has the company been in business? Have they grown consistently, or have they had to lay off employees in the past? Are they growing or shrinking in terms of size and revenue? If they are hiring, is it because they are expanding? This information will help you assess the stability of the company and can be used to personalize your cover letters and prepare questions for the job interview(s).

### **Essential Tips for Online Job Searching**

- Don't disclose any personal information online. Use a professional email address for all job-related communications.
- Save your resume and cover letter in Word format (to revise as needed quickly) and PDF format (to send via email or online without the risk of unintended document changes).
- When you see a job posting that interests you, print a hard copy or save it as a document on your hard drive. It may be tough to find it once you close the web page and go on to another one.

### **Popular Websites for Online Job Search**

The following is a list of websites you can use in your job search. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but these are the sites that are used the most for job searching. You will be able to search all these websites for job openings in your target geographical area, and all of them have functionality for you to apply online if the hiring company allows for it. You may find a better fit for your job search; try them all to see which one works best for you.



- **Employ Florida:** [www.employflorida.com](http://www.employflorida.com) This Department of Economic Opportunity page includes local job postings under the “Job Seeker” section.
- **Indeed:** [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) This site provides access to millions of jobs from job boards, newspapers, classified ads, and company websites. You can use the Advanced Job Search function to search on keywords (skills), company name, location, job title, and many other filters.
- **Simply Hired:** [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com)
- **Monster:** [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
- **Career Builder:** [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)
- **LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) See Section Three of this Guide (Preparing For Job Search/Using LinkedIn) for more information about using LinkedIn in your job search.
- **Idealist:** [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org) This site lists jobs in the non-profit sector only

### Resources at the Women’s Resource Center

The following are additional resources that will be particularly helpful in your search for employment within the Sarasota, Manatee, and Venice areas.

**Hot Jobs List:** This resource captures the highest demand jobs in the region, organized by education level. It also indicates which occupations qualify for CareerSource educational scholarships for those that are eligible. A link to this scholarship site can be found [here](#).

**Major Employer Database:** This spreadsheet has a list of major employers in the region, organized by industry and county, with direct links to the employers’ job opening websites. It also has the Sarasota Herald Tribune’s list of top companies to work for and links to all the local chambers of commerce membership directories.

**Career Center:** The WRC Career Center is an excellent resource if you need access to computers and professionals to help you with your career plan, job search, or computer tutoring. The Career Center hours may vary, so be sure to call or check the website for the current schedule. Clients are welcome to walk in during those hours; however, you may want to call in advance to schedule an appointment.



## Using Social Media

Social media has become a big part of our society and can be a powerful job search tool. According to a 2018 CareerBuilder survey, “70% of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, while 7% plan to start. Of those that use social media to research candidates, 57% have found content that caused them not to hire candidates.” Also, research shows being invisible (no social media footprint) is not a good solution. The CareerBuilder survey found that “nearly half of the employers (47%) say that if they can’t find a candidate online, they are less likely to call that person in for an interview”.

Some employers and recruiters will search social media to evaluate communication skills. They will look at your spelling, punctuation, grammar, and see if you can communicate ideas. They may try to verify the facts on your resume, so make sure your information is current and accurate. They will also search for you on social media to get an idea of who you are and what you have done before they even talk to you. They may look for clues about your personality to evaluate whether you would be a good fit for the culture within the hiring company.

It’s essential to think about all information posted by you (or about you) on all social media platforms. Don’t post things on social media that you would not want to share in an interview. Make sure there is nothing that would be considered offensive or unprofessional by a potential employer, recruiter, or anyone. Employers often learn a lot about how you spend your free time. Even the hint of the use of alcohol, illegal substances, or profanity could impact their perception of you. Assume everyone can see your posts!

### Examples of how to use social media platforms in your job search

- **LinkedIn:** As mentioned in Section Three of this Guide, your LinkedIn profile will serve as a virtual resume for potential employers and recruiters to browse. If you are unsure about using the internet for your job search, it’s OK to limit it to one platform. If that is the case, LinkedIn should be your platform of choice.

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- **Facebook:** Facebook can be used to identify professional associations. You can use Facebook to connect with groups and search their pages for potential news or information regarding companies or job openings. This is also a great way to network.



