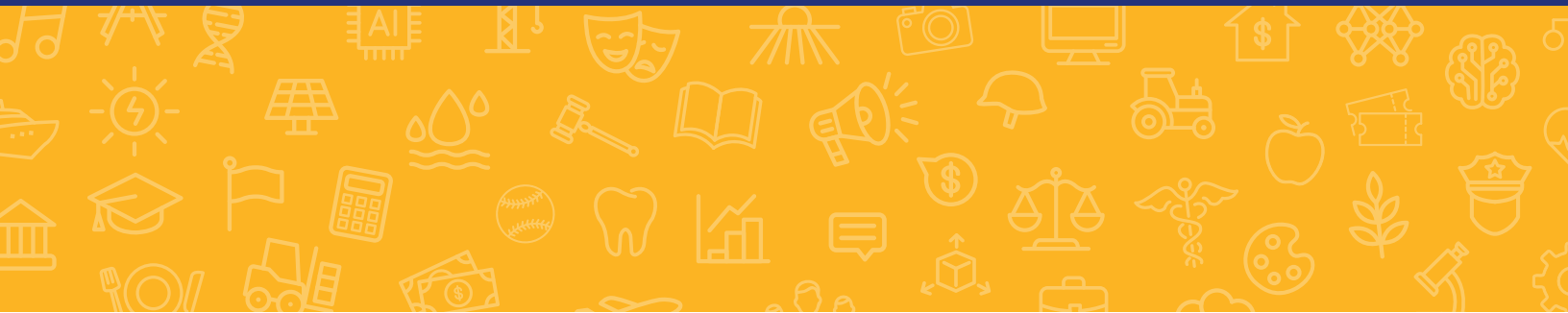


# Building Your Career



**MEBASC.COM**

# Building Your Career

If you've spent time looking for a job in recent years, you know today's job market can be tough.

Given current unemployment rates, it may surprise you to learn many businesses are struggling to find qualified employees to fill open positions. One reason is that job seekers are often unaware of employer expectations and how to effectively market themselves to potential employers.

Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) created this *Building Your Career* program to help bridge this gap by connecting students and future employees to the information they need to prepare for and successfully enter the workforce. Complete with useful tips and real-world examples, our newly revised *Building Your Career* is tailored especially for educators, school counselors and career specialists as they work to help students find and follow successful education and career paths.

**Building Your Career is organized around six main sections including:**

- ▶ College, Career & Citizenship Readiness
- ▶ The Job Search
- ▶ Applying for a Job
- ▶ The Job Interview
- ▶ Email and Social Networking Protocol
- ▶ Identity Theft and Internet Safety

Supplemental material and resources are included at the end of this guide.

A *Building Your Career* online component is also available through our website at [www.mebasc.com](http://www.mebasc.com). Here you can download complete copies of this guide as well as access additional information, tips and related resources.

For more than 35 years, MEBA has worked to foster and strengthen collaboration between business and education, to promote economic development and to help students and adults acquire the education and skills needed for success. We are pleased to offer *Building Your Career* as one more way to achieve this mission.

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# Section 1

## COLLEGE, CAREER AND CITIZENSHIP READINESS

For both college and career success, students must possess strong academic skills such as math and English. In today's global and increasingly competitive workforce, however, these core academic skills are not enough. Today's students and future job seekers also need technical and employability skills.

Technical skills are job specific skills related to a specific career pathway. Employability skills, also referred to as citizenship or soft skills, include such things as responsibility, critical thinking and being able to communicate effectively and work well with others.

This section of MEBA's Building Your Career is focused on college, career and citizenship readiness and provides information and resources on the following:

**CAREER ASSESSMENT**

**CAREER CLUSTERS**

**HOT JOBS OF THE FUTURE**

**WORK-BASED LEARNING**

**EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS**

**CITIZENSHIP**

# CAREER ASSESSMENT

What do you want to be when you grow up? You have probably been asked this question many times, especially as a young child. It's a simple question, yet for some it can be difficult to answer. This question – and more importantly, your answer — is the first step to becoming career ready. Determining the career path that is right for you is the cornerstone to building your career.

## **BEGIN BY ASKING YOURSELF QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:**

- ▶ Do I like working closely with people?
- ▶ Do I like working with my hands?
- ▶ What have I always wanted to do with my life?
- ▶ Can I work unsupervised, or do I require a more structured learning environment?
- ▶ What are my personal strengths?
- ▶ What are my personal weaknesses?
- ▶ Do I have any skills or hobbies that I would like to extend into a profession?

Be honest as you answer these questions. If you do not like working closely with people, for instance, nursing is probably not the profession for you. Sometimes finding the career path that is right for you means first determining what you do not want to do.

Don't worry that the decision you make today is for the rest of your life. Your first real job after school will probably not be your last. In reality, most people will make several career changes in their lifetimes. Still, to move forward today and to be ultimately successful in the future, it is important to have a sense of who you are, your skills, aptitudes and interests.



# CAREER CLUSTERS

2025 marks a transition to a new career clusters framework, guided by six Career-Ready Practices: Investing in the Future, Caring for Communities, Cultivating Resources, Building & Moving, Creating & Experiencing, and Connecting & Supporting Success.

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE



### FINANCIAL SERVICES

Careers in financial services focus on managing money through banking, accounting, insurance, real estate, and financial advising. These roles support economic growth by helping individuals and organizations maintain financial stability.

## CARING FOR COMMUNITIES



### EDUCATION

Professionals in education guide learning from early childhood through adulthood, including teaching, counseling, and instructional design. Their work fosters lifelong learning, critical thinking, and personal development.



### HEALTHCARE & HUMAN SERVICES

This cluster includes careers that support physical, mental, and emotional well-being through medical, therapeutic, and personal care services. Professionals use science and data to improve health outcomes and strengthen communities.



### PUBLIC SERVICE & SAFETY

Careers in this field include roles in government, law, security, and the military. These professionals uphold civic responsibility and work to ensure the safety, resilience, and effective functioning of communities and nations.

## CULTIVATING RESOURCES



### AGRICULTURE

This field focuses on advancing agriscience and improving food systems through cultivation, processing, and distribution. Careers also support industries like sustainable logging, fisheries, and regenerative agriculture, emphasizing environmental stewardship and community resilience.



### ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Careers in this sector involve fuel production, power generation, utilities, environmental conservation, and resource extraction. Professionals focus on sustainable energy solutions and responsible resource management to meet global needs while protecting the planet.

# CAREER CLUSTERS

## BUILDING & MOVING



### ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

This field integrates cutting-edge technologies like automation, AI, and engineering to improve product design and production. Careers focus on boosting efficiency, ensuring safety, and maintaining high standards in quality and innovation.



### CONSTRUCTION

Professionals in this field design, plan, and build structures that shape the built environment. Careers range from architecture and engineering to skilled trades; all focused on creating sustainable and resilient infrastructure for current and future needs.



### SUPPLY CHAIN & TRANSPORTATION

This field involves managing the movement of goods from production to delivery through air, land, and sea. Careers focus on logistics, distribution, and maintenance to ensure efficient operations that support global trade, economic growth, and community well-being.

## CREATING & EXPERIENCING



### ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, & DESIGN

This cluster brings together creative careers in visual arts, performance, film, journalism, fashion, and design technologies. Professionals in these fields produce and share work that informs, entertains, beautifies, and inspires across diverse platforms.



### HOSPITALITY, EVENTS, & TOURISM

This sector includes careers in food service, lodging, travel, and event planning. Professionals deliver high-quality experiences and manage logistics for guests and participants, supporting everything from local dining and cultural events to global tourism and business conferences.

## CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING SUCCESS



### DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

This cluster centers on building digital systems for communication, data storage, and problem-solving using tools like AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity. The skills developed are essential across all industries, driving innovation and helping professionals adapt to a rapidly evolving tech landscape. As a cross-cutting cluster, its content is designed to integrate with other career pathways in Career and Technical Education (CTE).



### MARKETING & SALES

This field focuses on promoting products, understanding consumer behavior, and building strong customer relationships. Careers involve digital marketing, data analysis, branding, and strategic communication to drive business growth and engagement. As a cross-cutting cluster, its skills apply across all industries and are encouraged for integration into other Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.



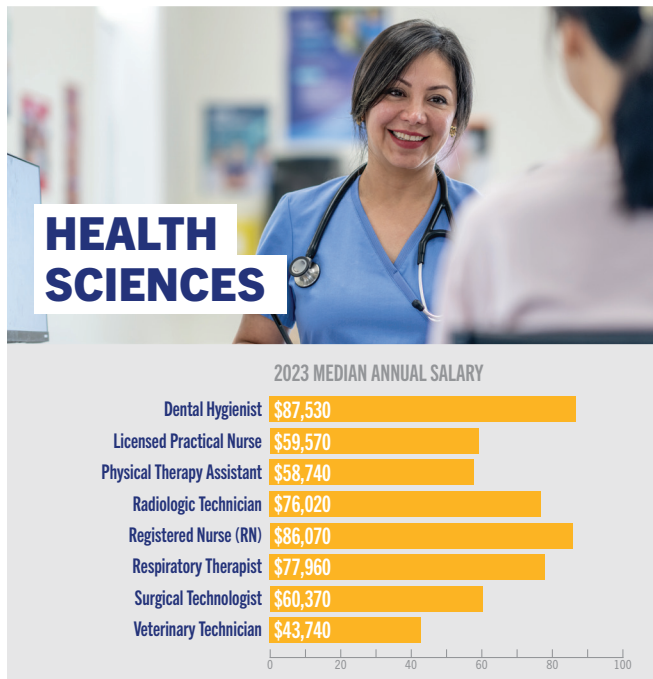
### MANAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This cluster includes careers in business operations, strategic planning, human resources, and organizational leadership. It equips individuals to lead teams, optimize performance, and adapt to changing markets. As a cross-cutting cluster, it also fosters entrepreneurial thinking and supports the creation of new ventures, driving innovation and economic growth across all industries.

# HOT JOBS OF THE FUTURE

While interest and aptitude are important factors in making career decisions, job availability and the labor market forecast should also be considered. As today's students prepare to become part of tomorrow's workforce, it is important for them to consider both personal interests and workforce needs.

The following four career clusters are predicted to have the largest growth expectancy in the Midlands — the most jobs for which employers will need skilled workers — through 2030.



Information provided by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

# WORK-BASED LEARNING

Work-based learning, or extended learning opportunities as they are called in many schools in South Carolina, provides one of the best ways to become job ready. Through work-based learning, students are able to see how what they are learning in the classroom directly relates to the workplace. Students can connect with potential employers, gain valuable workplace experience and skills, explore career interests, and gain insight and direction in determining a viable career path.

## TODAY'S STUDENTS HAVE MANY OPTIONS FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING, INCLUDING:

### ▶ APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship is a formal relationship between an employer and employee during which the worker, or apprentice, is paid while learning a specific occupation in a structured program. For more information, visit [www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com](http://www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com).

A Registered Apprenticeship is an adult educational program that is registered with the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. The traditional apprenticeship programs are designed for adults and may be linked to an approved youth apprenticeship program in high school.

Youth Apprenticeship begins in the eleventh grade for students who are age 16 and older. A youth apprentice may matriculate to a registered apprenticeship program after high school. This type of apprenticeship may or may not include financial compensation.

### ▶ JOB SHADOWING

Career/Job Shadowing is a short-term experience where a student will follow or "shadow" an employee for a specified time as he/she performs normal work activities. By shadowing the employee, the student is able to gain a better understanding of the requirements and responsibilities of a particular career.

### ▶ VIRTUAL JOB SHADOWING

Virtual Job Shadowing is an interactive career exploration tool that provides students with a behind-the-scenes look at various jobs through the computer. Individuals currently employed in a particular field offer an online tour of an occupation, showcasing needed skills, training, possible work schedules, typical duties, compensation and more.

