

# STEP AHEAD

workbook



## YOUR CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

Brought to you in partnership by:  GOODWILL-EASTER SEALS MINNESOTA &  **i**seek

**STEP AHEAD**

career planning  
for people with criminal convictions

This workbook was produced in 2013 by Goodwill/Easter Seals ReEntry programming and iSeek Solutions for use in Minnesota Department of Corrections facilities. This workbook is a companion publication to the STEP AHEAD website of career planning for people with criminal convictions: [www.iseek.org/exoffenders/about-us.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/about-us.html).

# STEP AHEAD Workbook

## Introduction

STEP AHEAD is a program designed to support people with convictions to successfully transition into the community and into employment. The purpose of the STEP AHEAD workbook, website ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html)), and transition class is to help job seekers become more prepared and confident with the job search process.

This workbook will help you to develop the skills needed to obtain employment. Some of the specific skills include: writing a quality resume, answering interview questions, and filling out online applications.

You will be using this workbook to explore your current skills and abilities then match them with available occupations. This workbook will also help you understand some common job search challenges so that you can better prepare for job interviews. In addition, you will learn about the benefits of networking and finding ways to connect with employers.

This workbook focuses on four important steps in career planning process: **Assess Yourself**, **Create a Plan and Set Goals**, **Find a Job**, and **Manager Your Career**. For more information and resources to help with these steps, or to find out how to **Explore Careers**, or **Expand Skills**, go to the STEP AHEAD website ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html)).

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## Section 1: Assess Yourself

People are more successful and satisfied when their interests and skills are a good fit with the job they have.

In this section, you will learn more about your personal skills, interests, strengths, and values so you can choose a job that is a good match for you. Knowing what is important to you will help you find and keep a satisfying job.

## Transferrable Skills

**Directions:** Transferable skills are skills that are used in one job and can also be applied to another job. The following are examples of common transferrable skills. Give specific examples of how you have used these skills. Consider how you have used them in previous jobs, volunteer work, hobbies, schools, and more. Don't forget the skills you have gained from work you have done while incarcerated!

1. **People Skills.** People skills refer to how one interacts with others. If you have good people skills, you are able to communicate well with others. Give examples of how you have used people skills in the past:

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2. **Leadership Skills.** Leadership skills involve taking the lead on a task or managing people or things. Give examples of how you have used leadership skills in the past:

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3. **Technical Skills.** People gain technical skills by working with specific tools, software, or machinery. For example, if you worked with Microsoft Office in a past job or at school, you have gained a technical skill. Give examples of how you have used technical skills in the past:

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4. **Flexibility skills.** Flexibility skills refer to the ability to adjust to diverse situations and environments. Give examples of how you have used flexibility skills in the past:

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5. **Problem-solving skills.** Problem-solving involves recognizing a problem and finding a solution. Give examples of how you have used problem-solving skills in the past:

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### Matching Interests to Work Options Exercise

Like skills, it is helpful to know which types of activities interest you. You can use the activities below to help match your interests to specific occupations. You will use this list to explore careers in another section.

**STEP 1:** Read each statement. Fill in the square next to the activities that interest you.

I Like To						
...do puzzles		( )				
...work on cars	( )					
...attend concerts, theaters, or art exhibits			( )			
...work in teams			( )			
...organize things like files, offices, or activities				( )		
...set goals for myself						( )
...build things	( )					
...read fiction, poetry, or plays			( )			
...have clear instructions to follow						( )
...influence or persuade people					( )	
...do experiments		( )				
...teach or train people				( )		
...help people solve their problems				( )		
...take care of animals	( )					
...have my day structured						( )
...sell things					( )	
...do creative writing			( )			
...work on science projects		( )				
...take on new responsibilities						( )
...heal people				( )		
...figure out how things work		( )				
...put things together or assemble models	( )					
...be creative			( )			
...pay attention to details						( )
...do filing or typing						( )
...learn about other cultures				( )		
...analyze things like problems, situations, or trends		( )				
...play instruments or sing			( )			
...dream about starting my own business						( )
...cook	( )					
...act in plays			( )			
...think things through before making decisions	( )					
...work with numbers or charts		( )				
...have discussions about issues like politics or current events				( )		
...keep records of my work						( )
...be a leader					( )	
...work outdoors	( )					
...work in an office						( )
...work on math problems		( )				
...help people				( )		
...draw			( )			
...give speeches						( )
	R	I	A	S	E	C

**STEP 2:**

Add the columns at the bottom of chart above. Write down the number of filled circles for each letter. Write down the number of filled circles for each letter here.

- R = Realistic            Total: \_\_\_\_\_
- I = Investigative      Total: \_\_\_\_\_
- A = Artistic            Total: \_\_\_\_\_
- S = Social              Total: \_\_\_\_\_
- E = Enterprising      Total: \_\_\_\_\_
- C = Conventional      Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 3:**

The three letters with the highest scores are your Interest Profile. Record your interest profile below.

**Your Interest Profile:**

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**STEP 4:**

Use the “Matching Your Interests to Work Options” section of the STEP AHEAD website to learn what your interest profile means ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/assess-yourself/matching-interests.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/assess-yourself/matching-interests.html)).

Then use the table on the next page to determine which industries would be a good fit for you to work in. Underneath the table are examples of jobs within the individual industries that may interest you. For example, if you are “Realistic,” you may be interested in the agriculture industry. Therefore, you may want to look for a job as a groundskeeper.

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	R	I	A	S	E	C
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Agriculture</li> <li>•Architecture &amp; Construction</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> <li>•Manufacturing</li> <li>•Science, Technology &amp; Math</li> <li>•Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Agriculture</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> <li>•Science, Technology &amp; Math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Human Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Hospitality &amp; Tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Architecture &amp; Construction</li> <li>•Manufacturing</li> <li>•Transportation</li> </ul>
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Agriculture</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> <li>•Science, Technology &amp; Math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> <li>•Science, Technology &amp; Math</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>		
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Hospitality &amp; Tourism</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Human Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education &amp; Training</li> <li>•Hospitality &amp; Tourism</li> <li>•Human Service</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Hospitality &amp; Tourism</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Arts &amp; Communications</li> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>•Hospitality &amp; Tourism</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> </ul>
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Architecture &amp; Construction</li> <li>•Manufacturing</li> <li>•Transportation</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>•Information Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Architecture &amp; Construction</li> <li>•Business &amp; Management</li> <li>•Manufacturing</li> <li>•Marketing &amp; Sales</li> <li>•Transportation</li> </ul>

**Agriculture:** landscapers and groundskeepers, power plant operators, farmers, animal caretakers

**Architecture & Construction:** construction workers, highway maintenance workers, plumbers, electricians

**Information Technology:** computer support specialists, computer engineers, web developers, information system managers

**Manufacturing:** forklift operators, precision assemblers, machinists, metal workers

**Science, Technology & Math:** engineering technicians, social science research assistants, safety engineers, manufacturing engineering technologists, natural sciences managers

**Transportation:** freight handlers, small engine mechanics, auto body repairers, supply chain managers

**Education & Training:** library assistant, adult and vocational education teachers, university teachers, instructional coordinators

**Arts & Communications:** prepress workers, camera equipment repairers, musicians, graphic designers

**Hospitality & Tourism:** cooks, counter attendants, janitors, restaurant managers

**Marketing & Sales:** customer service representatives, salespeople, sales supervisors, real estate agents

**Human Service:** clergy, sociologists, mental health counselors, hairstylists, and barbers

**Business & Management:** receptionists, management analysts, interpreters and translators, office managers

## Likes and Dislikes

**Directions:** Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. Describe your present lifestyle. What are your hobbies? What do you do when you not working or in school?