- **Twitter:** Twitter is a useful tool but requires more work to be effective. As an information source, you can use Hashtags(#) to find conversations about job searches in your area (for example, #FLJobHunting). If you want to use Twitter to attract attention from a hiring manager or recruiter, it's best to have a well-established Twitter account (with more than just a few followers in a specific field or discipline). Your account should contain ongoing activities in which you are re-tweeting leadership thoughts and information from you and other relevant leaders within your target field.
- **Instagram and Pinterest:** These platforms can be useful if you are working in (or targeting) jobs in creative fields such as culinary arts, sewing, gardening, painting, architecture, landscape design, interior design, etc. They are useful if you want to showcase your skills or draw attention to your current or past activities.

## Job Fairs

Job fairs can be an ideal way to meet local or regional representatives, many of whom are ready to interview and hire candidates on the spot. The events can be crowded, and it may seem challenging to move around and meet with your target companies. Still, they are an excellent opportunity to meet with multiple employers that you wouldn't be able to access otherwise.

Job fairs are also great for networking, and some events offer services such as resume reviews, interview skills training, and networking. Some job fairs span across many industries while others are organized for a specific industry (Hospitality, Healthcare, etc.). They are typically open to all job seekers in the area and may require online pre-registration. You will be required to submit your resume during the pre-registration, which gives hiring managers a chance to review it before the job fair.



Information regarding upcoming job fairs can be found on the internet (see examples below) and are often announced on the local evening news. Here are a few examples of web sites:

<https://www.heraldtribune.com/sarasotajobfair>

<https://www.floridajoblink.com/sarasota-job-fairs>

### Keep this in mind when preparing for a job fair

- **Do your homework:** Review the list of participating companies on the job fair website and make a list of the companies you'd like to meet at the job fair. Research them (see Section IV-A "Researching Target Companies" for details.) Write down a few questions that will illustrate your knowledge of the company and will demonstrate that you prepared for the interview. Employers are not just looking for the most skilled candidate for the job; they are also trying to identify the candidates that are genuinely interested in their company and have done their homework.
- **Practice your Quick Pitch:** Things move quickly at job fairs. You won't get much time with anyone manager or recruiter, so you will need to get their attention immediately. Introduce yourself to recruiters or hiring managers when you reach the table. Shake their hands and maintain direct eye contact. Rehearse the Quick Pitch you drafted in Section III-F over and over until you feel confident and natural saying it. Employer surveys identify enthusiasm and a positive attitude as two of the most important personal attributes in a candidate. Remember to smile!
- **Bring supplies:** Bring extra copies of your resume, a pen, and a notepad. If you have business or contact cards, bring them. You may also consider preparing a brief cheat sheet with a list of skills, achievements, and other details you want to mention for each specific target company.
- **Dress for success:** Attend the job fair in your best professional interview attire. See Section IV-D for more details.
- **Arrive early:** Lines can be long, so arrive before the job fair officially opens. It's better to stand in line so you can get in right away instead of coming later and being stuck with long lines at each table. This also means you'll be one of the early candidates at each table, which could make it easier to stand out in the crowd of candidates. Arriving early reinforces a positive image of a motivated candidate that plans well and is prepared.
- **Attend a workshop:** If the job fair offers workshops or seminars, attend as many as you can. In addition to getting advice or information, you'll have more opportunities

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to network. Be ready to chat with people you meet while moving around the job fair and hand out your contact information or resume.

- **Collect business cards:** Collect business cards, so you have the contact information for the hiring managers you met at the job fair. As soon as you get home, compile this information into a contact list and use it to send “Connect” requests on LinkedIn. Send thank-you notes to the company representatives you met at the job fair. Thank you letters are an excellent way to reiterate your interest in the company and to remind them you are a strong candidate. It’s hard to keep track of everyone you meet at a job fair, so jot down notes on the back of the business cards (or on a notepad) as soon as you have a chance. If you wait too long, you may have difficulties remembering specific details about each company.





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# Step Five | Job Interviews



## Preparing for your interviews

As the candidate, your objectives for the job interview are to learn more about the job and company, including benefits and opportunities for growth. This is your opportunity to determine if you'd fit into the work setting, and it's your time to convince the employer that you have the skills needed for the job.

The interviewer uses this meeting to tell you about the job and company and determine if you'd fit with the employees, managers, and company culture. They will evaluate if you have the skills, motivation, and experience to perform well in the job.