### ▶ CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Clinical Rotations provide students with opportunities to explore a variety of health careers, develop knowledge and skills related to healthcare, and transition from the role of student to that of professional. Students rotate among various departments of local healthcare facilities or community facilities to develop an awareness of the many related career opportunities. Unpaid work-based instructional opportunities must be planned and supervised cooperatively by the local education agency and the training sponsor. In the classroom, students are expected to master the essential knowledge and skills of health sciences coursework prior to participating in this experience. This learning experience usually occurs during the regular school day and is an integral component of a health sciences program.

# WORK-BASED LEARNING

## ▶ COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Cooperative Education Programs coordinate secondary or postsecondary studies with a job. Students and participating businesses develop a plan to align workplace activities with classroom instruction. Students receive course credit for classroom and work experiences.

## ▶ INTERNSHIP

An internship is a one-to-one relationship that provides “hands-on” learning based on a student’s career interest. The internship generally lasts from three to six months and may or may not include financial compensation.

## ▶ SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISES

School-Based Enterprises focus on the development of small businesses created, managed, and operated by students within the school setting. These ventures support the development of academic, technical, and entrepreneurial skills in an applied academic environment. School- Based Enterprises may be undertaken on or off school grounds.

## ▶ SERVICE-LEARNING ACTIVITY

Service-Learning Activity is a structured learning experience that models guidelines developed by the National and Community Service Trust Act (NACSTA). These activities generally focus on the four stages of preparation, action, reflection and celebration. For additional information, consult [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov).

## ▶ STRUCTURED FIELD TRIPS

Structured Field Trips are planned experiences that provide opportunities for students to explore different workplaces. Students are well-prepared beforehand to ask probing questions about employment opportunities, qualifications for employment, job descriptions, benefits associated with the job, types of services provided, and general information about the place of employment and its mission.

## ▶ WORK-BASED MENTORING

Work-Based Mentoring connects a student with a mentor (an employee of a business) who shares workplace skills and knowledge as a role model. The mentor instructs, critiques and challenges the student to perform well. He or she also works in consultation with the classroom teachers.

# WORK-BASED LEARNING

In addition to work-based learning opportunities, students can explore career clusters and connect with local employers in other ways including:

▶ **BUSINESS 101**

Seminars are tailored to high school seniors and college students to help them prepare for the workforce by providing job skills tips for effective resumes, cover letters and interviews, as well as information on dressing for success, financial planning and customer service.

▶ **CAREER FAIRS**

These events bring together several employers representing many various industries providing an opportunity for students and adult learners to learn about career opportunities, required skills and current workforce needs.

▶ **CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS**

Industry professionals are often willing and available to speak to students in a classroom setting, sharing information about required skills, career paths and opportunities within their industry.

▶ **VOLUNTEERING**

Serving as a volunteer is a great way to explore career interests and gain valuable insight. Students should talk with school counselors and career specialists to determine possible volunteer opportunities.

## ON-THE-JOB TIPS FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

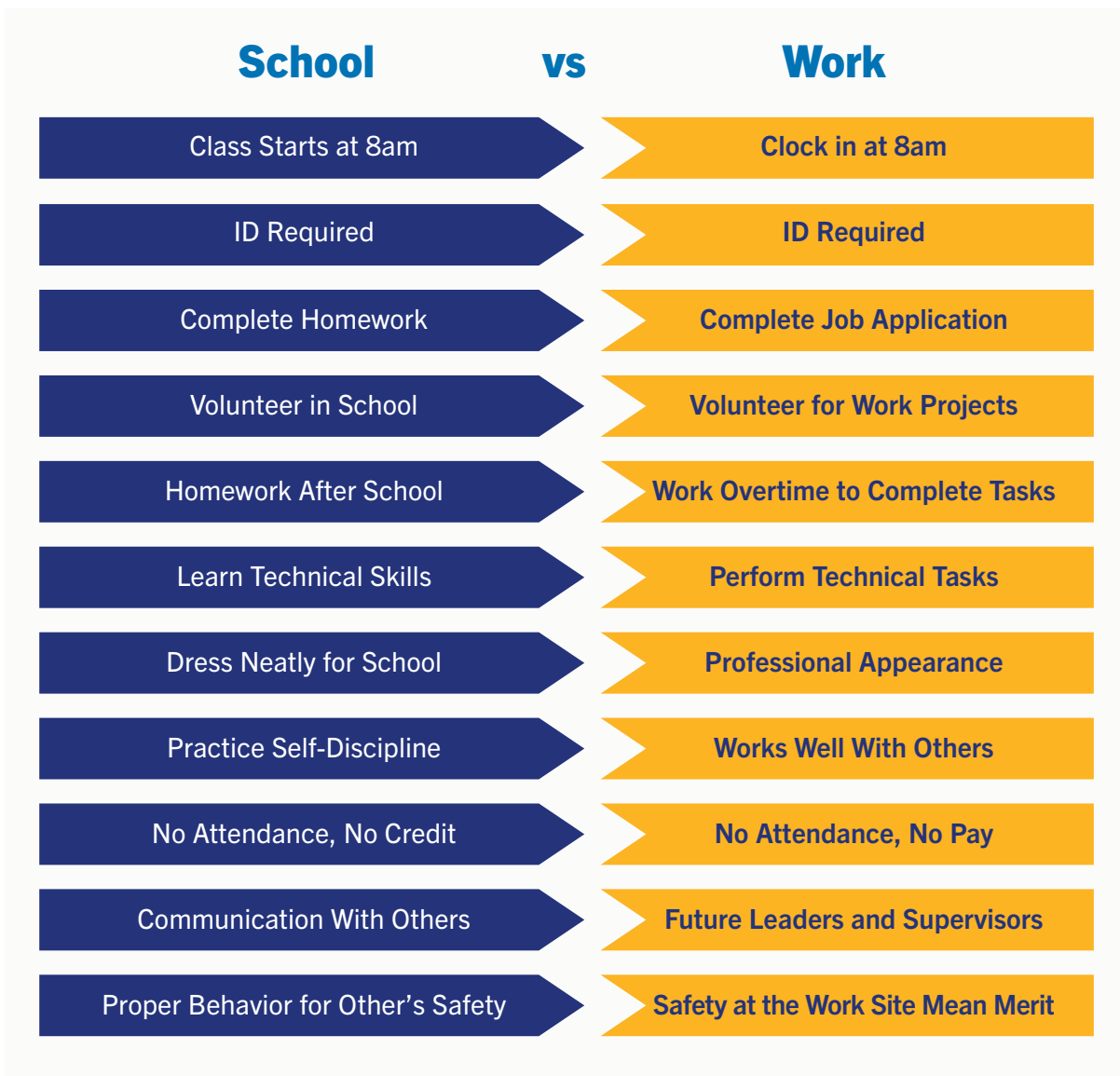
Whether participating in a short-term work-based learning experience or entering the world of work as a full-time employee, it is important that you always conduct yourself appropriately and professionally. The following tips can help you to put your best foot forward.

- ▶ Dress professionally
- ▶ Arrive on time
- ▶ Take something to write on and with
- ▶ Have a firm handshake
- ▶ Have good eye contact when talking with people
- ▶ Introduce yourself to employees
- ▶ Know about the company before you arrive
- ▶ Ask questions, perhaps even making a list before you arrive of the things you would like to know
- ▶ Get business cards from contacts you make

# EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

Understanding employer expectations is another important component of job readiness. Today's employers look for employees with not only academic success and relevant education and training but also strong career readiness and citizenship skills. Teacher instructions and expectations, daily classroom procedures and school policies are often similar to those of the workplace. The illustration below demonstrates this connection between learning and earning and emphasizes the importance of career readiness and citizenship skills in today's workplace.

## COMPARING SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONS TO WORK SITE PERFORMANCE



# CITIZENSHIP

Soft skills, also known as citizenship skills or employability skills, are those character traits, interpersonal skills and social habits that characterize a person's relationships with other people. According to many employers, they are just as important, if not more, than job-specific skills and certifications. Below are some of the soft skills most in demand by today's employers.

▶ **COMMUNICATION**

Ability to organize thoughts and ideas effectively and express clearly and persuasively when speaking or writing

▶ **POSITIVE, PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE**

Displaying enthusiasm through words and actions; acting in a manner that is responsible, fair and respectful of others

▶ **TEAMWORK**

Ability to work well with others in a professional manner to achieve a common goal

▶ **CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Ability to evaluate a situation and effectively and accurately identify potential problems and solutions

▶ **TIME MANAGEMENT**

Ability to prioritize tasks, use time wisely and work on a number of different projects at once

▶ **WORK ETHIC**

Willingness to persist in difficult tasks, working to overcome obstacles and produce results

▶ **ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO LEARN**

Willing and capable of learning new skills and techniques, seeking to improve personal and overall performance

▶ **INTEGRITY**

Honest and respectful, upholding the company's or institution's image and values

▶ **INITIATIVE**

Ability to recognize opportunities for growth as well as the need for change and then implement the steps necessary for achievement

▶ **ORGANIZATION**

Ability to design, plan and implement projects and tasks within an allotted timeframe





# Section 2

## THE JOB SEARCH

Until you have a job, your job hunt IS your job. You are now a professional job seeker. Get up early each morning, dress as if you are starting your job that day, and begin looking for leads, or potential opportunities. This section contains information to help guide your search, including:

**JOB SEARCH TIPS**

**WHERE TO LOOK**

**CONVERTING LEADS TO INTERVIEWS**

# JOB SEARCH TIPS

## ▶ **BE ORGANIZED**

Organization is key to your success. Put in place a system to help you stay focused and effective. Figure out a way to arrange letters and emails you have sent, applications you need to complete or submit online, phone numbers you have collected, and names of your potential employers. Keep a job search log to keep track of your actions, required follow up and outstanding tasks.

## ▶ **INVOLVE FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

Network with your friends and family, understanding that everyone may have potential leads. A support group can also provide helpful encouragement and advice.

## ▶ **BE RESPECTFUL AND POLITE**

When networking and pursuing job opportunities, make sure to strike a balance between being assertive but not aggressive, enthusiastic but not pushy, professional but not stiff, and persistent but not annoying.

## ▶ **BE DEDICATED AND PREPARED**

A job search is hard work. Devote a proper amount of time and effort. Expect to spend several hours a day pursuing leads, researching potential employers and opportunities, and following up with contacts.

## ▶ **CUSTOMIZE**

Tailor your cover letters, resume and references to specific opportunities. This shows you have taken the time to do your homework and that you have a sincere interest in each employer, which can improve your chances of getting called for an interview or being hired.

## ▶ **HAVE A REALISTIC TIMEFRAME**

Allow a reasonable amount of time. Do not expect to find a job within a few days or even a few weeks.

## ▶ **STAY POSITIVE**

Understand that setbacks and rejections are part of the process. Do not be discouraged when one job does not work out. Look for ways to learn and improve from the experience, and remain active and open in your search.

# WHERE TO LOOK

## JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Job search websites are great for searching for job openings online. You can organize your search according to location, career cluster/industry, specific job titles or keywords, and more. A few of the most well-known job search websites are listed below.

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

[www.ziprecruiter.com](http://www.ziprecruiter.com)

[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

## NEWSPAPER

A newspaper's "Classifieds" section includes ads for current job openings. Read through the ads, circle ones that interest you and follow up using the contact information provided. Many newspapers will also include online job postings on a special "Jobs" or "Classifieds" section of its website, such as *The State's* [www.thestate.com/jobs](http://www.thestate.com/jobs).

## FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Friends, family members and acquaintances can often be one of the best ways to find employment. They may know of an opening, can refer you to the right contact for a company, or point you in the right direction according to your needs, skills and interests.