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2. What part(s) of your life do you enjoy the most? Time with your family? Learning new things? Hanging out with friends? Other?

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3. What part(s) of your life do you dislike? Do you expect this to change soon?

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4. Who are the most important people in your life? How do they influence your decisions?

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5. If you have work experience, what did you like and dislike about your current or past jobs? List 3 likes and 3 dislikes.

Likes	Dislikes
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

6. List four careers you have thought about doing. Describe why you are interested in each one.

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Strengths

Often times an employer will ask you what your strengths are. Some of you may ask yourself, “What are strengths?” **Strengths** are the skills and things that you do well. You may feel uncomfortable talking about things that you do well to a potential employer; however, it is important to discuss your strengths in job interviews so you can stand out from other applicants.

**Directions:** Look at the list of strengths below. Check all the strengths you think apply to you and include as many as you can. Add any others you can think of.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest  | <input type="checkbox"/> Productive                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly  | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual  | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable  | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Attitude          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative   | <input type="checkbox"/> Can Be Trusted             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Like Responsibility                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard and Fast Worker       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neat Appearance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate, Quality Work     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to Learn  | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to Work Overtime   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works Well Under Pressure                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Neat Work Habits           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follows Directions Well                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn Quickly              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely Gets Angry          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can Work Without Constant Supervision                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Works Well With Others     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experience Working with Specific Tools and Equipment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Can Use Office Software    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in Specific Service (i.e. Food, Cleaning etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluent in Another Language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experience Managing Groups, Money, Time, etc.             | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____              |
- 

**Directions:** On the lines provided below write down three strengths from the list above that you could share during a job interview. Then briefly explain how you have demonstrated each quality. Potential employers want to hear how you have applied and succeeded with your strengths. By giving concrete examples you are showing and demonstrating your character.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Work Values

A **value** is something that is of great importance to you.

**Directions:** Look through the list and check those values you would need to be happy at work. Then circle the three values that are the most important to you. As you set your job goals, keep these values in mind, especially the three you have circled as most important to you. Understanding your values can help you select a job that is a good fit for you.

### Job Satisfaction:

- Enjoy and feel good about the work that I do
- Family and friends approve of what I do
- Challenging and interesting work
- Work for a company with a good name
- Able to use talents, skills, and abilities
- Access to the tools, training, and other resources
- Opportunities for advancement within the company
- Be able to direct and supervise others

### Money:

- Good wages
- A workers' union
- Chance to advance in my job
- Good benefits (Sick leave, insurance, vacation etc.)
- Job is located in a specific area

### Work Environment:

- Safe working conditions
- Clean work area
- Quiet work area
- A lot of activity in work area
- Get along well with everyone
- Work with culturally diverse people

### Supervision Style:

- A lot of supervision
- Some supervision
- Little supervision
- Have a supportive and fair supervisor

### Time:

- Same hours and days to work
- Opportunity for overtime
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Top Three Values:

---

## I Would Fit Well in the Following Jobs

**Directions:** Now that you have determined your skills, interests, and values, make a list of the jobs you would want to apply. Then explain why you think they would be a good fit for you.

Job	Why the job would be a good fit for me

## Review Section 1: Assess Yourself

Now that you have a better idea of what your goals and interests are, you can choose the positions best suited for you. Occupations that match your strengths, interests or values should be the main focus of your job search.

Please provide some feedback about what you learned in this section below.

1. What did you learn about yourself and your abilities by taking the assessments? (e.g. skills, interests, strengths, and values)

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2. How do you plan to use the information you learned in this section?

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### Fact:

Studies have shown that hiring ex-offenders results in a greater retention rates. Employees with criminal records are more likely to stay with an employer longer, avoiding employee turnover. For example, a study done at John Hopkins hospital found that their employees with a criminal background had a far better retention rate over a 40-month period than their non-offender employees.<sup>1</sup>

They also found that these employees had the same evaluation scores as their non-offender employees.<sup>1</sup> Many of the employees with criminal backgrounds received promotions and increases in pay within those 40 months.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alternative Staffing Alliance, "Persuading Employers to Hire Ex-Offenders." *Alternative Staffing Alliance Annual Conference Panel*, October 2010.



## Assess Yourself: Your Notes

## Section 2: Create a Plan and Set Goals

In this section, you will focus on the important details of what you really want when looking for a job and how to use a schedule to benefit your job search. By using these tools, you will be able to organize your search into a step-by-step process and manage your time wisely.

Although you might not use all the suggestions offered, you will get an idea of how your search can be more concentrated.

## Employment Planning Worksheet

Date available for work: \_\_\_\_\_

Three jobs I would like to apply for right away:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Cities/locations I am willing to work in:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

I want (check two):

- Permanent work       Full-time work       Temporary work       Part-time work

Minimum acceptable pay: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per hour

Preferred Shifts:

- Days (1<sup>st</sup> shift)       Evenings (2<sup>nd</sup> shift)       Overnights (3<sup>rd</sup> Shift)

Benefits I must have:

- Health insurance  
 Paid time off  
 Life insurance  
 Other: Do I have a valid driver's license?  Yes  No

Do I have transportation to work?  Yes  No

If not, how will I get to and from work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical limitations (as noted by doctor):

- Lifting restricted to \_\_\_\_\_ pounds       Limited sitting or standing  
 Low noise level       Wheelchair accessible  
 Clean air (no dust or fumes)       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural accommodations needed: \_\_\_\_\_

I want:  Close Supervision       Some Supervision       Little Supervision       To Supervise Others

I prefer to:  Work alone       Work with others

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### Job Search Schedule

**Directions:** Plan your job search schedule. Make sure to include the following:

- Contact your local WorkForce Center
- Search for jobs on the Internet
- Attend Job Club
- Research employers you are interested in
- Read newspapers like *Employment Guide*, *JobDig* or *Star Tribune*
- Make new contacts (phone or in-person)
- Attend job search or related trainings
- Update your resume
- Write your cover letter
- Attend a job fair
- Follow-up on job leads
- Fill out \_\_\_ number of applications
- Follow-up with employer after interview
- Attend job interview
- Practice interview questions
- Ask permission to use employment references
- Reach out to your network
- Attend professional organization meetings

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

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**Job Search Schedule continued**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

For a long-term career timeline, go to the STEP AHEAD website ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/create-plan/career-timetable.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/create-plan/career-timetable.html)).