### **Be prepared**

Interviewing can create anxiety and stress. The best way to reduce that stress and build confidence is to prepare.

- Review the information you've gathered about the company, position, and interviewer. Talk to people who work there if you know someone or can identify someone through networking or LinkedIn.
- Prepare questions about the job and organization. Let the interviewer(s) know you researched the company's mission, products, services, and website ahead of time. It is generally good to have three to five questions to show that you've thought about and prepared for the interview. Unless the interviewer encourages questions during the meeting, wait until the end (when they typically ask if you have questions). Don't ask questions that can be quickly answered by looking at the employer's website and any literature provided to you in advance. It is not typically a good idea to ask about salary or benefits until those subjects are raised by the interviewer or presented in an offer letter. Here are examples of questions you may want to ask during the interview:
  - Can you please explain the organizational structure and where this job is positioned?
  - What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?



- Can you describe the supervisor's management style?
  - What do you feel are the skills and abilities need for someone to succeed in this job?
  - What is a typical day or week like for this position? Does the workload fluctuate, or is it consistent?
  - How will my performance be measured? Who will review my performance, and how will I receive feedback? How often?
  - What is the company's policy on providing seminars, workshops, or training so employees can maintain or expand on their skills/knowledge?
  - What is the longevity of the people in this department? Is this job opening due to attrition, or is the department expanding?
  - Can you tell me about your process and timing regarding the hiring decision? Where are you in the process, and when do you plan to make a decision? How will I be notified of your hiring decision either way?
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- Go to the location of the interview in advance, so you know the exact location, travel time, and whether you will need to add extra time for parking.
  - Review the skills you identified in Section Two and highlighted on your resume and make a list of those most relevant to the job for which you are interviewing. Think about how you will incorporate those strengths when you answer questions.
  - Rehearse your Quick Pitch from Section Three. The interviewer often begins the interview by asking, "Tell me about yourself." The Quick Pitch will help you frame your answer to this question.

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## Typical Interview Questions



It is hard to know what questions the interviewer will ask. The best way to prepare for this is to review common questions and practice answering them. There are many web sites containing interview questions and answers. Take the time to review the information online to prepare yourself for your interviews.

Listed below is a sampling of some of the most common interview questions. Draft your response to each question and rehearse your answers. Again, think about your list of skills from your inventory and how you will incorporate them into your answers.

- **Tell me little about yourself:** Employers ask this question to determine if you're a good fit for the job – not only based on your skills and experience but also to decide if you will work well with the team and the company culture. Your answer will give them insights into your personality and will see how comfortable you appear to answer open-ended questions.
    - How to Answer: Give a brief overview of your job history or why you have applied for this job. Mention a few things that reflect on your personalities, such as hobbies or volunteer work. It may be challenging to know where to start. The “present-past-future” format is an excellent way to organize your answer and end on a positive note: Begin with a brief overview of where you are now, then reference how you got to where you are, then finish with a goal for the future.
  
  - **Why should we hire you? What types of skills do you bring to our workplace?** Employers ask this question to determine if you are the best candidate with the best qualifications for the job.
    - How to Answer: Be confident and provide two to three specific skills and achievements you bring to the employer. (Again, reference section 2 above). Be concise and focused without sounding arrogant. Start by saying, “You should hire me because my experience is closely aligned with the requirements you listed in your job posting, specifically I have ## years of experience in ...”. Cite quantifiable examples (which should be listed on your resume) that will clearly illustrate your skills and experience. Remember to be focused and concise. You don't want to ramble or appeared disorganized.
  
  - **What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?** Employers ask this question to determine if your strengths align with the needs of the company and the job's
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responsibilities. Remember, everyone has weaknesses, and the employer wants to know that you can recognize your own.