## LIBRARY

Your local library is a great place to find trade publications, local magazines, company information and other job search resources. Don't be afraid to ask the library staff for help as they are there to help.

## JOB SERVICE CENTER

Visit your local job service center or workforce development board online or in person to explore job listings as well as participate in many workforce training and support programs.

## COMPANY AND AGENCY WEBSITES

Many companies, especially larger ones, as well as local and state government agencies, will post job openings along with application instructions on their websites, often in a special "Careers" section.

You may also be able to speak with someone about current job openings and the application process by calling a company or agency directly. Call the main number and then ask to be connected to the Human Resources Department.

## STAFFING AGENCIES

A staffing or "temp" agency can help connect you to employment opportunities. Companies hire staffing agencies to fill open jobs either temporarily or permanently. You, as the job seeker, may be placed as a contract, trial or direct placement hire.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networks such as Facebook, X, and LinkedIn can play a valuable role in your job search. You can use these tools to let people know you are looking for a job, specifically what kind of career you are interested in, share your resume, make connections and research leads. It is important that your use of social media is always safe, professional and appropriate.

*Please see Section 6: Identity Theft and Internet Safety for tips on safe and appropriate use of social media.*

# CONVERTING LEADS TO INTERVIEWS

Every potential job you find, every contact you make, and every person you meet about employment is a job lead. Follow up and work to convert the lead into an interview using one of the following four contact methods.

## WRITTEN LETTERS

- ▶ Write individual letters, tailoring each letter to the specific recipient.
- ▶ Address letters to individuals with appropriate job titles and positions.
- ▶ Write in a way that will capture the attention of people who serve a variety of functions in your career field.
- ▶ Focus on geographic interest and specific career goals if applying from a distance.
- ▶ Show initiative by stating that you will call at a future date about the possibility of an interview.
- ▶ Sign each letter with a black ink pen.

## TELEPHONE

- ▶ Review information about the company prior to placing the call.
- ▶ Make sure to know the name and title of the person whom you wish to reach.
- ▶ Identify yourself politely and indicate that you are following up on a letter (if that is the case).
- ▶ Ask directly for the person with whom you wish to speak when/if an administrative assistant answers. If your contact is not available, ask the assistant when they are expected to return then leave a message indicating that you will return the call.
- ▶ State that you are calling to find out if they have any immediate openings in your field or if they anticipate any openings in the near future.
- ▶ Be prepared to interview over the phone.
- ▶ Make notes about the key points you wish to make.
- ▶ Keep your conversation brief, to the point and professional.
- ▶ Prepare questions that relate to the organization – something you found out during your research (e.g., new product, expansion of facilities, etc.).
- ▶ Ask to arrange a meeting and suggest a time to discuss possible job opportunities.

# CONVERTING LEADS TO INTERVIEWS

## EMAIL

- ▶ Address the employer by his or her proper title and last name.
- ▶ Always use your full name when closing your email.
- ▶ Make sure your email address is professional. Cute and clever email names are considered unprofessional. Play it safe and use your own name.
- ▶ Write using complete sentences, use capital letters and punctuation appropriately and correctly just as you would with other correspondence.
- ▶ Avoid slang expressions.
- ▶ Do not use smileys or emoticons as they are inappropriately casual.
- ▶ Never presume upon the employer's time. Ask if what you propose is convenient. Make polite requests, not demands.
- ▶ Do not inundate the employer with a string of emails. Once you have sent the original message, follow up at well-placed intervals (about once a week). Employers often receive hundreds of emails. Make sure to give them time to respond to you.
- ▶ Do not assume the employer will remember you. In subsequent messages, refer to your prior correspondence and always use your first and last name.
- ▶ Check your email every day. You may risk losing an opportunity or alienating a potential employer if messages sit for several days.
- ▶ Never keep employers waiting. Answer email messages promptly, always within 24 hours.

## IN-PERSON VISIT

- ▶ In the case of an ad placed by an employment agency, call first and try to schedule an appointment to meet with the person who is screening for that type of ad.
- ▶ Dress professionally as if you are going to an interview.
- ▶ Be prepared for anything -- filling out an application, participating in an initial screening, setting up a return appointment, etc.
- ▶ Ask to see someone in a particular department and have their name ahead of time, if possible.
- ▶ If you cannot see the person right away, offer to wait.
- ▶ If waiting is not possible, ask to make an appointment or leave your resume and offer to call back for an appointment.
- ▶ While the potential for being in the right place at the right time can be great, cold calling can be tough and discouraging. Being told "no" to your face can be a major confidence destroying experience.





# Section 3

## APPLYING FOR A JOB

After determining your career path and identifying potential job opportunities, you are ready for the next step in building your career – the job application process. This section includes information about how to apply for a job using one or more of the following components:

**RESUMES**

**REFERENCES**

**COVER LETTERS**

**APPLICATIONS**

# RESUMES

By definition, a resume is simply a summary of your education, skills and experience. It is a custom-designed, self-marketing tool tailored to your career objectives.

## RESUME PURPOSE

As the first link between you and your potential employer, the primary purpose of your resume is to secure an interview, not the job. It is your foot in the door, assurance that you are not excluded from consideration. A successful resume functions to:

- ▶ Focus attention on your strongest points
- ▶ Give full credit for all your activities and achievements, whether paid or unpaid
- ▶ Guide a potential employer towards positive things to talk with you about during an interview
- ▶ See and present yourself in a focused and positive manner

## RESUME SUCCESS

To prepare a successful resume, you need to know how to review, summarize and present your experiences and achievements effectively and concisely. Many resumes live or die in the first 30 seconds of the screening process as employers decide whether to forward your resume to the next step or to reject it. A successful resume can increase your chances of getting to the all-important interview.

Here are a few tips to help your resume — and by extension, you — shine.

- ▶ **Concise.** Limit your resume to one page. A rare exception is if you have years of experience or if the job for which you are applying calls for a curriculum vitae (CV).
- ▶ **Persuasive.** Your resume should work to convince a potential employer to hire you. It should be results-oriented and use action words to describe your experiences and achievements.
- ▶ **Accurate.** Your resume should be free of misspelled words and grammatical mistakes. Take care to make sure the format and font are consistent throughout. Most importantly, make sure the information you present is complete and correct, anything less can make you appear dishonest.
- ▶ **Relevant.** Target your resume for the specific job for which you are applying, highlighting your relevant skills and experiences. Use specific examples of how you are qualified for the job and what you will bring to the company or organization.

# RESUMES

## RESUME PREP

Resumes are all about the image you want to project to your future employer. The stronger the skill and experience descriptions in your resume, the higher the number of interviews and offers you will receive. Before you begin writing your resume, it is important to focus your thoughts and to determine the image you want to convey.

The following exercise can help you more easily create your resume by first taking a personal inventory of everything that would make your employers hire you to represent their company. On a sheet of paper:

### 1. Write down 15 words or phrases that you would use to describe yourself to a future employer.

Begin by asking yourself what kind of person you are. Are you responsible? Do you work well with others? Are you energetic? Do you communicate well? Do you possess a strong work ethic? Why should someone hire you? Some key words and phrases you may use include:

- quick
- responsible
- team player
- positive attitude
- self-motivated
- highly organized
- dependable
- dedicated
- friendly and pleasant
- good leadership skills
- eager to learn
- problem-solver
- enthusiastic
- excellent communicator

### 2. Outline your skills and abilities.

What skills do you have that might be useful in the workplace? If you are creating your resume in response to a specific job opportunity, take time to focus on those skills and abilities that directly relate to that job. Are you good with technology? Do you know how to use various computer programs? Do you know how to repair cars or simple machinery? Build or assemble things? Are you good at developing and implementing plans? Are you able to organize large amounts of information quickly and easily? Some examples of skills and abilities you might include are:

- Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel
- Conduct Internet research efficiently
- Repair cars quickly and successfully
- Effectively organize and manage projects

### 3. Outline your work experiences and extracurricular activities.

Do not omit work that you have done in the past. Even babysitting, mowing lawns, volunteering and memberships in organizations such as the Boy Scouts are valid work experiences because they show you have taken on responsibility in the past. Include information such as dates of employment, company name, your position or title as well as your responsibilities. Be sure to also include special achievements and activities. Write down anything that comes to mind; you will edit and shorten later.

# RESUMES

## RESUME FORMATS

There are several resume formats. Two of the most preferred are chronological and functional which are outlined below. Review both of these formats then choose the one to best highlight your strengths.

- ▶ **The Functional Resume** is organized according to skills and job function experience, grouping together experiences that show proficiency in a specific skill. This format minimizes or does not include names of past employers and dates and can be useful for persons with considerable volunteer (rather than paid) experience and career changes as well as recent high school and college graduates with limited employment who wish to emphasize the skills they have acquired through school. *See sample functional resume on page 28.*
- ▶ **The Chronological Resume** lists information – education history and work experience – in order of most recent to least recent, focusing on where and how skills were obtained. It focuses on continuity of employment and is especially effective if your work history is related to your career goals and you can show increasing responsibility. When listing your experience chronologically, make sure to include dates of employment, names and addresses of employers, job titles and brief descriptions of your responsibilities and accomplishments in each instance. *See sample chronological resume on page 29.*

## RESUME CONTENT

Several components make up a resume, although the format you choose will determine which components you should include as well as in what order. Standard resume components include:

- ▶ **Heading/Identifying Information** – all of your contact information is placed at the top of your resume, aligned to the left or centered on the page. Start with your name at the very top of your resume, followed by your mailing address, phone number and finally, your email or website address.
- ▶ **Employment Objective** – one clear, concise sentence explaining the job you want and/or your career goal
- ▶ **Special Certifications and Qualifications** – specific skills, certifications or trainings you have which relate to the job for which you are interested
- ▶ **Work Experience** – previous jobs including your job title, place of employment, city and dates of employment
- ▶ **Education** – include school name and date of graduation from high school, college or other postsecondary education institution/program (list expected date if you have not graduated yet)
- ▶ **Activities** – extracurricular or athletic participation, volunteer work and membership in organizations, being sure to indicate any leadership positions or achievements
- ▶ **Honors, Awards** – honors received, achievements, community recognition

# RESUMES

## RESUME DOS AND DON'TS

Use this list of resume do's and don'ts as a checklist to make sure your resume is complete, professional, accurate and ready to help move your job search forward.