## Review Section 2: Create a Plan and Set Goals

Now that you had the opportunity to identify the times of the day that you would like to work, your preferred salary, and other important details, you should now have a better understanding of what you will be looking for when you enter the job search process.

**Fact:**

Research suggests that people who write down their goals, share this information with a friend, and send weekly updates to that friend are, on average, 33% more successful in accomplishing their goals than those who merely think about their goals.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dominican University of California. "Study Backs of Strategies for Achieving Goals" [San Rafael] 2011. Web.

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## Create a Plan and Set Goals: Your Notes

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## Create a Plan and Set Goals: Your Notes



## Section 3: Find a Job

In next section you will learn about and/or improve skills that are important for obtaining a job.

The specific skills that will help you prepare for applying and interviewing for jobs include:

- Completing an application
- Creating a resume and cover letter
- Answering interview questions
- Completing a reference page
- Deciding the best options for is and when you disclose a disability or felony to your employer

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## Networking

**Directions:** Fill out the following table with as many people you know who may be able to help you with your job search. Then contact your network for help in your job search, making sure you let them know what type of work you are looking for.

Group	Name	Relation to You	Phone Number	Address	E-mail Address
Family					
Friends					
Volunteer					
Classmates					
Neighbors					
Coworkers					
Teachers					
Job Club					

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<b>Past Employers</b>					
<b>Local Businesses</b>					
<b>Support Groups</b>					
<b>Clubs</b>					
<b>Religious Organizations</b>					
<b>Community Organizations</b>					
<b>Other</b>					

## Employment References

**Directions:** Circle “T” for true if you believe the person would make a good employment reference candidate. Circle “F” for false if you believe the person would make a bad employment reference candidate and explain why.

1. A supervisor from a job you worked for less than 6 months. **T or F**
2. One of your former high school or college teachers. **T or F**
3. Your grandmother. **T or F**
4. A supervisor from a job you worked for over a year. **T or F**
5. A manager from a job you were fired from. **T or F**
6. Your parole officer. **T or F**
7. Your cousin’s husband’s great aunt. **T or F**
8. Your former coworker. **T or F**
9. Your kindergarten teacher. **T or F**
10. Your priest or religious leader. **T or F**
11. The head of the organization you regularly volunteer with. **T or F**
12. Your social worker. **T or F**
13. Your Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor. **T or F**
14. Your elderly neighbor whose leaves you rake. **T or F**

### Employment References: Answer Key

1. False. A good reference candidate should know you for at least a year, preferably more.
2. True. A good reference candidate should be able to discuss your work habits and quality. A former teacher would be able to do this.
3. False. Although your grandmother may know you well, it is recommended that you avoid family members as reference candidates. An employer may view a family member as subjective.
4. True. A good reference candidate should be able to objectively discuss your skills and the quality of your work. A former supervisor from a job you held for a long time would be able to do this.
5. False. A manager who fired you would more than likely give you a poor reference. Thus, you would be less likely to get hired for a new job.
6. True and False - This is dependent upon your relationship with your P.O.
7. False. It is likely that your cousin's husband's great aunt does not have a close enough relationship with you that they would be able to discuss your moral character.
8. True. It is better to have a reference candidate that is in a leadership position; however, a coworker would be able to discuss your work habits, skills, duties, and moral character.
9. False. Your kindergarten teacher does not know the person you have grown to be well enough to be a good reference candidate.
10. False. Avoid reference candidates that could be controversial.
11. True. A volunteer leader is able to discuss work skills, duties, and moral character.
12. False. Avoid reference candidates that may create concern for a potential employer.
13. False. Avoid reference candidates that may create concern for a potential employer.
14. True. Although this reference candidate should supplement more professional reference candidates, your elderly neighbor could verify your moral character and work ethic.

## Application with Errors

**Directions:** The following completed job application contains 20 mistakes. Try to find and correct all the mistakes.

**APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

This is an equal employment opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any applicant or employee on any grounds prohibited under federal, state, or local law, including race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, marital status, ancestry, marital status, disability, including disability related to pregnancy or childbirth, membership or activity in any local commission, status regarding public assistance, membership or non-membership in any labor organization, creed or affiliation, preference, or any other characteristic protected under federal, state or local law. None of the questions in this application are intended to elicit information regarding any protected characteristics, nor imply any limitation, illegal preference, or discrimination based upon non-job related information or protected characteristics. If you are hired by TCC, you will be employed on an at-will basis. As an at-will employee, you may terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, without notice. Similarly, if you are hired, TCC will have the right to terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, without prior notice. No TCC supervisor or manager has the authority to offer or promise anything other than at-will employment.

---

Answer ALL Questions Completely Please Print

Name Paula Anne Stephen Date 5.5.09  
First Middle Last

Have you ever been known by another name or by an alias?  Yes  No  
 If yes, explain: divorced 2 times

Present Address: 123 3rd St. Mpls. MN 55  
city state zip code

Permanent Address: none  
city state zip code

Home Phone ( ) 555-6789 Mobile ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Pager ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Other ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: 123 45 6789

Are you currently licensed (not suspended) to drive in Minnesota or another state?  Yes  No  
 If yes, provide State and license number: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you furnish proof that you are 18 years of age and eligible to work in the United States?  
 Yes  No If no, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Position applied for: anything

Full Time  Part Time  Temporary  Date You Can Start 6.1.09

Days  Nights  Weekends  Desired Wage \$ 20 per hour

Have you applied for employment with ~~Comp~~ before?  Yes  No When? can't remember

Have you worked for ~~comp~~ before?  Yes  No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving? fired

How did you first learn about employment with comp - Co.?  
 Minneapolis Star Tribune  \_\_\_\_\_ Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 St. Paul Pioneer Press/Career Builder  Radio Station: \_\_\_\_\_  Other: (please specify) Goodwill Easter Seals

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (Only minor traffic violations should be omitted.)  Yes  No  
 If yes, provide the date, location, & circumstances and identify the offense(s) and jurisdiction(s).  
1998 - DUI

Have you served in the Military?  Yes  No  
 If Yes: Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe your military duties if any may be related to position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Membership in National Guard or Reserves?  Yes  No

**STEP AHEAD**

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Please provide education information if you wish to be considered now or in the future for a supervisory or office position:

Education	Name and Location of School	Years	Graduate?	Major Areas of Study
High School	Beaumont High, IL	4	Yes / No	none
College			Yes / No	
Trade			Yes / No	