- How to Answer: When asked about your greatest strengths, state skills, or attributes that pertain to the specific job and, if possible, will set you apart from other candidates. Be prepared to provide an example of how you applied the strength(s) in the past. Example: “I’ve received a lot of positive feedback about my ability to multi-task effectively. As a Receptionist at ABC Company, I answered over five incoming phone lines, processed an average of 100+ emails a day, and scheduled travel for eight sales representatives with a great deal of timeliness and accuracy”.
  - For your greatest weakness, discuss a skill you have improved upon, and turn it into a positive. For example, “My greatest weakness is in some ways also a strength; I’m very detail-oriented, and I sometimes overthink a problem. I’ve learned that when I clarify the task objective(s) and confirm the deadline, I can avoid going too deep in the task, meet the objectives, and complete the task on time.”
- **Why do you want to leave your current job (or a previous one)?**
    - Employers want to know why you want to work for their company. They also want to learn anything they can about what you did or didn’t like about previous employers so they can evaluate if you would be successful or enjoy the work at their company. Try to frame your answer in a way that makes the interviewer feel confident that the position you’re interviewing for is in line with your personal and professional goals.
    - How to Answer: Stick with the facts, be direct, and focus your answer on your future. Never say anything negative about your past or current employer. Being negative may not reflect well on you, and it’s best to highlight the positive reasons you’re seeking a new position. Explain that you are/were ready for a new challenge, want(ed) to try a new one, or want(ed) to expand your skills. If you were laid off or your departure wasn’t under the best circumstances, state the truth without too much detail and focus on the positive reasons you are applying for the job. Review your resume and be prepared to explain why you left each position.
  - **When you have gaps in your resume and interviewers, ask what you’ve been doing.** Employers always look for gaps in employment to determine if there are/were any issues that would impact their decision about you as a candidate.
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- How to Answer: If you've been out of work for a while, emphasize what you accomplished. For example, have you taken courses or workshops to enhance your skills, volunteered, or served as an intern to gain experience in a new field? Did you leave a previous job to re-evaluate your long-term career goals? If you haven't worked for personal reasons (for example, you took time to care for an ill spouse, child, or parent), share that information, and tell the interviewer you can now devote your full time and attention to work. Sharing information about a personal health issue can be tricky. It may be advisable to mention it if it's been entirely resolved and is unlikely to reoccur. If it is not pertinent to the job, and you have other ways to explain the gaps in employment, it may not be advisable to mention it. This should be evaluated and handled on a case by case basis. If you have moved to a new area and it's taken some time to look for a job, you could say you have focused on learning about the local job market and finding the right position. If you have taken time to pursue a personal goal like touring as a musician or climbing Mt. Everest, mention it but make it clear that need has been satisfied and emphasize your current enthusiasm for the job opening.



- **Why are you interested in this job? Our company?** This question provides an excellent opportunity to show the interviewer that you know what the job entails, and you have researched the company's mission, culture, and products/services. You can take this time to reinforce why you are a good fit for the role and mention aspects of the company that appeals to you the most. If you've done the job previously, explain the things you enjoy about the work. If it represents an opportunity for a promotion or expansion of duties, tell why you are excited about the possibilities and why you feel you are ready for them. Don't cite salary or a pay increase as a reason for joining the company as the Interviewer may be concerned you will leave their company as soon as a better offer comes along.
- **How do you handle stress and pressure at work?** Employers want to know how you deal with workplace stress.
  - How to Answer: Avoid saying you never experience workplace stress, instead acknowledge it happens and explain how you've overcome it, or even how you've used it to your advantage. Example: "I've learned that workplace stress will happen from time to time, and the best way to avoid it is to be organized and prepared. I try to anticipate what can go wrong and plan for it. When things are stressful, I just take a deep breath and try



to identify how to reduce stress. If I can, I solicit help from my coworkers or boss and focus on how the process can be improved to make things easier”. Another example: “Workplace stress is inevitable. Sometimes it can be used to improve the process. When I was working on a printing project at ABC Company, the deadlines were moved up based on customer needs. It created a lot of pressure at the time, but I overcame it by creating a master schedule that not only worked on that project but became a tool we used for all projects moving forward”.

- **What are your salary expectations?** The hiring manager or interviewer wants to know what you expect to earn and whether it is in line with what they can offer you. In many cases, companies have specific guidelines for starting salaries for each job type, and they are required to maintain equity within their compensation structure. Put simply, they determine salary offers based on external factors (typical pay rates in the local job market for the same job) and internal factors (the salaries for other employees doing the same position with the same experience).
  - How to Answer: If at all possible, tell the interviewer you are flexible, and you understand the salary would be just one component of the overall compensation package (i.e., including medical benefits, savings plans, etc.). Further state, you would seriously consider any salary that is commensurate with your experience. It’s best to avoid mentioning a specific wage, so you don’t run the risk of underselling yourself OR pricing yourself out of a job. Prepare for this question before the interview. Research the typical pay range within the local job market and determine what reasonable based on your experience and qualifications is. Search online for an average salary range for job types in your area (Glassdoor.com, for example). Also, remember to review your Financial Needs Worksheet from Section Two. If you’ve indicated that salary is negotiable and the interviewer presses for a specific number, it’s best to say that you’ve researched the wages for the area, and you would hope to receive a salary within the range of \_\_\_\_\_. Note: If you have to provide salary expectations on a paper or online application, indicate “negotiable” or “commensurate with experience.”
  