### DO

- ✓ Start with your full name, address (can be optional), phone number and email address
- ✓ Include a brief objective or summary
- ✓ Highlight your strong points
- ✓ List any special skills, competencies and certifications
- ✓ List previous employment from most recent to earliest by month/year
- ✓ Make sure to carefully check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. Use spell check and have a professional person (teacher, guidance personnel) proofread your resume.
- ✓ Use quality white or off-white 8.5 x 11 resume paper
- ✓ If your resume paper has a watermark, make sure it is "right-reading" when you print, meaning the watermark, like text, should be read left to right. To check if your paper has a watermark, hold the paper to the light to see the watermark.
- ✓ Print on only one side of the paper
- ✓ Use a font size of 10 to 14 points
- ✓ Use one standard typeface such as Times New Roman or Arial
- ✓ Avoid italics, scripts and underlined words
- ✓ Put your resume in a large envelope for mailing

### DON'T

- ✗ Handwrite your resume
- ✗ Use colored or patterned papers
- ✗ Use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics or shading
- ✗ Use nicknames
- ✗ List references – these should be included on a separate sheet
- ✗ Put your photo on your resume
- ✗ Fold or staple your resume
- ✗ Include personal information including age, gender and marital status
- ✗ Include reasons for leaving previous jobs

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

With today's equal opportunity requirements, personal data is not required, and does not belong, on a resume. A good rule of thumb is to exclude any of the following information on your resume:

- ▶ **Marital and family status**
- ▶ **Religious or political affiliation (except when you are applying at a church, synagogue, political group, etc.)**
- ▶ **Ancestry, national origin, race or color**
- ▶ **Gender**
- ▶ **Age eye**

## FUNCTIONAL RESUME SAMPLE

Anita Job  
123 Career Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205  
(803) 555-1212  
anitajob@gmail.com

**Objective:** To obtain a manager trainee position requiring strong organizational and technical skills.

**Skills: Management**

- Coordinated and managed daily activities and workflow distribution for cashiers
- Developed and maintained monthly schedule for team of nine staff members

**Organizational**

- Conducted weekly inventory and ordering reviews
- Developed and maintained database of client contacts
- Maintained cash drawer, assuring accurate count in and count outs

**Technical**

- Proficient use of Microsoft Office Suite, including Word and Excel
- Experienced with various database management and online research tools

**Experience: Assistant Manager, Rush's**  
7450 Garner's Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29205 April 2020 - Present

**Office Assistant, ABC Accounting, LLC**  
1234 Devine Street, Columbia, SC 29205 February 2018 – April 2020

**Front End Cashier, Kroger**  
3403 Forest Drive, Columbia, SC 29204 May 2017 – February 2018

**Education: Dreher High School, Columbia SC**  
2017 - Present  
Courses included:  
Business Management  
Computer Science

**Activities:** Dreher High School yearbook staff, YMCA peer mentor

**Awards:** Rush's Employee of the Month, YMCA Outstanding Volunteer Award

**References:** Available upon request

## CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME SAMPLE

Anita Job  
123 Career Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205  
(803) 555-1212  
anitajob@gmail.com

### Objective

To obtain a manager trainee position requiring strong organizational and technical skills.

### Experience

#### Assistant Manager

April 2020 – Present

Rush's, 7450 Garner's Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29205

- Coordinated and managed daily activities and workflow distribution for cashiers
- Developed and maintained monthly schedule for team of nine staff members
- Conducted weekly inventory and ordering reviews

#### Office Assistant

February 2018 — April 2020

ABC Accounting, LLC, 1234 Devine Street, Columbia, SC 29205

- Developed and maintained database of client contacts
- Performed various administrative duties including answering the phones, filing and drafting correspondence

#### Front End Cashier

May 2017 – February 2018

Kroger, 3403 Forest Drive, Columbia, SC 29204

- Maintained cash drawer, assuring accurate count in and count out
- Serviced customers by helping locate items and handling returns and price adjustments

### Education

#### Dreher High School 2017 - Present

Courses included:

- Business Management
- Computer Science

### Activities

- Dreher High School yearbook staff
- YMCA peer mentor

### Awards

- Rush's Employee of the Month
- YMCA Outstanding Volunteer Award

### References

Available upon request

# REFERENCES

For employers to trust you and to learn more about your qualifications and skills, they may want to talk to people who know you well, such as former employers, teachers or mentors. These individuals are your “References.” Before you send out or post your resume, develop a list of three to five individuals who will serve as appropriate references for you. Always ask someone if they will serve as a reference for you. Do not use a friend or relative as a reference. Your reference should have some professional significance to your job search.

Your references should not be included in your resume. References should be listed on a separate sheet of paper in the order in which you wish them to be contacted. Include the name, title, business or organization, business address and phone number (and email address if available). If references are not initially requested, include a note at the bottom of your resume stating, “References available upon request.” Be ready to provide your reference list to potential employers if they ask for it and always take a copy with you to a job interview.

Keep your reference list consistent with your resume. Use the same paper, heading format and font size and style. Format your reference list according to the sample provided.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Stay in touch with your references. Let them know when you have applied for a job or have a job interview. Provide them with a copy of your resume as well as some information about the job so they can relate to your experiences and qualifications. Send each of your references a thank-you note letting them know the outcome of your job search. Not only is this proper etiquette, but this will help keep your connections current should you need their help again later in your professional career.

## REFERENCES SAMPLE

Anita Job  
123 Career Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205  
(803) 555-1234  
anitajob@gmail.com

References:

Mr. Joe Smith  
Manager, ABC Foods  
123 Mockingbird Lane  
Greenville, SC 29305  
(864) 555-1212  
jsmith@abcfoods.com

Ms. Susan Jones  
Owner, Jiffy Consulting  
444 Hampton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 555-1222  
sjones@jiffyconsulting.biz

Ms. Ann Hamilton  
District Supervisor, City Packaging  
411 Kensington Way  
Columbia, SC 29205  
(803) 555-5678

# COVER LETTERS

**Most resumes are not complete without a cover letter that introduces you and your resume to the employer. A good cover letter provides essential information not found in the resume. Cover letters can be personalized or generalized, but they should always be written specifically to go with your resume.**

Begin your cover letter by including your return address and date, followed by the inside business address and salutation, all aligned left.

The tone of your letter should be professional and pleasant, and the language should be clear and concise. Letter content can be organized into three paragraphs with each paragraph serving to provide specific and important information.

## FIRST PARAGRAPH

Use the first paragraph to identify the position you are writing about and your source of information. Include whether you saw the job posting or heard about the position or company through a referral. If you were referred to the job by a current employee of the company, be sure to include his or her name and title.

## SECOND PARAGRAPH

The second paragraph is a brief summary explaining why you are qualified for the position. Detail your strongest qualifications and show how they match position requirements. Provide evidence of your related work, extracurricular activities and academic experiences and accomplishments, and refer to your enclosed resume.

## THIRD PARAGRAPH

Close your letter by requesting an interview and indicate how and when you can be contacted. Suggest that you will call at a specific time to follow up and to discuss an opportunity to meet with the contact. Be sure to thank the reader for his or her consideration.

End your letter with an appropriate closing such as “Sincerely” followed by your handwritten signature and typed name. As with your resume, you should review your cover letter carefully, checking your spelling, grammar, punctuation and format. Ask a professional or a trusted friend to proofread your cover letter as well. You may want to read your letter aloud to make sure everything you have written is clear and concise.

*The sample cover letter on page 32 provides you with a guide to writing an effective cover letter.*

## EMAILING A COVER LETTER

The only time you do not include a cover letter is when your first introduction to an employer is in person. Even if you are applying for a job electronically, including a cover letter is still necessary and can improve your chances for success if written and presented effectively.

In most cases, you should email your cover letter as an attachment, using the body of your email to introduce yourself and give the goal of your communication. The most important thing, though, is to follow the instructions of the job posting exactly. Some companies may not accept emails with attachments; and in that case, you will want to paste your cover letter within the body of the email using a simple font and format.

*For more on appropriate use of email in your job search, see pages 58 - 59 on Email Etiquette.*

# COVER LETTERS

## COVER LETTER SAMPLE

123 Career Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205  
May 15, 2021

Ms. Deborah Albright  
Executive Director  
B & B Enterprises, Inc.  
PO Box 211039  
Columbia, SC 29221

Dear Ms. Albright:

I am responding to the ad in The State newspaper for the position of manager trainee and am very interested in speaking with you about the position. I believe my qualifications and skills are very well suited for this position, as outlined in the enclosed resume.

My previous work in food service and education, including management experience, has prepared me to successfully fulfill the duties and expectations of a manager trainee with B & B Enterprises. I am very eager to secure a position that will allow me to continue my education in management, and your position sounds like the ideal opportunity.

I have enclosed my resume for your review and would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about my qualifications and the position. I will contact you next week to see if there is a convenient time for us to meet. Please also feel free to contact me at 555-1234 or anitajob@gmail.com. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Anita Job

Enclosure: Resume

# APPLICATIONS

A job application is an official form — a list of questions requiring factual responses — an employer asks all applicants for an open position to complete. An application may be offline, using a pen and paper format, or, and increasingly so, online using a computer. In today’s job market approximately 50 percent of mid-sized companies and almost all large corporations use an online applicant tracking system (ATS) to screen job candidates.

Most application forms are fairly short and ask for the same information, providing employers with a consistent way to collect answers to the same questions from all applicants. Each company, however, will most likely use a custom form that is slightly different from any other. Much like your resume and cover letter, an application offers you the opportunity to present valuable information about yourself to a perspective employer and to make a good first impression.

If you are required to complete an application offline, using pen and paper format, before, during or after a job interview, make sure to complete the application neatly, using only blue or black ink. If possible, ask for a copy of the application a day or two before an interview so you can take your time reviewing and completing it.

It is essential that your job application is:

- ▶ **Complete.** Answer every question, leaving nothing blank. If a question does not apply to you, write “NA,” for “Not Applicable” in the space provided.
- ▶ **Correct.** Double check to make sure your application is free of spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.
- ▶ **Accurate.** Provide honest answers without any lies or exaggerations.

Additional tips and sample applications are included on the following pages to help you prepare to successfully complete job applications.

# APPLICATIONS


## APPLICATION TIPS

- ▶ Be prepared. Create a fact sheet that collects and organizes all of the information you may be asked to provide including education, specific dates referring to education or experiences, certifications, previous work and volunteer experience and references.
- ▶ Use your full name on the form as well as your complete address including zip code. Do not use nicknames.
- ▶ Fill in the specific job title if you are asked to list the job for which you are applying. Do not write “Anything.”
- ▶ List your most recent job first when completing employment information. Include your job title, company name and dates of employment for each work experience you list.
- ▶ List your most recent education first and include school name, attendance dates and degrees received for each entry. Don’t forget to include career and technology schools, training or certification programs.
- ▶ Always put “Negotiable” at this point in your career if asked to list a salary requirement.
- ▶ Do not use texting abbreviations, computer slang, shortcuts or acronyms. Use standard English.
- ▶ Write clearly and neatly only using blue or black ink when completing an “offline” application using pen and paper format. Do not cross out or scribble out mistakes.
- ▶ Pay attention to deadlines and closing dates for the job application process.
- ▶ Sign your application using blue or black ink.



# APPLICATIONS

## APPLICATION SAMPLE

		I AM APPLYING FOR THE POSITION OF:			
		Customer Service Representative (POSITION NAME/NUMBER)			
AT: Dominion		DATE:			
		(SCANA COMPANY)			
*Individuals applying for a position which requires the operation of a commercial motor vehicle must complete the Addendum to Application					

FIRST NAME	MIDDLE/MAIDEN	LAST	SOCIAL SECURITY #	
Anita	Goode	Job	481-72-XXXX	
ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
123 Career Avenue		Columbia	SC	29205
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER	TIMES AVAILABLE	ALTERNATE TELEPHONE NUMBER	TIMES AVAILABLE	
(803) 555-1234	8 AM 6 PM	(803) 555-1235	AM PM 6-10	
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF OR PLEAD GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO ANY CRIME OTHER THAN A MINOR TRAFFIC VIOLATION? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO				
GIVE NAMES OF ANY RELATIVES, INCLUDING THOSE BY MARRIAGE, EMPLOYED BY SCANA OR ITS COMPANIES				
LAST	FIRST	RELATIONSHIP	DEPARTMENT	
NA				
ARE YOU LEGALLY AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE U.S.? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO				
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT DESIRED: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME <input type="checkbox"/> TEMP <input type="checkbox"/> SUMMER <input type="checkbox"/> CO-OP/INTERN <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT				
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	SALARY EXPECTED	DATE AVAILABLE		
0	Negotiable	8/15/21		
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION PREFERENCE, IF ANY			IF UNDER 18, GIVE DATE OF BIRTH	
Columbia, SC			NA	
HAVE YOU EVER APPLIED TO SCANA OR ITS COMPANIES BEFORE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		IF YES, WHERE AND WHAT POSITION? APPROXIMATE DATE		
		NA NA		
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN EMPLOYED BY SCANA OR ITS COMPANIES? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		IF YES, WHICH DEPARTMENT OR COMPANY?	LOCATION	DATES OF EMPLOYMENT
		NA	NA	NA