**WORK HISTORY** – List employers during last five years in sequential order, with present or last employer first.

Employer Name: <u>Work All Day, Inc.</u> Supervisor: <u>Tom</u> Address: <u>don't know</u> Phone #: <u>(612) 555-5656</u> Starting Date: <u>11/2/09</u> Ending Date: <u>2/2/10</u> Starting Wage: \$ <u>7.00</u> per hour Ending Wage: \$ <u>7.00</u> per hour Describe the work you did: <u>labor, moved stuff around</u> Reason for leaving: <u>let go</u>
Employer Name: <u>MacBurger</u> Supervisor: <u>no longer there</u> Address: <u>St. Paul, MN</u> Phone #: ( ) _____ Starting Date: <u>8/14/08</u> Ending Date: <u>11/3/08</u> Starting Wage: \$ <u>6.15</u> per hour Ending Wage: \$ <u>6.15</u> per hour Describe the work you did: <u>took orders, cooked</u> Reason for leaving: <u>work was too hard</u>
Employer Name: _____ Supervisor: _____ Address: _____ Phone #: ( ) _____ Starting Date: ____/____/____ Ending Date: ____/____/____ Starting Wage: \$ _____ per hour Ending Wage: \$ _____ per hour Describe the work you did: _____ Reason for leaving: _____

May we contact the employers listed above?  Yes  No If no, please explain. they won't give me a good reference.

Have you ever been discharged by an employer?  Yes  No If yes, please explain. He was a jerk.

Have you signed any agreements or forms with your previous employer that limits your ability to compete, solicit customers, or use business information?  Yes  No If yes, please provide copy and explain. I don't know what you mean.

List all Periods of Unemployment		
From: <u>6/07</u>	To: <u>8/08</u>	How did you spend this time? <u>watching TV, playing video games</u>
From: _____	To: _____	How did you spend this time? _____
From: _____	To: _____	How did you spend this time? _____

**STEP AHEAD**

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**REFERENCES:** Give the names of three persons not related to you, whom you have known at least one year.

	INDIVIDUAL'S NAME	PHONE	OCCUPATION	YEARS ACQUAINTED
1.	Joe Brown	555-123	Land lord	6 mos.
2.				
3.				

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT: PLEASE READ AND SIGN** (if you agree)

By my signature below, I promise that the information provided in this employment application (and in any related documentation or interview) is true and complete, and I acknowledge that any false or misleading information or significant omission will disqualify me from further consideration for employment, and will result in my dismissal from employment, if discovered at a later date. I promise to immediately notify you if I should be convicted or plead guilty to any crime while my job application is pending, or during my period of employment if hired.

I authorize my person, school, current employer (except as previously noted), past employer, the State of Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicles, and any other organization named in this application (or related documentation or interview) to provide you with any information and opinion requested by you in connection with my application, or employment if hired, and I release such persons, schools, current and past employers and organizations and agree to hold them harmless from any legal liability in responding to such requests, irrespective of the circumstances or the nature or content of their responses.

I understand that this application does not create a contract of employment. I understand that, if hired, I will be subject to any and all current and subsequently adopted policies. I understand and agree that, if hired, my employment is for no definite period of time, and may, regardless of the date of payment of wages or salary, be terminated at any time for any reason, with or without notice. I understand that no person is authorized to change any of the terms mentioned in this employment application or in any offer of employment I may receive, except in a written employment agreement signed by you.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Mistakes:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_



## Corrections Application with Errors

1. Date – Year not written neatly.
2. Name – Should say “married name” or “maiden name” not “divorced two times.”
3. Zip Code – Incomplete, did not write in all five digits.
4. Permanent address – If this is the same as your present address, you can write “same.” If you move a lot, list a family member’s address or someone else with stable housing.
5. Phone Number – Should include area code.
6. Social Security Number — Not written clearly.
7. Driver’s license – Did not provide state or license number.
8. Age – Scratched out information.
9. Position Applied For – Should list specific job title or type of position.
10. Available to Work – Indicate as many schedule options as possible, including part time.
11. Wages – Wage listed is too high. The wage should fit the job.
12. Worked for Company Before – Does not use positive terms to explain termination.
13. Education – Did not indicate if graduated high school.
14. Work History – Did not provide enough detail. Also, did not use positive reason for leaving jobs. Use phrases such as “I wanted to explore other opportunities,” “I wanted a more challenging position,” or “I took time off to determine what career I really want, relating to what I do well.”
15. Employer Contacts – Should allow them to contact past employers.
16. Discharged by Employer – Used negative term to describe reason for termination.
17. Signed Agreement Forms from Previous Employers – Ask if you do not understand a question. Do not write that you don’t understand.
18. Periods of Unemployment – Did not give a positive response.
19. References – Did not follow the directions. Also, did not complete the phone number.
20. Acknowledgement – Did not sign.

## Application for Employment

**Directions:** Fill out the following application as you would if you were actually applying for a job. Bring this application with you to reference when you fill out actual applications.

### Personal Information

Last Name: _____	First Name: _____	Middle Initial: _____
Date of Birth: _____	U.S. Citizen: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
ID/Driver's License #: _____	Social Security #: _____	
Current Address: _____		
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____
Length of Time There: _____		
Telephone #: _____		
Cell Phone #: _____		
Permanent Address (if different from present): _____		
_____		
City: _____		
State: _____		
Zip: _____		
Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If yes, please explain: _____		
_____		

### Education

Type of School	Name/Location	# of Years Attended	Graduation Date	Degree(s) or Diploma(s)	Major Field(s) of Study
High School					
Business/Tech School					
Graduate School					
College/University Undergraduate					
Other Training (explain)					
Other Training (explain)					

### Skills

Languages Spoken/Written: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Training: \_\_\_\_\_  
Computer Skills: \_\_\_\_\_  
Machines/Equipment You Can Operate: \_\_\_\_\_

### U.S. Military Service

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Entered: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Discharged: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Training/Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment Experience

1. Employer Name/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Employed (Month/Year): \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties: \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting Salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Reasoning For Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor/Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this your current employer?  Yes  No      May we contact this employer?  Yes  No

2. Employer Name/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Employed (Month/Year): \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties: \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting Salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Reasoning For Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor/Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this your current employer?  Yes  No      May we contact this employer?  Yes  No

**3. Employer Name/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates Employed (Month/Year):** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Duties:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Starting Salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ending Salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reasoning For Leaving:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor/Manager Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Is this your current employer?**  Yes  No      **May we contact this employer?**  Yes  No

**4. Employer Name/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates Employed (Month/Year):** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Duties:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Starting Salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ending Salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reasoning For Leaving:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor/Manager Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Is this your current employer?**  Yes  No      **May we contact this employer?**  Yes  No

### References

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# Years Known:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# Years Known:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# Years Known:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that all of the information provided by me in this application (or any other accompanying or required documents) is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of any facts in said documents will be cause for denial of employment or immediate termination of employment, regardless of the timing or circumstances of discovery.

In consideration for employment with \*company,\* if employed, I agree to comply with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of \*company\* at all times and understand that such obedience is a condition of employment.

