



JOB SEEKERS



YOUR FUTURE STARTS HERE

5 Polish your job-seeking skills

Once you receive the proper training and education needed for your desired career field, it is time to prepare and perfect the skills you need to look for and apply to specific jobs. The fifth step in the process will provide you with information on how to fill out a job application, craft a great resume, prepare an effective cover letter, perfect your interview skills and access additional job search assistance.

NOTE WorkForce WV offers free Job Search Workshops every month.

Completing a job application

We understand that filling out a job application can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Your application is where you get to convey your accomplishments, past experience and willingness to work hard to obtain the job at hand.



General application tips

- Include your most relevant and transferrable skills.
- Emphasize that you have the required skills, experience and education for the position.
- List the jobs you've held over the last 10 years in reverse chronological order (current job first).
- Contact three professional references and ask them if you can list them on your application. Verify their contact information and job title(s).
- If completing by hand, make sure you write neatly.
- Always be honest. Lying on an application can result in immediate termination.
- Make sure your application is complete (there are no blanks) and is signed.
- Read over your application upon completion to make sure all information is spelled correctly and is accurate.
- Follow up with the employer. If you do not hear back regarding your application after a reasonable amount of time, contact the employer and ask if they are still hiring for the position. If not, see if they keep resumes on file and if they expect to fill any other positions in the near future.



Online application tips

Completing a job application online can require a lot of steps. To help you navigate the online application process, consider these tips.

- Some companies divide applications into separate pages. If you reach the bottom of a page and the option to save application is listed, be sure to click that feature. Do not click continue until you have saved your application.
- Do not click your browser's back button. If you need to revisit a previous page in the application, click the application's previous button, usually located in the upper-left or lower-left corner of the page.
- Complete all required fields. If you submit an incomplete application, the page may generate an error message and clear all of your information.



careeronestop.org/jobsearch/resumes/online-applications.aspx

Developing your resume

Your resume and cover letter are your personal marketing materials. Whether you are beginning a resume from scratch or are looking to update outdated application materials, we've put together general reminders to help you craft a solid resume that can easily be tailored to specific job listings moving forward.



NOTE A good resume is the key to securing a job interview.

Elements of a resume

- **Contact Information** – Always include contact information at the top of your resume so the employer will know how to contact you.
- **Skills** – Include information on your skills within the top portion of the document, so the employer will know you are qualified.
- **Work History** – Here is where you include any relevant work experience, including tasks you performed and overall duties and responsibilities for each position.
- **Education** – Begin listing your education with your most recent/highest degree level obtained first. Consider including relevant course work and extracurricular clubs and activities.



Resume reminders

Here are some useful tips to help you with your resume.

- A resume should be kept to one page, two at the most.
- Your resume should be a reflection of your skills, ability, education and work history.
- Make sure the employer can see within the top 1/3 of the page that you have the specific skills and qualifications required for the position.
- Employers are interested in your accomplishments – describe what you have accomplished throughout your career or in previous jobs.
- List relevant contact information so they employer will know how to reach you with questions and to set up an interview.
- Use an appropriate email address, even if you have to create new account.
- For example, sportsfan97@mail.com is not appropriate. Your initials with your last name would be a better choice.
- Always be honest. Lying on your resume could have serious consequences and result in termination, if hired for the position under false pretenses.
- Always check grammar, spelling and capitalization. Ask one or two people you trust to review your resume and recommend changes.

Free templates



There are different formats for resumes, and it is important to find and use the resume format that is best for you.

Not all resumes look the same. Visit

workforcewv.org/images/greenbook/templates/ResumeTemplate.docx to download a free template to give you a guiding idea of how to arrange and convey your information.

Writing an effective cover letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to capture the employer's attention so they will spend more time reviewing your resume – with the ultimate goal of setting up an interview. Your cover letter can be used for two purposes: to inquire about job openings or to actually apply for specific job openings.