HIGH SCHOOL	NAME AS LISTED ON SCHOOL RECORDS	GRADUATED	IF NO, LAST GRADE COMPLETED	
Anita Goode Job		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	NA	
HIGH SCHOOL ADDRESS			DID YOU RECEIVE GED?	
Dreher High School 701 Adger Road			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
NAME AND LOCATION OF COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL	DATE ATTENDED	COURSE OF STUDY/MAJOR	GRADUATION DATE	
NA	FROM MONTH/YR TO MONTH/YR		DEGREE	
ANY SPECIAL DEGREES-CERTIFICATES/HONORS NOT LISTED ABOVE			IF YOU DID NOT GRADUATE FROM ANY OF THE ABOVE, DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN?	
National Honor Society 2000-2001			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
PLEASE INDICATE ANY PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/LICENSES				
NA	TYPE	LICENSE NUMBER	EXPIRATION DATE	STATE ISSUED
LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (SPOKEN, READ, WRITTEN)				
None				
ORGANIZATION/SOCIETY NAME	HIGHEST OFFICE HELD	FROM	TO	COMMENTS
DECA	Member	8/2019	5/2021	

# APPLICATIONS

## APPLICATION SAMPLE CONTINUED

COMPLETE IF APPLICABLE FOR POSITION DESIRED	TYPING WPM	DICTATION WPM	OFFICE MACHINES OPERATED
NA	NA	NA	
COMPUTER EXPERIENCE	Business Computer Skills Class, Dreher High School		SOFTWARE Microsoft Office
COMPUTER LANGUAGES	OTHER RELATED INFORMATION None		
CERTIFIED WELDER <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	TYPE OF CERTIFICATION NA	HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	OTHER MACHINERY/OTHER SKILLS NA
SUPV/MGMT EXPERIENCE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	IF YES, NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES SUPERVISED NA		

BEGINNING WITH LAST POSITION, OR PRESENT IF NOW EMPLOYED, LIST ALL EMPLOYERS AND SELF EMPLOYED PERIODS. MAY WE CONTACT YOUR EMPLOYERS LISTED BELOW? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF NO, INDICATE WHICH EMPLOYERS YOU DO NOT WANT US TO CONTACT.					
1. NAME OF EMPLOYER	DATE HIRED	DATE LEFT	SUPERVISOR	TELEPHONE NUMBER	
Custom Screen Printing	8/2021	-	Roxanne Altman	803 779-XXXX	
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PART TIME	
1801 Main Street	Columbia	SC	29205		
POSITION	REASON FOR LEAVING		SALARY <input type="checkbox"/> YR. <input type="checkbox"/> HR.		
Customer Service Assistant	NA		\$12.00		
DUTIES Pick up and deliver print jobs to clients, take customer calls, schedule appointments					
2. NAME OF EMPLOYER	DATE HIRED	DATE LEFT	SUPERVISOR	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	
Commercial Maintenance Service	5/2021	9/2021	Jim Sanderson	803 254-XXXX	
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME	
1524 Green Street	Columbia	SC	29205		
POSITION	REASON FOR LEAVING		SALARY <input type="checkbox"/> YR. <input type="checkbox"/> HR.		
Customer Service Assistant	Summer help only		\$9.75		X
DUTIES					
3. NAME OF EMPLOYER	DATE HIRED	DATE LEFT	SUPERVISOR	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	
Took incoming calls from clients and dispatched maintenance crews					
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME	
POSITION					
REASON FOR LEAVING					
SALARY <input type="checkbox"/> YR. <input type="checkbox"/> HR.					
DUTIES					
4. NAME OF EMPLOYER	DATE HIRED	DATE LEFT	SUPERVISOR	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE					
ZIP CODE					
<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME					
POSITION					
REASON FOR LEAVING					
SALARY <input type="checkbox"/> YR. <input type="checkbox"/> HR.					
DUTIES					

MILITARY RECORD: COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF APPLICABLE	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATES OF DUTY FROM: TO:	RANK AT SEPARATION
PRIMARY MILITARY OCCUPATION	SPECIAL TRAINING		
NA			
DUTIES			

GIVE NAMES OF TWO PERSONS TO WHOM YOU ARE NOT RELATED AND BY WHOM YOU HAVE NOT BEEN EMPLOYED. THESE PERSONS SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU SEVERAL YEARS.					
NAME					YEARS KNOWN
Wayne Anderson					9
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	
1802 Devine Street	Columbia	SC	29205	803 779-XXXX	
OCCUPATION					YEARS KNOWN
Owner, Palmetto State Advertising					4
NAME					
Ellen Hanson					
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	
701 Adger Road	Columbia	SC	29205	803 254-XXXX	
OCCUPATION					
Guidance Counselor, Dreher High School					

Greg Bulmash was only a few years out of college and struggling to make it as a writer. Looking for steady employment in the meantime, he became frustrated with the job-seeking process and wrote a satirical piece illustrating how he would like to fill out a job application as opposed to how he should. The following application answers are from the full piece posted by Bulmash on his self-published Internet humor column in April 1997.

**NAME:** Greg Bulmash.

**DESIRED POSITION:** Company's President or Vice President. But seriously, whatever's available. If I was in a position to be picky, I wouldn't be applying here in the first place.

**DESIRED SALARY:** \$185,000 a year plus stock options and a Michael Ovitz severance package. If that's not possible, make an offer and we can haggle.

**EDUCATION:** Yes.

**LAST POSITION HELD:** Target for middle management hostility.

**SALARY:** Less than I'm worth.

**MOST NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT:** My incredible collection of stolen pens and post-it notes.

**REASON FOR LEAVING:** It sucked.

**HOURS AVAILABLE TO WORK:** Any.

**PREFERRED HOURS:** 1:30-3:30 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL SKILLS?:** Yes, but they're better suited to a more intimate environment.

**MAY WE CONTACT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER?:** If I had one, wouldn't I be there?

**DO YOU HAVE ANY PHYSICAL CONDITIONS THAT WOULD PROHIBIT YOU FROM LIFTING UP TO 50 LBS.?:** Of what?

**DO YOU HAVE A CAR?:** I think the more appropriate question here would be "Do you have a car that runs?"

**HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY SPECIAL AWARDS OR RECOGNITION?:** I may already be a winner of the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes.

**WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE DOING IN FIVE YEARS?:** Living in the Bahamas with a fabulously wealthy dumb sexy blonde supermodel who thinks I'm the greatest thing since sliced bread. Actually, I'd like to be doing that now.

**DO YOU CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE?:** Yes. Absolutely.





# Section 4

## THE JOB INTERVIEW

The job interview is a critical step in finding a job. It is your opportunity to prove to the employer in person that you are right for the job. You will be judged on your appearance, your ability to communicate, job skills and goals, work ethics and much more. This section is designed to help you interview with success and includes information on:

**PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW**

**DRESSING FOR SUCCESS**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**INTERVIEW TIPS**

**FOLLOW-UP**

# PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

The first step towards a successful job interview is to make sure you are prepared. Being prepared means not only making sure you are able to talk effectively about your skills and career interest, but also that you are knowledgeable about the position you are seeking as well as the company itself.

Take time to carefully review the job description and requirements. Research the prospective company by talking with current and former employees, reviewing the company's website, press releases, annual reports and other publications. Look up recent articles about the company and research industry trends online. Being able to say, "I just read an article about that while I was researching your company," is very powerful in an interview. It shows that you have a genuine interest in the company and that you are prepared and willing to go above and beyond what is expected.

The company profile outline below provides a good guide for collecting and organizing company research.

## COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Description: What does the company do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Company Mission Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Company Life: How long has the company been in business? \_\_\_\_\_

How was it started? \_\_\_\_\_

Company Size: How many employees does the company have? How many people does it serve? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Company Location: How many offices/locations and where? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Company Stock Exchange Listing (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

What is its current stock value? \_\_\_\_\_

Recent Company News and Industry Trends: \_\_\_\_\_

# PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

## OVERCOMING INTERVIEW ANXIETY

It is normal to be a bit nervous before an interview. Being organized and prepared is the best way to overcome interview anxiety. Below are a few more tips to help you feel more comfortable and confident before an interview.

- ▶ Make sure that you eat at least two hours before an interview. If you are hungry or if you have just eaten, your body will only make you more nervous.
- ▶ Before you go to the interview site, breathe deeply several times. Breathe in slowly for as long as you can and hold your breath for five seconds. Exhale slowly. Repeat several times.
- ▶ Try on your interview clothes the week before the interview. Make sure they fit well and do not need alterations. Practice good posture while sitting properly at a table or desk.
- ▶ Prepare yourself the night before. Make sure your clothes are clean and wrinkle-free. Put copies of your resume, reference list, work samples as well as a notepad together so that you do not panic to find them before you leave.
- ▶ Rehearse introducing yourself, answering interview questions, asking interview questions and talking about yourself and your resume.
- ▶ Get at least eight hours of sleep the night before your interview.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HANDSHAKE

The handshake is the first impression someone gets of you (after your dress). Here are some tips for getting the handshake right followed by three examples of getting it wrong.

- ✓ Handshake should be firm with good eye contact.
- ✓ Speak clearly and state your name, if applicable.
- ✓ Include a greeting such as, "It's nice to meet you."
- ✗ NO informal handshakes such as fist-bumps, high fives, etc.
- ✗ NO two-handed shakes: these are very personal and sometimes patronizing
- ✗ "LIMP FISH" – puny, too delicate
- ✗ "BONE CRUSHER" – too hard, hurts the hand
- ✗ "SHAKER" – shakes too much

# DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Research shows that within the first four to nine minutes of an interview, the recruiter decides whether to seriously consider you for the position. Your appearance is vitally important in any interview, regardless of the nature of the job for which you are applying. If you present yourself in a professional manner, you will be treated as a professional and given consideration for the job as a professional.

## MEN:

- **Suit** – well-fitted, wool or wool blend in navy or dark grey
- **Shirt** – long-sleeve, white or pale blue, solid or with thin stripes
- **Tie** – classic width of 3 to 3 ¼ inches in silk or a silk/wool blend, solid, with neat stripes or a conservative pattern
- **Belt** – leather in either black or brown
- **Socks** – over the calf, either nylon or thin cotton in black or navy
- **Shoes** – conservative leather slip-ons or lace-ups in black or brown
- **Hair** – Neat and tidy
- **Jewelry** – very minimal, NO earrings or other visible piercings (nose rings, tongue piercings, etc.)
- Be well-groomed with nails neatly cut and manicured, teeth freshly brushed and face clean shaven with unscented or very limited to no aftershave.
- Don't mix and match suit jackets and pants.
- Don't look disheveled, too casual or inappropriate. No jeans, turtlenecks or corduroys.



## WOMEN:

- **Suit** – well-fitted, conservative pant or skirt with jacket in black, navy or dark grey
- **Skirt** – suit skirt should be long enough so you can sit down comfortably
- **Shirt** – coordinating blouse in a solid color or with a conservative pattern, cotton blend or silk with a simple cut and no excess frills
- **Hosiery** – neutral-toned, sheer, no seams/rips
- **Shoes** – conservative, plain leather pumps in a dark or neutral color
- **Hair** – neat and tidy, styled away from your face
- **Jewelry/Accessories** – simple and conservative, minimal amount to complete the outfit. No bangle bracelets or plastic belts. No visible piercings (nose rings, tongue piercings, etc.) except for simple earrings.
- **Purse** – leather in same color as shoes, only use if not using a briefcase
- Be well-groomed with nails neatly cut and manicured and teeth freshly brushed.
- Make-up should be simple and sparse
- Little or no perfume or scented lotion
- Keep colors and patterns simple and understated. Don't wear clothing with patterns that are too "busy" or colors that are too "loud."
- Don't look disheveled, too casual or inappropriate. No jeans, turtlenecks, corduroys, textured tights, corduroy blazers or skirts, cowl-neck sweaters, low-cut necklines or clothing that is too tight.