I understand that if offered a position with \*company,\* I will be required to submit to a pre-employment medical examination, drug screening, and background check as a condition of employment. I understand that unsatisfactory results, refusal to cooperate with, or any attempt to affect the results of these pre-employment tests and checks will result in withdrawal of any employment offer or termination of employment if already employed.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND AGREE TO THE ABOVE STATEMENTS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

## Resume and Cover Letter Tips

- Anytime a resume is sent by mail or email, it must be accompanied by a cover letter.
- The greatest challenge will not be what to include, but what to leave out.
- Skills Identification
  - Clearly identify your skills.
  - Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you have worked.
  - Your resume should be an honest presentation of your best qualities.
- Language
  - What you say is important, but how you say it is just as important. To highlight your skills and qualifications, use action verbs.
  - Do not use slang or abbreviations.
  - Have someone proofread it for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Focus
  - Keep it brief.
  - Target your job search and your resume to your specific job goals.
  - Prepare multiple resumes if you are planning to pursue two different occupations.
  - Mention the company to which you are applying in the cover letter. Give specific examples of how your skills match the job they have available.
- Appearance
  - Should be typed.
  - Should be neat, organized, and easy to read.
  - Do not fold your resume or cover letter.
- Cover letter
  - State the date, your name, and your address at the top of the letter.
  - Below your name and address, write the name of the person to whom you are writing. Always address the letter to a specific person by name and title if known. If do not know the name, simple use a title such as "Office Manager."
  - State your interest in the job for which you are applying.
  - Mention your skills, education, special training, and work experience that qualify you for this job.
  - Provide a phone number so the employer can reach you.
  - Thank the person for taking the time to read your letter.
  - Use an appropriate closing such as "Sincerely."
  - Sign the letter; do not just type your name.
  - Avoid starting every sentence with the same word.
  - Reflect your individuality, but do not try to be humorous, familiar, or cute.
  - Use key words from the ad or industry.
  - Show your knowledge of the company.
  - Proofread the letter several times to catch errors. Give it to someone else to double check. Reading it out aloud can help.

## How to Describe Gaps in Employment

A gap in employment is a period of months or years in which one was not employed. An employment gap is caused by situations such as the inability to find work, going back to school, or serving a prison sentence. It will appear on your resume when you list your job experience. Employment gaps are red flags for employers. If they see one on your resume, they will most likely ask about it during your interview.

Here are some tips on how to minimize the impact of your employment gap:

- **Use a functional resume.** This type of resume highlights skills and accomplishments rather than chronology of employment. It will help cover up any employment gaps you may have.
- **Get creative when you format your resume.** When typing the dates of your past employment, use a smaller font for the dates and do not bold them. Include a summary section or an “other achievements” sections to show what you were doing during your employment gap and to draw attention away from your employment dates.
- **Omit a past job on your resume.** You do not have to include your entire employment history on your resume, especially if omitting a past job will help hide an employment gap.
- **Explain in the cover letter.** Doing so will prevent you from being screened out before you receive an interview. Be honest. The employer will probably want you to explain further in an interview.
- **Highlight the positive.** When explaining your employment gap during an interview, make sure you explain all the positive things you did during that gap. For example, if it applies to you, tell the employer that while you were incarcerated you received you GED or learned a trade.

## Resume Templates

**Directions:** This template is a general format. You can change the actual content and layout to fit you. Not all items are required or necessary. The length of the resume depends on your information. Replace the content descriptions with your own information to create your resume. Remember to delete this instruction information.

### Functional Resume Template

First and Last Name  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
City, State Zip Code  
you@email.com

#### EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

Include objective here

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification—

Short summary of skills, accomplishments or responsibilities for this specific qualification.

Qualification—

Short summary of skills, accomplishments or responsibilities for this specific qualification.

Qualification—

Short summary of skills, accomplishments or responsibilities for this specific qualification.

#### SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

**Job Title** (can include employer and/or dates)

- Main responsibilities or accomplishments

**Job Title** (can include employer and/or dates)

- Main responsibilities or accomplishments

#### EDUCATION/TRAINING

#### LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

#### AWARDS OR PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

## Chronological Resume Template

### First and Last Name

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State Zip Code

(555) 555-5555

you@email.com

**EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY:** Include your objective or summary statement here

### WORK EXPERIENCE:

***Job Title***

**Dates**

**Employer, City, State**

- List your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

***Job Title***

**Dates**

**Employer, City, State**

List your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

***Job Title***

**Dates**

**Employer, City, State**

List your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

***Position or Project***

**Dates**

**Organization, City, State**

List your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

***Position or Project***

**Dates**

**Organization, City, State**

List your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

### EDUCATION/TRAINING:

### LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:

### AWARDS:

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:





## What to Wear and Bring to an Interview

**Directions:** Circle the correct answer to complete the statement.

1. On the day of my interview I should wear:
  - a. Jean shorts
  - b. Khaki pants
  - c. My shortest skirt
  
2. On the day of my interview I should:
  - a. Shower, brush my teeth, put on deodorant, and comb my hair
  - b. Roll out of bed and catch a bus to the interview
  - c. Dye hair orange, paint my nails to match hair, put on chain, and show off tattoos
  
3. I should bring \_\_\_\_\_ to turn in my job application and to my interview:
  - a. My girlfriend and three kids
  - b. Copies of my resume, references, pen, notebook, and ID
  - c. Cigarettes and cell phone
  
4. I should arrive at my interview:
  - a. Right when it is supposed to start
  - b. 15 minutes late. It is good to be fashionably late
  - c. 10-15 minutes before it starts
  
5. On the day of my interview, I should wear:
  - a. Tennis shoes
  - b. Dress shoes
  - c. Sandals
  
6. After the interview, I should:
  - a. Contact the employer immediately to see if s/he has made a decision yet
  - b. Write a thank you note or email including any follow-up questions I have
  - c. Contact the employer multiple times per day, every day, until s/he has decided
  
7. During my interview, I should:
  - a. Answer my cell phone when it rings
  - b. Keep my hat on and use slang and curse words
  - c. Give clear answers. Sit up straight. Make eye contact with my interviewer.

Correct answers: 1. B, 2. A, 3. B, 4. C, 5. B, 6. B, 7. C

## Body Language

**Directions:** The following movements are examples of body language. Check all the examples of body language that one should display during a job interview.

- Smile
- Arms folded
- Eye contact
- Arms unfolded
- Body turned away from interviewer
- Head tilted back
- Head tilted down
- Head tilted to one-side
- Eye roll
- Firm handshake
- Sit tall

1. **Smile:** Smiling shows that you are a friendly person who can get along well with others. 2. **Eye Contact:** Having poor eye contact can be interpreted by the employer as you are trying to hide something. 3. **Arms unfolded:** arms folded shows lack of interest or unfriendliness. 4. **Head tilted to one side:** shows you are interested. Head tilted down or back shows superiority and negative attitude. 5. **Firm handshake.** 6. **Sit Tall:** shows you are interested and taking the job seriously

## Sample Job Interview Questions

**Directions:** Answer the following questions as you would answer them during an interview. Then look at the answer key to see how well you answered. Finally practice your corrected answers out loud with proper body language.