- **What are your goals for the future?** The employer asks this question to determine how long you will be satisfied in the position before wanting to move to another job or be promoted.

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- How to Answer: Be specific about why the job and company interest you and how the position aligns with your long-term goals. For example, say something like, “My goal is to find a job that I can hold long term, becoming a valued employee with a company like yours, as I gradually advance to positions of increasing responsibility. I am interested in the \_\_\_ job here at ABC Company because of your reputation for training and developing your employees”.



### Behavioral interview questions

Behavioral interviewing, also known as “competency-based” interviewing, is a technique used by more and more companies. They usually focus on “behavioral competencies” that are closely aligned with the skills and qualifications listed in the job posting.

The answers to these behavior-based questions may be answered using the “STAR” format:

- **“ST” for Situation or Task**
- **“A” for Action(s) you took**
- **“R” for result(s) of those action(s)**

The interviewer will ask the candidate to describe a situation in which they had a problem and how they solved it. The following are typical examples of behavioral questions:

- *Describe a challenging situation or project and how you overcame it.*
- *Describe a time when you served on a team and what your contribution was.*
- *Describe a failure that occurred in your job and how you overcame it.*
- *Describe a situation when you had to request help or assistance on an assignment.*
- *Give an example of a time in which you had to follow a policy with which you didn’t agree.*
- *Tell me about a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem. Or come up with process improvement.*
- *Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a coworker or your boss.*

For each of the questions above, consider the skills required for the job and develop concrete, behavioral “STAR” examples, which indicate you have those qualities. For example, for question 1 above, if the job description suggests “Independent problem-solving skills needed,” you will want to describe a problem you encountered in a previous



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5. Do not wear anything too revealing that could distract or send the wrong message. Think about your audience.
  6. You may wish to hide visible tattoos until you know more about the company's dress code and culture.
  7. Hair should be dry and neatly arranged, nails should be clean and neatly trimmed.
  8. Carry your resume, etc. in a folder or portfolio to keep them neat and organized and to convey a professional image.
  9. If you need assistance in selecting job-appropriate outfits, visit the Women's Resource Center Career Closet.



## Follow-Up: Thank You Notes, Request for Feedback

Thank You notes are always a best practice in job interviewing. Employers may think less of interviewees who fail to follow up, and timely notes can tip the scales in your favor if you are competing with other top candidates.

Thank You notes can be used to get your name in front of people one last time and leave a positive impression. Use this opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills and professionalism, and to highlight the ways your skills and experience are a good match for the job.

Timing is important. Send a thank-you note to the interviewer(s) within 24 hours of the interview. The sooner the hiring manager or interviewer receives a thank you note, the better. If it's convenient, you may drop off a hand-written note. However, it has become reasonable and customary to send the letter as an email attachment.

List what the note is about in the subject line of the email. The hiring manager may receive a high volume of email messages so that it could be overlooked. Include your name, "Thank You," and the position for which you interviewed. Example "Thank You from Susan Carter, Clinical Nursing Assistant Candidate."

Format the thank you note as a business letter and attach it to the email.

Place your name and contact information at the top, followed by the date and the hiring manager's contact information. Begin the letter with a polite greeting, then thank the interviewer for the opportunity to meet with them. Be specific about the job title for which



you interviewed. Reference a few things you noted from the interview and tie your skills and experience to the open position. End the letter by thanking them again for their time offer to provide any further information they may need.

### Sample thank you note

*(Date)*

*(Your name)*

*(Your address)*

*(Your phone number)*

*(Your email)*

*(Today's Date)*

*(Name of Interviewer)*

*(Title of Interviewer)*

*(Name of Company)*

*(Company Address)*

*Dear Ms./Mr. (Name of Interviewer)*

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the *(job title)* position. I enjoyed meeting with you on *(day of week or date)* and learning more about the position and *(company name)*. I was impressed with *(mention 2 things)*.