## INTERVIEW CLOTHES: A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Students starting out may wish to have two suits and several coordinating shirts and ties or blouses and scarves. Select the best quality clothing you can afford. If you do not already have one, take the time to purchase a quality suit. Don't pick anything that is too flashy or trendy. Stay conservative, picking attire that you will use for years to come.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

As with anything, preparation is the key to interview success. Before your job interview, spend time reviewing possible interview questions and rehearsing your answers. As you practice, think about the purpose behind each question. What kind of information is the interviewer trying to obtain? How might the question allow you to show your qualifications and interest in the position? Practice at least twice or thrice until you believe your answers are good and you feel comfortable in your delivery.

## COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TIPS

Below are some commonly asked interview questions as well as tips for effective answers.

### ▶ TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

This is the number one statement by interviewers, and while it may seem simple, its broadness may make it difficult to answer. With this query, keep in mind that the interviewer is interested in learning about you professionally, not personally. Pick a few key points about yourself to emphasize such as your work experience, job skills and career goals. Conclude by expressing your interest in the position and the company. A thoughtful and well-delivered answer will help direct the conversation and allow you to elaborate on your skills and qualifications.

### ▶ WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU?

This question offers a great chance to really sell yourself. Briefly and succinctly outline your strengths and qualifications, describing how each relates to the job position. Be careful not to answer this question too generically. Nearly everyone says they are hardworking and motivated. Discuss what distinguishes you from your peers. Set yourself apart with qualities that are unique to you.

### ▶ WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK HERE?

This question is the interviewer's way of seeing if you've done your homework. Before a job interview, you should always make sure you know about the company, its direction and industry. If you've done your research, this question gives you the opportunity to show initiative and demonstrate how your experience and qualifications match the company's needs.

### ▶ WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESSES?

The key to answering this question is being honest about a weakness but demonstrating how you have turned it into a strength. For example, if you had a problem with organization in the past, demonstrate the steps you took to more effectively keep yourself on track. This will show that you have the ability to recognize aspects of yourself that need improvement and the initiative to make yourself better.

### ▶ WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB?

Even if your last job ended badly, be careful about being negative in answering this question. Be diplomatic and professional. If you do point out negative aspects of your last job, find some positives to mention as well. Complaining endlessly will not say much for your attitude.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## ▶ DESCRIBE A PROBLEM SITUATION AND HOW YOU RESOLVED IT?

As a recent high school or college graduate with little job experience, it may be difficult to think of an appropriate response to this question. The interviewer wants to know if you can think critically and develop solutions, regardless of what kind of issues you face. Even if your problem was not having enough time to study, describe steps you took to prioritize your schedule. This will demonstrate that you are responsible and can think through situations on your own.

## ▶ WHAT IS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WHICH YOU ARE MOST PROUD?

The key to answering this question successfully is to be specific and select an accomplishment that relates to the position. Even if your greatest accomplishment is being on a championship high school basketball team, opt for a more professionally relevant accomplishment. Think of the qualities the company is looking for and develop an example that demonstrates how you can meet the company's needs.

## ▶ WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS?

This is one of the hardest questions to answer, particularly if you are a recent graduate with little work experience. Before going to your interview, research the salary range in your field to get an idea of what you should be making. Note that ranges may differ according to geographic location. Steer clear of discussing salary specifics before receiving a job offer. Let the interviewer know you will be open to discussing fair compensation when the time comes. If pressed for a more specific answer, always give a range, rather than a specific number.

## ▶ ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ARE:

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Are you willing to travel if needed?
- What kind of people do you find difficult to work with?
- Are you willing to work overtime if needed?
- Why did you choose this area of work?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What did you like most or least in your recent job?
- How do you work under pressure?  
Give an example.
- When are you available to start?
- What are your short and long-range goals?
- Assuming you could do anything you wanted, what would it be?
- Do you have plans for college or continued study?
- What failures have you experienced?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?

## ▶ INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Act includes guidelines employers must follow when conducting job interviews. Criteria requires that questions must be job-related, and the answer must be necessary to judge an applicant's competence for the job in question.

Questions should NOT be used to find out personal information, as the answers could have a disparate effect. In a nutshell, employers should not ask about any of the following, because to not hire an applicant because of any of this information is to discriminate.

- Ancestry, national origin, race or color
- Gender
- Age (except to establish that an applicant meets minimum age requirements by law)
- Marital and family status
- Religious or political affiliation
- Disability

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## ▶ QUESTIONS TO ASK

In addition to being asked questions, you should be prepared to ask a few questions yourself. After all, you need to make sure that this job, at this company, is right for you. Below are some sample questions, but you will also want to develop some of your own questions that are specific to you and the company where you interview.

- Why is the position open? Promotion, company expansion, or did someone leave the company?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of the position?
- What do you expect the responsibilities to be six months to a year from now?
- Does the position provide the opportunity to work on special projects? If so, what are recent ones?
- What computer software and other technology skills are required for the position?
- How many people work in this department/office? What is the management structure?
- How long have you (the interviewer) been with the company?
- What is the most challenging aspect of your work?
- What is the work environment like? Do employees work well together or as a team?
- Is travel associated with this position?
- In your opinion, what type of person is successful in the company (team player, self-starter, etc.)

## ▶ QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

While you want to make sure you find out as much as possible about the position and the company to be able to make an informed decision, there are some questions that are inappropriate for you to ask in a first job interview with the company. Also, do not ask any questions that are answered in the job posting, position description, company website or literature.

- What is the salary? What types of benefits will I receive?
- Can I take off time for vacation?
- Is this job hard?
- Will I have to work overtime? Will you pay me more?
- Do people hate their jobs here?
- Did I get the job?

### **It is important to end the interview on the right note. Leave the interview just as you entered it — smiling and enthusiastic.**

Before the interview is over, be sure you ask if there is anything about your background that needs to be clarified. This is important because it allows you the opportunity to resolve any concerns before you walk out the door. Ask the interviewer for a business card. This will be extremely helpful when you write the thank-you note following the interview.

Remember to thank the interviewer for his or her time and the opportunity to meet. If you are interested, tell the interviewer you are interested in the position and that you look forward to continuing the process. If you feel comfortable, ask what the next step is in the job application process.

# INTERVIEW TIPS

This section includes a great deal of important information for interview success. The following Interview Dos and Don'ts will help you review what you have learned and make sure you're ready to ace your next job interview.

## DO

- ✓ Be on time. This is rule #1. If you show up late for an interview, you should just turn around and go back home. You just lost the job! Never be more than 15 minutes early; arrive on time.
- ✓ Dress appropriately. Wear conservative clothing, sensible shoes and be sure your entire outfit is clean and pressed. Dress for the job you want. While a suit is usually the best choice for a job interview, it is not always necessary. You can ask to be sure.
- ✓ Be pleasant and professional. Smile and be positive and respectful. Be prepared. Bring all necessary items organized neatly inside a briefcase or leather notebook or portfolio. Use the "Interview Checklist" on page 50 to make sure you have everything you need.
- ✓ Speak clearly. Look the interviewer in the eye when answering or asking questions.
- ✓ Do your homework. Spend time researching the company as well as preparing and practicing your responses to common interview questions.
- ✓ Be honest. A lie will eventually catch up with you. Even if you get the job initially, you may very well be fired in the end.
- ✓ Show your interest. Ask questions about the job and the company and convey your interest in the position and in working for the company.
- ✓ Show appreciation. Always thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. Ask for a business card and send a follow-up thank-you note within a day or two of the interview.

## DON'T

- ✗ Forget to turn your cell phone off or put it on silent. Never take a call or text while in an interview.
- ✗ Chew gum.
- ✗ Swear, use vulgar language or slang terminology.
- ✗ Bring your coffee or soft drink.
- ✗ Do not film the experience and post to social media.



# INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Use the following checklist to make sure you bring the following items, neatly organized in a briefcase or professional leather notebook or portfolio.

- Name, title and contact information of the person(s) with whom you are interviewing company name, company profile sheet as well as the company's recruiting literature
- Job title as well as the job posting and position description, if available
- Two working pens (in case one runs out), no pencils
- Any notes you have prepared to help you during the interview
  - fact sheet that includes important information such as prior work experience, educational history, etc., especially if you may be required to complete an application onsite as part of the interview process
- Three copies of the resume you sent to the employer
- Three copies of the cover letter you sent to the employer
- Reference list
- Questions to ask the interviewer
- Work samples or portfolio, if appropriate



# THE WORKING INTERVIEW

## A Hands-on Hiring Process

### WHAT IS A WORKING INTERVIEW?

A working interview is a hands-on interview where employers can see a candidate's ability to perform a specific job or task instead of answering a series of questions. The employer analyzes the time and ways you solve and approach the problem, and in some cases, candidates may spend the entire day at the company and complete a task by the end of the day.

### BENEFITS OF WORKING INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Employers can see candidates perform and analyze strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ Candidates can showcase their skills and strengths
- ▶ Candidates can assess the work culture, and management style of a company to determine if they can imagine themselves working there before making a decision
- ▶ Employers can hire the top performers with utmost transparency

### WORKING INTERVIEW TIPS:

- ▶ **Research the company.** Read the company's website to determine their values and mission. This way, you can reflect their values through the work that you do.
- ▶ **Establish expectations up front.** Prior to starting your interview, ask about the work you will be doing and what compensation you are receiving. Many employers will pay either a flat rate or an hourly rate for the work you do during your interview. If they do not plan to pay you, decide whether you are comfortable with that.
- ▶ **Pay attention to detail.** Make sure you reread the directions and ensure you have accounted for every detail. Listen to verbal instructions carefully. Ask questions if confused about any aspect of a given task. Use all of the time they give you to make sure you did the job correctly.
- ▶ **Ask smart questions.** If you are unsure of anything, ask employers to clarify so you can do the job correctly. If you were a real employee, you'd be allowed to ask informed questions, so feel free to do so now too.
- ▶ **Dress for success.** Even though it's a working interview, you should still wear nice clothes like you would at any other interview (unless they tell you otherwise). This typically means formal business attire that fits you well and is clean and wrinkle-free.
- ▶ **Find your confidence.** Remind yourself that you are capable of the work you need to accomplish. By staying uplifted and assured that you know what you're doing, the employer may take notice of your confidence.
- ▶ **Show your enthusiasm.** Even if a task is quite challenging, show that you can handle anything while having a positive attitude. Staying calm and collected during your working interview shows employers that you work well under pressure.
- ▶ **Make a lasting impression.** A working interview allows employers and their employees to get to know you better. If you are working in the office for a day or two, make sure to introduce yourself to those around you and show that you are enjoyable to work with.

Sources: ©Indeed, "What to Expect at a Working Interview", 2021. & Totempool, "What is a Working Interview and How to Outperform in One?"

# THE VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

## A Modern, Online Hiring Process

### WHAT IS A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW?

A virtual interview is an interview that takes place remotely, sometimes over the phone, but often using technology like video conferencing and other online communication platforms.

### BENEFITS OF A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

- ▶ Virtual interviewing is convenient for employers, allowing for a more efficient interview process, easing scheduling conflicts, saving money and broadening the candidate pool
- ▶ Virtual interviews are often conducted in the same way as face-to-face interviews; however, you must consider adjustments that may need to be made for limited ability to read body language or facial expressions
- ▶ You can avoid tardiness (no traffic snarls)
- ▶ You can reference notes without being too obvious

### WORKING INTERVIEW TIPS:

- ▶ **Determine the Best Hardware**  
If you have multiple devices (such as a computer, tablet, smart phone, etc.), choose the one you are most comfortable with – and the one with the most reliable technology. For most, a computer will be best. Prepare a backup plan with your interviewer for any tech issues that may arise.
- ▶ **Select the Proper Location for the Interview**  
A secluded room in which you can shut out distractions (and noises), diffused lighting with no shadows or glares, a generic, plain background, or even a simple virtual background are best. Ensure you can be seen on camera from the waist up.
- ▶ **Test All the Technology before your Interview**  
**Do a speed test:** Poor internet = poor communication. For optimum speed, ask household members to log out during your interview. If WiFi is unreliable, connect by plugging in your local area network (LAN) cable. You can also test your connection through a Google search for “Internet speed test.” Make sure to close any other unnecessary applications on your device.