1. Tell me about yourself.

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2. What kind of job are you interested in?

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3. Why are you interested in working for this company?

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4. What experience or training do you have for this position?

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5. What are your strengths?

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6. What are your weaknesses?

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7. What do you like best about your most recent job? Least?

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8. How would you handle conflict with your supervisor or coworkers?

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9. What hours do you want to work? Are you willing to work weekends?

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10. Tell me a couple things that are most important to you about a job.

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**11. Tell me how you would handle an angry customer.**

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**12. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.**

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**13. Describe your best boss.**

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**14. Describe your worst boss.**

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**15. Give me an example of how you solved a problem in the past.**

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**16. Where do you see yourself in a year?**

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**17. Give me an example of time you showed leadership.**

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**18. Describe a time you had to ask questions and listen carefully to clarify a customer's problem.**

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**19. Tell me about a time when your job required high attention to detail.**

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**20. Describe a work decision you have made that you wish you could do over.**

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**21. Do you have questions for me?**

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## Sample Job Interview Questions: Answer Key

1. You need to mention 2 or 3 skills and include a real-life example of them from a previous job.
2. Be specific so that employer can picture you at the job. Research the job before the interview.
3. Make sure to research the company before the interview and give specific reasons.
4. Read the job description prior to the interview. Describe the skills you have that match the job.
5. Refer back to your completed “Strengths” worksheet to answer this question.
6. Be brief and general. Start by saying something positive, followed by what your weakness is. End your answer by stating what you are doing to correct that weakness and improve yourself. For example, “I am very ambitious, but sometimes I do so much it is hard to stay organized. However, I now keep a planner so all my tasks and goals are in order and get accomplished.”
7. Answer should relate to the job you are interviewing for.
8. You may want to consider delaying your response to the conflict to allow your emotions to calm. Recognize that you are part of the problem. Own your part and seek way to improve your relationship by asking what you can do.
9. Be as flexible as possible. Only express limits when absolutely necessary.
10. Refer back to the “My Work Values” worksheet to help answer this question.
11. Stay calm, listen carefully, and manage the situation with confidence and respect
12. The answer should be work-related and is an example of going above and beyond what was expected. When you are explaining the story, begin by describing the situation then describe what you personally did. End your answer by explaining what the end result was.
13. Do not use specific names. Instead, describe the positive traits of your best supervisor or your ideal supervisor. For example, you may want a boss who treats his employees fairly.
14. Do not say anything negative. Pick a work-related characteristic that can be stated in a positive way. For example, “I had a supervisor who was vague when giving assignments. I learned to ask questions so that I knew what was expected”.
15. Be specific. Describe the problem in detail followed by explaining what action you took to solve the problem. Finally, clarify what the outcome of your action was.
16. The interviewer is checking on your maturity and whether you are someone who likes to grow and learn. Examples might include; learned my job well enough to teach others, looking forward to another year, getting a chance at advancement, etc.
17. Be specific. Describe the situation then your action followed by the outcome of your action.
18. Be specific. Describe the situation then describe your action followed by the outcome.
19. Think of a specific example that required accuracy, special skills, and failure to use these skills would have led to problems from your employer.
20. Be specific, but do not pick anything too negative. Begin by describing something positive you normally do. Then describe a time that you might have done the opposite. Finally, end by saying something positive by explaining what you learned from your mistake.
21. Always come prepared with at least two questions for the employer. Do not ask questions about salary or benefits. Ask questions such as, “How would you describe a typical day on the job?,” “Will there be opportunities for advancement and ongoing trainings?” and “What kind of person are you looking for?”

## Discussing Your Conviction Record

**Directions:** The following steps will help you practice how to disclose your criminal background during an interview if asked about it by a potential employer.

1. **Application.** Many companies ask about your criminal record on the job application. Read this question carefully before answering. Often the employer will ask about your criminal history within a given time frame. For example, the question may be “Have you been convicted of a felony within the last seven years?”

If your conviction was more than seven years ago, you can simply answer “no.” If it was more recent, do not answer “yes” because it will increase your chances of getting screened out before an interview is offered. Instead, write something such as, “will discuss in interview.” This may spark the employer’s curiosity and give you the opportunity to verbally explain your offense in an interview.

2. **Take responsibility.** When an employer asks about your criminal background during an interview, do not blame others for your actions. Instead, say something such as, “In the past, I made a poor decision.” Be honest and brief, but do not mention specific details of the offense. You could also soften the offense. For example, instead of plainly saying you were convicted of robbery, say something like, “I took something that was not mine to take.” Avoid the term felony. In the space below, write the beginning of your own response to the question, “Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please explain.”

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3. **Stay positive.** Explain what constructive changes you have made in your life since your conviction. It could be something like completing an education program, doing volunteer work, or having more positive relationships. Now write down all the positive changes you have made. Begin by stating, “Since then, I have ...”

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- 4. **Lesson learned.** Convey regret for your actions and discuss what you have learned from your experience to show that you will not repeat your actions. For example, use phrases like, “I’m not proud of my actions, and...,” or “At the time my priorities were not right; however, since then ...” Write down what you have learned since your conviction.

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- 5. **Focus on goals.** Clarify your goals for the future, how you are moving forward, and what you are doing to accomplish them. Explain how a position at the company you are interviewing for will help you accomplish your goals. Write down your goals and the actions you have taken to complete them.

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- 6. **Put it altogether.** Combine your responses to steps 2 through 5 to form a complete response to the question, “Have you have been convicted of a crime? If so, please explain.” Practice saying the completed response out loud.

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# Disclosure Decisions TO GET THE JOB

Every individual with a disability must choose whether to disclose (share) his or her disability with an employer. Primary factors to consider include whether accommodations will be needed on the job or whether a disability is visible or hidden. Other aspects related to the employer and the company may also influence your decision. Follow this disclosure decision guide to determine what will work best for you. Remember, if you choose to disclose your disability, you are protected from discrimination by federal laws.



First, identify a **NEED** for disclosure, such as determining accessibility, necessary accommodations, or potential job match. Consider your answers to questions in Chart 1 and decide if you have a reason to disclose.

If you decide that disclosure will help you be successful, look at the pros and cons of **WHEN** you disclose in Chart 2. Then, follow the general guidelines in Chart 3 to decide **HOW** to disclose.

Effective disclosure can establish a positive working relationship with your employer. Practicing with a close friend, family member, or career counselor can help to increase your comfort level and skills.