A cover letter should not be a mass-mailed, generic document. Rather, it should be addressed to a specific recipient, and if possible, should mention a specific job with the company.



While not all employers require a cover letter, including this additional piece can strengthen your application and make your materials stand out among other candidate submissions.

Parts of a cover letter

- **Salutation** – Address the letter to a specific person. Try to refrain from using Dear Sir/Madam or To whom it may concern.
- **Introduction** – Begin the letter by telling the employer what position you are applying for and how you heard about the opening.
- **Body** – The body of the letter should tell the employer why you are a good fit for the position. Give examples of your talents, but do not repeat your resume.
- **Closing** – In closing, request an interview and your willingness to answer any additional questions the employer may have.
- **Signature** – Sign the letter boldly with blue ink to show the employer the letter isn't a photocopy.



Cover letter tips

A cover letter does not have to be long; instead, it should cover top level information the employer wants to know in a concise manner.

- Focus the content of your letter on what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you.
- Try not to overuse the word “I” throughout the letter.
- Be clear and brief, but give the employer enough information to know that you are qualified for the job.
- Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Have a second pair of eyes review your letter and offer suggestions.

Free templates



Write your cover letter in your tone of voice and in a way that works best for you.

Visit <http://workforcewv.org/images/greenbook/templates/CoverLetterTemplate.docx> to download a free template to serve as guides to overall structure and generic language.

Preparing for your interview

Your strong application materials have resulted in an interview. Now what's next?

Contrary to popular belief, preparation is key in an interview. Common perception is that you can't prepare for an interview, because you do not know what questions the employer will ask. As it turns out, there are a number of important tips to follow to ensure you are prepared for your scheduled interview.



Local Career Centers offer mock interviews. Call a career center near you today to schedule your practice interview.



Research

- Research the company and the industry. Make sure you know facts about the company, the products or services they offer and the industry markets they serve.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of the interview. If you are not sure about directions on how to get there, do a trial run the night before.



Review and prepare

- Prepare for the interview by reviewing practice questions.



careeronestop.org/jobsearch/interview/common-interview-questions.aspx



monster.com/career-advice/article/100-potential-interview-questions

- Be prepared to sell yourself with a summary of your education, achievements, skills and goals.
- Know and anticipate in advance how you will answer questions about lack of experience, job-hopping history and gaps in employment. Prepare positive answers to these sometimes negative questions.
- Be prepared to tell the interviewer about goals you met, problems you solved, or times you were able to excel on the job, both individually and as part of a team.
- Be prepared with questions to ask your interviewer.
- Always be honest. Lying on an application can result in immediate termination.



Day of the interview

- Dress for success. Jeans and a t-shirt are never appropriate for a job interview. First impressions go a long way in an interview setting; show your employer you care enough to look the part.
- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Turn off your cell phone or leave it in the car.
- Address the interviewer by name. Smile and shake hands firmly. Maintain good eye contact.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.
- Ask your interviewer your prepared questions.
- Express your readiness to take on the job duties.
- Thank your interviewer for their time. Be sure and get business cards from each person who interviews you and send a thank you to each person.
 - Handwritten cards are appreciated, but email is also acceptable. No matter what format, be sure and send your thank you within 24 hours.



After the interview

- Evaluate your interview. Determine your strengths and your weaknesses to better prepare for a second interview.
- Follow up with the interviewer after an appropriate amount of time. Check to see if they need any additional information, reference information or writing samples.

Assistance with employment challenges

Everyone's journey to employment is different. If you are in need of special assistance, the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) may be able to help. DRS helps those with physical or mental disabilities address barriers that may be interfering with their ability to prepare for or maintain employment.

Rehabilitation counselors are available to set up a free, individualized plan for employment that will outline the services needed to help you reach your employment goal.

For more information, visit:



wvdrs.org

Background checks

It is not unusual for companies to require background checks on potential employees. For more information, download the background check fact sheet.



workforcewv.org/images/greenbook/print/WORKjobSeekers_BackCheckPDF_Step 5.pdf