**Check Your Lighting:** Light yourself from the front. If you have a desk light, position it towards your face so you’re clearly visible. Try to use cool, rather than warm light, as it emits a modern, clean, and brighter look (test on camera beforehand).

**Check Your Sound:** Before your call, test the microphone and speakers through the call platform that you will be using. These features are found in the “settings” area in most conferencing platforms.

**Test the Video/Call Platform:** Before your interview, familiarize yourself with tools and features of the video/call platform that you will be using. Ensure your camera connects properly to the platform and that you can successfully access the call.

# THE VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

## A Modern, Online Hiring Process

### VIRTUAL INTERVIEW TIPS CONTINUED:

▶ **Schedule at Least One Mock Interview**

Under as close to identical circumstances as possible, schedule a practice interview with someone you know. This will help you to monitor your speaking pace when nervous, your body language, appropriate hand gestures and expressions, responses to impromptu questions, and how often you look into your camera “at the interviewer,” and not at yourself on screen.

▶ **Complete Full Interview Preparations**

Conduct research on the employer/company, prepare responses to expected/common interview questions (which can be found online), and formulate questions you want to ask that cannot be easily answered through an online search. Carefully review the job description noting your relevant qualifications and prepare relevant examples of your achievements and experiences.

▶ **Build rapport**

You can establish rapport by researching your interviewer (if you have been told who it is beforehand) and being prepared to talk about any common interests or find other neutral topics with which to learn more about your interviewer.

▶ **Dress Professionally**

Be on the safe side with clothes. Do research on the general dress code for the industry you’re interviewing in. If you’re unsure, business casual is a good standard to follow. A great outfit example for men and women is a button-down shirt and blazer with slacks. Make sure to view yourself in the monitor to see what looks best on camera.

▶ **Be authentic**

When interviewing virtually, you have the rare opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment and show the interviewer who you are and why you’re the best person for the job. You bring something unique to the table...your personality, so let it shine!

▶ **Follow up**

It’s good practice to send a follow-up email within 24 hours of an interview, thanking the interviewer for their time and letting them know you’re available if they have any additional questions.

*Sources:* ©Indeed, “How to Succeed in a Virtual Interview,” 2021.  
©Harvard Business Review, “4 Tips to Nail a Virtual Job Interview,” 2021.  
©LiveCareer, “Top Tips for How to Ace Your Online Video Job Interview,” 2021.

Each year, CareerBuilder releases a list of the strangest job interview blunders compiled as a result of a Harris Interactive survey of more than 2,600 hiring managers and 3,900 workers nationwide. We've included some of these outlandish interview mistakes below as clear and humorous examples of what NOT to do on your next job interview.

1. Said he was so well qualified [that] if he didn't get the job, it would prove that the company's management was incompetent.
2. Stretched out on the floor to fill out the job application.
3. Brought her large dog to the interview.
4. Chewed bubble gum and constantly blew bubbles.
5. Brought his childhood toys to the interview
6. Balding candidate abruptly excused himself. Returned to office a few minutes later, wearing a hairpiece.
7. Applicant challenged interviewer to arm wrestle.
8. Asked to see interviewer's resume to see if the personnel executive was qualified to judge the candidate.
9. Announced she hadn't had lunch and proceeded to eat a hamburger and french fries in the interviewer's office.
10. Wore jogging suit to interview for position as financial vice president.
11. Said if he were hired, he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.
12. Wouldn't get out of the chair until I would hire him. I had to call the police.
13. When I asked him about his hobbies, he stood up and started tap dancing around my office.
14. Had a little pinball game and challenged me to play with him.
15. Bounced up and down on my carpet and told me I must be highly thought of by the company because I was given such a thick carpet.
16. Pulled out a digital camera and snapped a flash picture of me. Said he collected photos of everyone who interviewed him.
17. Called in sick to her current employer during the interview, faking an illness.
18. Referred to himself in the third person.
19. Candidate said her hair was perfect when asked why she should become part of the team.
20. A telephone call came in for the job applicant. It was from his wife. His side of the conversation went like this: "Which company? When do I start? What's the salary?" I said, "I assume you're not interested in conducting the interview any further." He promptly responded, "I am as long as you'll pay me more." I didn't hire him, but later found out there was no other job offer. It was a scam to get a higher offer.

# FOLLOW-UP

Throughout your job search it is important that you maintain careful records, using a system to keep your contacts with potential employers including such information as date, person, result, current status and next action. After each job interview, it is important that you take time to review the position and company, send a thank-you note within 24 hours and that you follow through on any requests for additional information or directions to call back at a specific time.

## POSITION AND COMPANY REVIEW

Following an interview, use the questions below to review the position and company. This will help you organize and remember important information that, should you be offered the job, you will need to consider as you determine if the company and position are right for you. The review can also help collect your thoughts as you prepare a thank-you letter to send to the interviewer.

The Position: \_\_\_\_\_

The Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Potential Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE POSITION

- Why is it available?
- How long has it been open?
- What would be your specific responsibilities?
- Are the goals set for the position realistic and attainable?
- Can you successfully perform the responsibilities of the position?
- What is your growth potential in this position?
- How does the position fit into your long-term and short-term career goals?
- Do the daily work activities appeal to you?
- Are your salary and benefit requirements satisfied?
- Is there opportunity for advancement?
- Will you be developing new skills and expanding your experience?
- Are the demands of the job compatible with your lifestyle?
- Can you manage the stress associated with changing jobs/relocating?
- Are the values of the organization compatible with your own?
- Is this employment opportunity a mutually beneficial relationship?

# FOLLOW-UP

## THE COMPANY

- Is the company growing or downsizing?
- Is the company a result of an acquisition or a planned expansion?
- Has this growth affected its profitability? How will it affect you and your position?
- What is the growth potential of the company's products and/or markets?
- What is the company's market share?
- Who are its competitors?
- How long has the current management been in place?
- Does the management team consist of new hires or people promoted from within?
- Does the company have a high retention rate of employees, or do they have a problem with high employee turnover?

## YOUR POTENTIAL SUPERVISOR

- How long has he/she been in this position?
- To whom does he/she report?
- What was his/her previous work experience?
- How does this relate to his/her background?
- What is his/her growth potential?
- Do you think you can work well with this person?

# THANK-YOU LETTER

It is essential that following an interview you write a thank-you letter to the interviewer to acknowledge the meeting and to remind him or her of you after you have gone. This letter shows your organizational skills and professionalism and offers you the opportunity to reemphasize your qualifications and interest in the company and position. To be effective, a thank-you note should be:

**Individually written.** Even if you interviewed with more than one person, you should send a thank-you letter to each person with whom you interviewed. Make sure to modify your message so that each interviewer receives a unique note.

**Typed or handwritten neatly using simple, professional stationery.** If typed, use stationery and format consistent with your resume. If handwritten, use blue or black ink, your very best handwriting and cream or bright white note cards.

**Be less than one page.**

**Timely.** Mail your thank-you letter within 24 hours of the interview.

**Specific.** Mention the names of the people you met at the interview and reference specific points that were discussed. Your thank-you note should show that you:

- paid attention to what was being said
- understood the importance of the interviewer's comments
- are excited about the job, can do it and want it
- can contribute

## IS IT OKAY TO SEND A THANK-YOU NOTE BY EMAIL?

At times, yes. Especially if a quick hiring decision is expected and time is of the essence, email is appropriate because it allows you to follow-up and express your thanks the same day as the interview. Still, even after sending a thank-you email, you should send a traditional thank-you letter by mail as well. Even in today's high-tech, fast-paced world, many employers say they still appreciate receiving a handwritten thank-you letter. It shows that you are conscientious and professional, and it may help set you apart from and above other candidates.

# THANK-YOU LETTER

## THANK-YOU LETTER SAMPLE

123 Career Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205  
June 20, 2025

Ms. Deborah Albright  
Executive Director  
B & B Enterprises, Inc.  
PO Box 211039  
Columbia, SC 29221

Dear Ms. Albright:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this morning. I enjoyed talking with you and learning more about B & B Enterprises, Inc., and the manager trainee position. Meeting with you today confirmed my interest in the position and the company.

As we discussed this morning, I would love the opportunity to work at B & B Enterprises. I believe my experience and future career goals are well suited for the position, and I would work hard to prove myself as a valuable employee. I will look forward to contacting you next week about the available position. Please also feel free to contact me anytime at 803-555-1234.

Sincerely,

Anita Job





# Section 5

## EMAIL AND SOCIAL NETWORKING PROTOCOL

In every region and in every industry, widespread and increasing use of the Internet, computers and automated systems greatly impacts the way we do business. Daily advances in technology mean there are always new products and new methods, new solutions and new problems. Although you may already know how to and do use smart phones, apps, social media, iPads and other tablet devices, it is important for you to understand the role such technology can play in building your career. This section is designed to help you use technology safely and appropriately and includes information on:

**EMAIL ETIQUETTE**

**SOCIAL NETWORKING**

# EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Email as a form of communication is integral to mostly every industry and job. It is essential that you understand how to use email appropriately in the workplace. The following guidelines for email etiquette can not only help you land a job but also keep one.

## ▶ **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE**

Possibly the most important thing to know is who your email is going to and to whom it could be forwarded. If you send a casual message to your friend about something in your company, and for some reason, it is forwarded again and eventually seen by someone in a senior position, you could be reprimanded and/or terminated. Companies can be liable for damaging statements you make if your email falls into the wrong hands. You never know the lifespan of an email or who may see a copy. A good rule of thumb to follow is to never put anything in an email that you wouldn't want to be printed on the front page of the newspaper.

## ▶ **STANDARD GRAMMAR RULES APPLY**

Standard grammar rules including proper capitalization, punctuation, etc. always apply in a professional setting, including email.

## ▶ **USE PROFESSIONAL EMAIL NAME AND ADDRESS**

Use a basic email address that is a version of your name. This will help identify your email in the recipient's inbox. Using loverboy@email.com or sweetbabe@email.com as your email address will likely cause a prospective employer to view you as immature and not as a mature professional.

## ▶ **SALUTATIONS**

Use standard formalities, such as Dear Mr. Smith, as if you were writing a professional letter.

## ▶ **SIGNATURES**

Use standard formalities and include your name, title, company name and email address in your signature line.

## ▶ **"SUBJECT" LINE**

Always include a pertinent subject title for the message so the reader can quickly and easily locate the message as well as determine its importance.

## ▶ **LANGUAGE**

All communication should be professional and concise. Never use profanity, off-color or sexually explicit jokes or stories, prejudicial references or slander. You should also limit the use of all uppercase words to only those times when you are trying to make a very important point. Use of all uppercase words is the equivalent of shouting in someone's ear.

## ▶ **FORMAT**

Keep the format simple. Don't use fancy fonts, colors or backgrounds, as some servers cannot handle messages in these formats.

## ▶ **ABBREVIATIONS**

Only use abbreviations that are common to the English language (e.g. FYI), otherwise, you may confuse your recipient.

# EMAIL ETIQUETTE

## ▶ EMOJIS

Since emails do not contain visual or auditory cues, users have come up with Smilies and emoticons to convey the writer's emotions. These can be distracting and appear unprofessional so use sparingly.