## Three Steps to Disclosing a Disability

**3. Choose HOW to Disclose**

**2. Decide WHEN to Disclose**

**1. Determine NEED for Disclosure**

## 2. Decide WHEN to Disclose: Consider Pros and Cons

When	Potential Gains	Potential Setbacks
In a cover letter	Advance time to prepare positive written disclosure and to tailor your abilities to duties of job description.	Employer's preconceptions may hinder opportunity for an interview. Unable to read employer's body language and mood.
In a resume or on a job application	Establishes "up front" relationship and communication.	Employer may have stereotypes about disabilities and may not offer you an interview.
When employer calls for an interview	Establishes open communication and gives an employer time to review Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 compliance information.	May not get serious consideration during interview.
Before the interview	Shows respect to employer, gives employer advance notice to secure any accommodations that may be needed during the interview, and time to research proper etiquette or refresh knowledge on ADA.	Employer has advance time to yield to his or her stereotypes about disabilities.
During the interview	Opportunity to read employer body language, to time the disclosure, and to disclose in a brief, positive manner.	Employer may feel uneasy and ill prepared to respond with appropriate and legal questions.
After the job offer	May have legal recourse if disclosing disability negatively affects the hiring decision. There is time to get accommodations in place before the job starts. Positive relationship has already been established with employer.	Employer may feel that you have been dishonest in the application process, which may erode trust.
After the job begins	Gives opportunity to establish credibility before disclosure. Gives freedom to talk with co-workers about disability related issues.	May take time to secure requested accommodations. Employer may believe you have not been honest which may negatively affect your relationship.
When performance difficulties arise	Difficulties may not arise (i.e. you may never need to disclose).	Employer may have difficulty changing his or her perceptions of your work performance, feel betrayed or wonder why you waited so long.
Never	Disability information is kept private.	Not protected from discrimination under the ADA.

# 1. Determine NEED for Disclosure: Gather all the Facts

Consider the questions below. "Yes" answers may indicate a need for or benefit of disclosure. "No" answers may indicate a need for more preparation or limited benefit of disclosure.

Area	Questions	Circle Answer
Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I have background information about the company?</li> <li>Does the company, senior management, or owner welcome and value diversity?</li> <li>Has the company participated in any disability related recruitment programs?</li> <li>Is there a company policy on hiring individuals with disabilities?</li> <li>Does the company offer any internship programs?</li> <li>Is pre-employment testing required? What is the medium for testing?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Job Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I requested a detailed job description for the position?</li> <li>Do I know what are the essential functions and expectations of the job?</li> <li>Can I talk with an employee who is currently in this position or in a similar one?</li> <li>Will my compensatory strategies (e.g., use of adaptive software or assistive technology) change the traditional way of getting the job done?</li> <li>Will I need accommodations for the application process, interview process, or at the worksite?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the supervisor use a flexible and personal management style?</li> <li>Does the employer have experience in managing differences or diversity?</li> <li>Does the employer focus on essential, rather than marginal functions?</li> <li>Has the employer had positive experiences hiring individuals with disabilities?</li> <li>Can I provide the employer with resource information about the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and my specific accommodation needs?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Am I familiar with the protections provided by the ADA?</li> <li>Am I comfortable with my disability?</li> <li>Am I aware of my strengths and functional limitations?</li> <li>Will I need potential medical assistance?</li> <li>Have I explored technology or strategies to compensate for my limitations?</li> <li>Have I previously used accommodations at a work-site?</li> <li>Have I practiced disclosure with a family member, close friend, or career professional?</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No

## Need More Information?

### About company and position:

- University career centers
- Human resource departments
- Professional associations
- Local chambers of commerce
- Company specific websites
- Informational interviews

### About potential accommodations:

- Job Accommodations Network  
[www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)
- Virginia Assistive Technology System -- [www.vats.org](http://www.vats.org)
- ABLEDATA -- [www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)
- Department of Rehabilitative Services -- [www.vadrs.org](http://www.vadrs.org)

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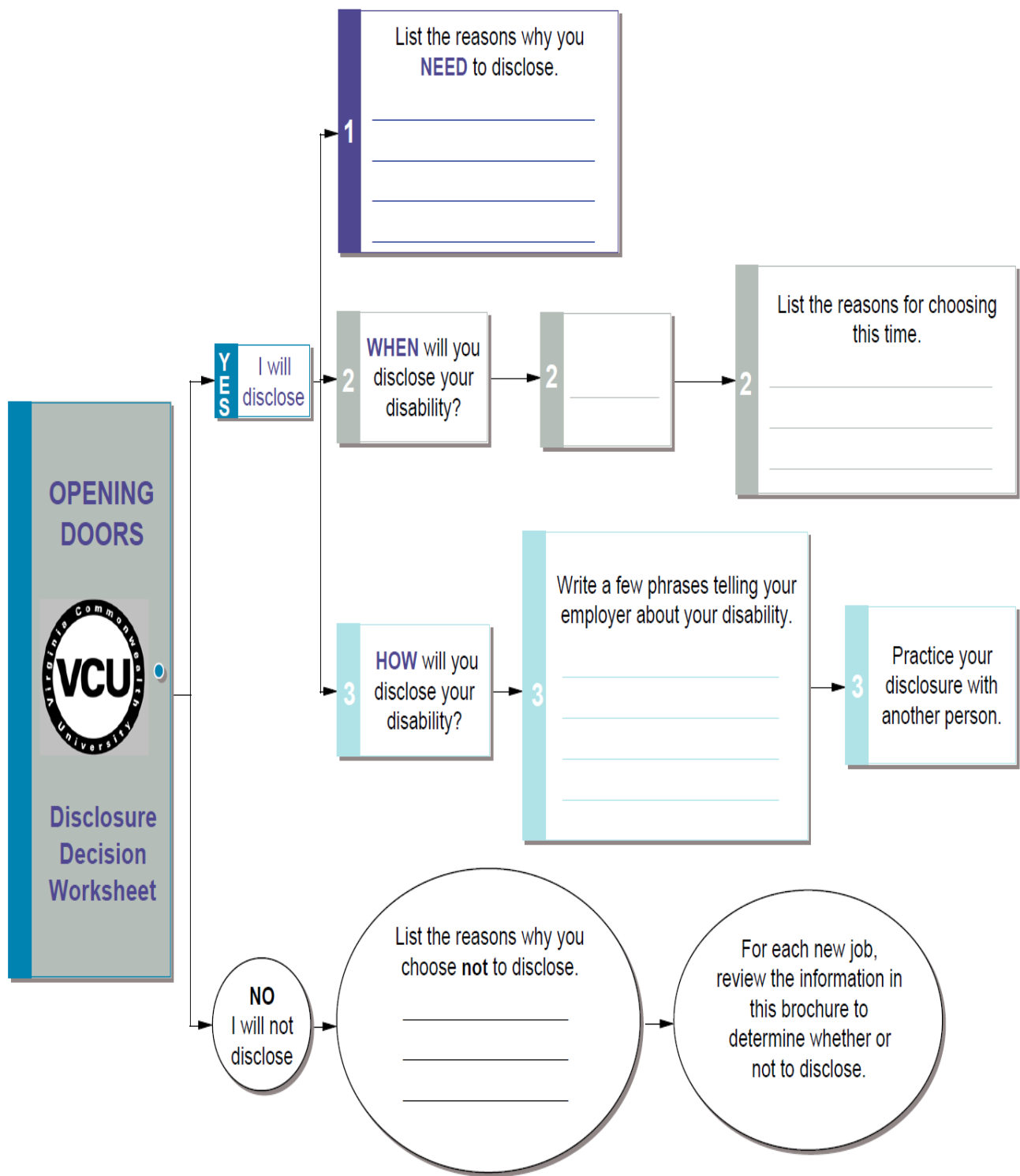
### 3. Choose HOW to Disclose: General Guidelines