As we discussed, my experience includes (tie a few key skills or accomplishments to the job requirements). I left the interview with a better understanding of your organization and I feel even more confident that my experience will enable me to contribute to your goals and objectives.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. If I can provide further information to help you with your hiring decision process, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

*(Your Signature)*

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## Follow-Up Calls for Online Applications



Emails and letters are effective ways to demonstrate your professionalism and interest in the position. Also, follow up calls are an excellent strategy to keep your name and application in front of recruiters or hiring managers. Be prepared to leave a voicemail message. Write down your message and rehearse it in advance to be sure it will be concise and clear.

### Sample follow-up calls

*Good Morning (Afternoon), this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling. I recently filled out an online application for the \_\_\_\_\_ position and wanted to follow up to ensure that you received my application and resume from the online process. I am very interested in the position and look forward to hearing from you. Again, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I can be reached at (Phone number). Say it twice, slowly. Thank you.*

*Good Morning (Afternoon), this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling. I am calling in response to an email I sent last week with my resume inquiring as to whether you will be hiring soon. My background includes \_\_\_\_ years of experience in the \_\_\_\_\_ industry along with a passion for \_\_\_\_\_. I have been interested in your company for some time, and I feel I could be an asset to your organization. Would there be an opportunity for me to discuss my background with you and learn more about how I can add value to your company? Again, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I can be reached at (phone number).*

### What to do /say if you don't get the job

It's natural to be disappointed and frustrated if/when you learn you didn't get the job. If you receive a phone call, thank the manager or recruiter for calling and politely ask, "What can I do to make myself eligible for a job like this in the future?" This avoids putting the manager in a position where he/she has to defend the decision, and it's a positive way to obtain any feedback they are willing to provide. By asking this question, you'll learn what skills you might acquire or experience you'll need to gain to be considered in the future. If you receive an email, respond with the same question. Either way, express your continued interest in the job and company and ask them to consider you for future openings.



## Job Offers: Evaluate and Negotiate

Congratulations! You've received a job offer!

Whether you're communicating in person, on the phone, or via email, thank the person who made the offer and says how excited you are—before you do anything else.

Request to have the offer put in writing. An official job offer letter should include, at the very least, the name of the position, start date, salary, and details about benefits.

Ask how much time you have to give a final answer after receiving the letter. A responsible employer typically offers a day or two for prospective employees to review and understand the offer before accepting it.

Review your Financial Needs Worksheet, Paycheck Calculator, and Employment Benefits Checklist in Section II-1. Is the starting salary going to meet your needs? Does the offer include the benefits you've indicated you "must-have" or "would like to have"? If your financial obligations are within the typical salary range for the job, but the offer is lower than expected, you could ask if the offer is negotiable. Make sure your expectations are based on the job market, not just your financial needs.

If you review the offer and have questions or want to negotiate any components of the offer, you can respond by saying, "This is a wonderful opportunity. I'd like to discuss the details with you. Can we set up a time to speak or meet?" Keep the tone positive. Reiterate how excited you are about the offer. If your current or previous salary is the same or higher than the offer, provide that information and ask if they can explain how they determined the starting salary. Ask them if there is any flexibility to bring the starting salary closer to your expectations. If they can't make any adjustments, ask them about their timing and procedures for performance reviews and raises. If you determine your needs are not in line with the offer, you may have to decline the offer respectfully. Again, keep the tone positive; reiterate your interest in the company and tell them you hope you can revisit opportunities with their organization in the future.

If/when you are ready to accept the offer, reiterate all the details as you understand them in your acceptance. "I am pleased to accept your offer for the \_\_\_\_\_ position at ABC Company. It is my understanding that I am being offered \_\_\_\_\_ as a starting salary and will be eligible for medical and dental benefits after XX days of employment, along with X days of paid time off." The details of this letter will vary depending upon the offer letter.

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Once you've accepted, ask the following questions to demonstrate your proactive interest, reaffirming the hiring manager's choice to extend the offer to you.

- Confirm the start date and location.
- Is there any onboarding paperwork I should get started on after accepting a job offer?
- Will there be an orientation?
- Is there anything else I need to do to prepare for my first day at work?



**Women's Resource Center**

[www.myWRC.org](http://www.myWRC.org)

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