## ▶ PRIVACY

There is no such thing as a private email. With some systems, email administrators have the ability to read any and all email messages. Some companies monitor employee email. Somewhere in the world a person (usually a hacker) is able to read your email as well. Again, a good rule to follow is to never send anything by email that you wouldn't want to see printed on the front page of the newspaper or posted on the company bulletin board.

## ▶ PROTECT INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

There will always be individuals (often hackers) who seek to retrieve information that does not belong to them using both legal and illegal techniques. If you are using a distribution list, protect the privacy of the recipients by entering their email address in the "BCC" or Blind Carbon Copy line. This will ensure the email addresses remain private even if the email is forwarded.

If you need to forward content of an email but want to ensure the privacy of a distribution list, create a new email and cut and paste the appropriate text to send the email without sharing someone's contact information and without risking exposure of any other confidential information.

## ▶ FORWARDING

When forwarding an email, delete the list of previous email addresses as a courtesy to the reader and for the privacy of the previous recipients. Do not forward emails such as jokes, warnings, and other items unrelated to the job. In addition, such emails may often be hoaxes or contain unwanted tracking software or viruses dangerous to your computer.

## ▶ DELIVERY CONFIRMATION

In some instances, it is important to know whether the intended recipient received your email or not. To confirm receipt, you can use a delivery confirmation option that is common to most email operating systems. A phone call may also be appropriate if there is a need to converse with the recipient. You can also ask the recipient to reply to confirm receiving the email.

## ▶ COMMUNICATE THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY... BY PHONE

At some times and for some situations, communication should be over the phone. For example, if you are discussing confidential information with a client and they most likely would not want the discussion in print, simply give the client a call. If the issue is confrontational, it might be best to discuss the matter in person or over the phone. Always keep in mind email is meant to make things more convenient, not to completely replace person-to-person conversations.

## ▶ FOLLOW COMPANY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Many companies have established policies regarding the use of electronic communications as well as procedures to prevent viruses and potential "hackers." Software such as VPN (Virtual Private Network) may be added to company networks to combat unauthorized access. Always make sure you are knowledgeable about and comply with company policies and procedures.

# SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook, X, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok. The odds are pretty good that you currently use one or more (or all) of these social networks to interact online with friends and other network members by sharing messages, posting photographs, etc. Nearly 70% of all online American adults ages 18 and above use one or more social networks regularly. We expect that number as well as social networking options to continue to grow.

A common trend for today's employers is to seek out a candidate's personal information on search engines such as Google as well as their social networking profile on sites such as Facebook, X, YouTube and more. You should be aware that what you do online now, including how and what you share on various social networks, can impact your future career path. As you work to become job ready and to join the workforce, consider the following tips.

- ▶ **Your online character is different from your professional character, so why not use a different email address?** Most email service providers allow you to create more than one email address, so you may want to create a professional email address to use only for job searching and a personal email address for social networking. Using a nickname as well as a personal email address can help prevent employers from finding your online personal profiles.
- ▶ **Google yourself!** Make sure there are no surprises which may hinder your success in a job search. Personal blogs, photographs and references to inappropriate behavior will make an employer think twice about considering your job application.
- ▶ **Check your privacy settings.** Make sure your privacy settings are set to "My friends only" and not public. This should include settings that control who can view posts, photos and comments other people may make on your profile.
- ▶ **Keep your profile picture in good taste.** It and other photos on your profile may be viewable to others whether your profile is set to private or not. Keep in mind that even if you have set your photos to private and viewable only by friends, it is possible for photos in which you are tagged and that are uploaded via another person's profile may be viewable based on that person's privacy settings, not yours.
- ▶ **Monitor interactions and clean up your profile.** Make sure your settings limit who can view posted comments or photos to only your friends and/or that your review and approval are required before such items can appear on your profile. Review your profile to make sure it is appropriate, deleting crass or tasteless comments, photos and videos.
- ▶ **Think before you post/share.** Be careful what you post because you never know who might read it. Just do an X search for "I hate my job" to see how easily what you post can be viewed. Keep in mind that potential employers, bosses, hiring managers, etc.

## A NOTE ON VOICEMAIL AND RINGTONES

Make sure your outgoing voicemail message is professional while searching for a job. An employer does not want to hear a party in the background when he or she calls to leave a message.





# Section 6

## IDENTITY THEFT AND INTERNET SAFETY

Identity theft is a serious crime. It occurs when your personal information is stolen and used without your knowledge to commit fraud or other crimes. Identity theft can cost you time and money, destroy your credit and ruin your good name.

### IDENTITY THEFT

### INTERNET SAFETY

# IDENTITY THEFT

Skilled identity thieves use a variety of methods to steal your personal information such as those listed below. Keep in mind that new methods and techniques are being developed every day, especially online. Always remain wary and vigilant to protect yourself against such theft.

## COMMON METHODS OF IDENTITY THEFT

- ▶ **Dumpster Diving.** Thieves rummage through trash looking for bills or other paper with your personal information on it.
- ▶ **Skimming.** Thieves steal credit/debit card numbers by using special devices when processing your card or even by using special scanners for cards with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Systems) technology.
- ▶ **Phishing.** Thieves pretend to be financial institutions or companies and send spam or pop-up messages to get you to reveal your personal information.
- ▶ **Changing Your Address.** Thieves divert your billing statements to another location by completing a “change of address” form.
- ▶ **Old-Fashioned Stealing.** Thieves steal wallets and purses; mail, including bank and credit card statements; preapproved credit offers; and new checks or tax information. They steal personnel records from their employers or bribe employees who have access.

## PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT

- ▶ Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them.
- ▶ Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or write your Social Security number on a check. Give it out only if absolutely necessary or ask to use another identifier.
- ▶ Keep your personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help or are having work done in your house.
- ▶ Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you know with whom you are dealing.
- ▶ Don't respond to email, text or phone messages that ask for personal information. Legitimate companies don't ask for information this way. Delete these messages.
- ▶ Never click on links sent in unsolicited emails; instead, type in a web address you know.
- ▶ Use firewalls, anti-spyware and antivirus software to protect your computer, iPad and/or other devices and keep up to date. You should set your computer or device's operating system, web browser and security system to update automatically and on a regular basis.
- ▶ Don't use obvious passwords like your birth date, your mother's maiden name or the last four digits of your Social Security number. Create passwords that mix letters, numbers and special characters.
- ▶ If you shop or bank online, use websites that protect your financial information with encryption. An encrypted site has “https” at the beginning of the web address. The “s” is for secure.
- ▶ If you use a public wireless network, do not send information to any website that isn't encrypted.

# IDENTITY THEFT

## DETECTING IDENTITY THEFT

Be proactive to detect suspicious activity and possible identity theft.

Review your credit report periodically. You can request a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit report companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. To obtain your free credit report call **1-877-322-8228** or visit [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com).

Routinely monitor your financial accounts and billing statements. Be alert to signs that require immediate attention:

- Bills that do not arrive as expected
- Unexpected credit cards or account statements
- Denials of credit for no apparent reason
- Calls or letters about purchases you did not make

## DEFENDING AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

If you suspect you are the victim of identity theft, you must take action immediately. Place a “Fraud Alert” on your credit reports and review the reports carefully. The alert tells creditors to follow certain procedures before they open new accounts in your name or make changes to existing accounts. Each of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies have toll-free numbers for placing an initial 90-day fraud alert, but a call to one company is sufficient.

### EQUIFAX

1-800-525-6285  
[www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

### EXPERIAN

1-800-EXPERIAN (1-800-397-3742)  
[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

### TRANSUNION

1-800-680-7289  
[www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

- Close any accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently.
- Call the security or fraud departments of each company where an account was opened or changed without your approval. Follow up in writing with copies of supporting documents.
- Use the ID Theft Affidavit at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft) to support your written statement.
- Ask for verification that the disputed account has been closed and the fraudulent debts discharged.
- Keep copies of documents and records of your conversations about the theft.
- File a report with law enforcement officials to help you with creditors who may want proof of the crime.
- Report theft to the Federal Trade Commission. Your report helps law enforcement officials across the country in their investigations.

## IDENTITY THEFT CLEARING HOUSE

Federal Trade Commission  
Washington, DC 20580

[www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft)

1-877-ID-THEFT or 1-877-438-4338 or TTY 1-866-653-4261

# INTERNET SAFETY

Many people are using online job search websites as part of their job hunt. While often a great tool, job seekers must still take proper precautions to make sure in finding a job they don't lose their identity.

Your resume is full of personal information that can be used to steal your identity, so you must protect it. Only upload your resume to websites with a secure server, those with “https” at the beginning of the web address.

**Do not include your physical address if posting your resume online.**

Many reputable job search sites have privacy features including the option to omit your contact information from its searchable database. You may also want to consider using a separate email address specifically for your job search.

**Do not include contact information for your references on an online job search portal.**

Be careful of job search scams. Scam artists use phony online job opportunities to get job seekers to provide them with sensitive information such as Social Security numbers and birth dates. Reputable and legitimate companies usually won't operate from post office boxes or require that you provide this type of information.





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES IN THE MIDLANDS

### SC WORKS

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

Part of the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, SC Works is a statewide career center system with 56 local centers staffed by professionals who provide employment services for job seekers. SC Works also provides workforce resources and labor market information to SC job seekers and employers.

## MIDLANDS SC WORKS CENTERS

### COLUMBIA CENTER

700 Taylor St, Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: (803) 737-JOBS (5627)

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm

### LEXINGTON CENTER

671 Main Street, Lexington, SC 29170

Phone: (803) 359-6131

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 5:00pm

### WINNSBORO CENTER

96 Highway 321 Bypass South, Winnsboro, SC 29180

Phone: (803) 635-2812

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5:00pm

## RICHLAND LIBRARY – BUSINESS, CAREERS AND RESEARCH CENTER

[www.richlandlibrary.com/business-careers-and-research-center](http://www.richlandlibrary.com/business-careers-and-research-center)

The Business, Careers and Research Center at Richland Library offers free classes and personalized service on resume writing, interviewing and job searching with a career specialist as well as access to a copier, printer, scanner and local fax. The Center's online Virtual Career Resources allow users to search current job listings as well as research occupations, create professional resumes, learn interviewing skills and more.

### RICHLAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BUSINESS AND JOB CENTER

1431 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29201

Third Level

Phone: (803) 929-3401

Hours: Sunday, 2:00pm – 6:00pm

Monday – Thursday, 9:00pm – 8:00pm

Friday – Saturday, 9:00pm – 6:00pm

## GOODWILL CAREER SERVICES

### PATHWAYS

- Healthcare
- Transportation & Logistics
- Skilled Trades
- Clean Tech Accelerator
- Technology

### SERVICES FOR:

- Older adults
- Younger adults
- Veterans
- Reentry
- Vocational Services available
- Employer Services available
- Career Specialist Advisement available

[www.goodwillsc.org/career-services/](http://www.goodwillsc.org/career-services/)

Career Advisor Platform: My Career Advisor

Call a Career Specialist (toll-free): (877) 538-7975

## CAREER AND TRAINING CENTERS MIDLANDS LOCATIONS

### BATESBURG-LEESVILLE LOCATION

101 West Columbia Avenue

Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29006

Phone: (803) 532-2141

Hours: Tuesday, 9:00am – 4:00pm

St. Andrews Location

555 St. Andrews Road Columbia, SC 29210

Phone: (803) 772-7900

Hours: Monday – Friday

9:00am – 12:00pm, 1:00pm – 4:30pm

## RESOURCE AND OPPORTUNITY CENTERS MIDLANDS LOCATIONS

### COLUMBIA LOCATION

111 Highland Center Drive, Columbia, SC 29203

Phone: (803) 509-8394

Hours: Monday-Friday

9:00am – 12:00pm, 1:00pm – 4:30pm

**For further information please call one of the staff members of the Midlands Education and Business Alliance:**

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