How	Examples
Stress current involvement in a positive activity that shows your ability to manage your disability.	<b>Resume</b> -- Member of the American Blind Skiing Foundation
Be optimistic; focus on your abilities and job qualifications.	<b>Cover Letter</b> -- As an individual with a life long physical and speech disability, I learned early on to focus on my intellectual abilities and to develop strengths within my limits. For example, I received my first computer when I was 5 years old and learned to operate it independently. Today I am proficient in many software applications, operating systems, and system troubleshooting.
Give the employer information on what he or she needs to do or provide regarding communication, directions, or supervision.	<b>Telephone Call Prior to the Interview</b> -- "I am calling to confirm my interview scheduled at your company in 2 days. Could you please tell me where to find your office's accessible entrance?"
Educate the employer by articulating or demonstrating how you can perform the essential functions of the job. Have resource information available for the employer.	<b>During the Interview</b> -- Have you ever heard of a screen reader? I have a learning disability and have difficulty reading in the traditional way. My screen reader, which reads electronic information aloud using a computerized voice, has enabled me to succeed at college and I know it will be useful on this job. "
Explain the benefits of your disability regarding your personal growth or perseverance.	<b>During the Interview</b> -- "Through my disability, I have learned the value of connecting with professionals. I can be resourceful and creative to get the job done."
Face employer concerns by talking about your compensatory strategies or accommodation solutions.	<b>During the Interview</b> -- "You may be wondering how I can type letters with my physical disability. I have a great software program that allows the computer to type as I speak words. It can be loaded on most computers. I would be happy to show it to you sometime."
Use general, functional terms to briefly explain the impact of your disability on the job; avoid technical, medical diagnoses.	<b>After the Job Offer</b> -- "During the interview, you explained that work was verbally assigned at a staff meeting. I find that I work best when instructions are both written and verbal. I have a disability that makes processing verbal information a challenge. Could you accommodate me in this way?"
In a private setting, remind your employer about your right to confidentiality.	<b>After the Job is Accepted</b> -- After disclosing your disability in your employer's office: "Thank you in advance for keeping this information confidential."
Frame the disclosure around how you work best.	<b>A Few Weeks on the Job</b> -- "I have noticed that I am having a difficult time completing my work assignments. I have a medical condition that requires frequent breaks in order to do my work. Would you allow me to work later to enable me to take more breaks? I always get the job done when I manage my schedule in this way."

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y



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## Review Section 3: Find a Job

Focusing on your skills, interests, and job options will provide a strong foundation for your job search. It will also provide you with the information you need to be successful in filling out applications, developing your cover letters and resume, and participating in job interviews.

1. What did you learn about yourself?

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2. How will you use the information in this section to achieve your career goals?

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## Find a Job: Notes

## Section 4: Manage Your Career

The purpose of this section is to further prepare you for the job search. Information in this section and on the STEP AHEAD ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html)) will help you to learn about the hiring process, how to perform well in your new job and how to manage stress and your emotions.

The activities in this section will help you to be successful in reaching your job and career goals.



## How to Keep Your Job

**Directions:** Circle the statements that describe what you should do to keep your job.

1. Be on time.
2. Don't get along with coworkers.
3. Be willing to help out in other areas at work.
4. Wear the latest fashion trends
5. Have a good attitude.
6. Stay busy working.
7. Always be back from breaks on time.
8. Go to work every time you are scheduled.
9. Take extra-long break if you need them
10. Give plenty of notice if you're sick.
11. Check with supervisor before doing anything.
12. Follow all policies at work.
13. Ask questions if you do not understand something.
14. Do not have any parole/probation violations.
15. Do not abuse drugs or alcohol, especially at work.
16. Producing good-quality work.
17. Steal from work.
18. Respecting your supervisor.
19. Refusing to wear appropriate work clothing
20. Do not ask for a lot of time off.
21. Make a lot of personal phone calls at work.

## How to Keep Your Job-Answer Key

1. Should be circled
2. It is important to get along with your coworkers.
3. Should be circled
4. It is important to wear appropriate work attire, not the latest fashion trends.
5. Should be circled
6. Should be circled
7. Should be circled
8. Should be circled
9. It is important to keep your breaks to the time allotted.
10. Should be circled
11. Should be circled
12. Should be circled
13. Should be circled
14. Should be circled
15. Should be circled
16. Should be circled
17. Stealing from work will probably lead to you being fired.
18. Should be circled.
19. It is important to wear your uniform or appropriate work attire.
20. Should be circled
21. It is important to only make personal calls while on break.

## Is Your Online Profile Hurting Your Career?

Employers often view applicants' Facebook and other social media profiles when making their decision to hire an applicant. If the employer finds inappropriate or questionable content on an applicant's profile, that applicant is likely to no longer be considered for hire.

**Directions:** Answer the following questions by circling "T" for true or "F" for false. If you answered with mostly trues, you will want to edit the content and privacy settings of your social media profiles to be more employer-friendly.

1. My Facebook profile contains a lot of pictures of me drinking. **T or F**
2. My status updates contain curse words and inappropriate content. **T or F**
3. My friends post inappropriate pictures and messages on my wall. **T or F**
4. My profile pictures show off all my tattoos. **T or F**
5. When I Google my name, links to all my social media profiles show up. **T or F**
6. People who are not my friends can view my entire Facebook and Twitter profiles. **T or F**
7. I would not let my grandmother view my Facebook profile. **T or F**

## Stress Reducers

**Directions:** Looking for work and maintaining a job can be stressful. A certain amount of stress makes life interesting and challenging. However, when there is too much stress or a person is not managing it well, illness can result. Below is a list of stress reducers to help you stay well physically and emotionally. Check the items below that best describe you.

- I sleep 7-8 hours at least four nights per week.
- I have at least one relative or friend nearby on who I can rely.
- I drink fewer than five alcoholic beverages per week.
- I give and receive affection regularly.
- I exercise as least three times per week.
- My income is adequate to meet my basic expenses.
- I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
- I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).
- I am able to speak about my feelings when angry or worried.
- I have regular conversations with the people I live with about chores, money, and living issues etc.
- I regularly participate in social or other activities.
- I do something fun at least once a week.
- I am able to manage my time well.
- I eat a well-balanced diet, including adequate amounts of protein, fruits, and vegetables.
- I am close to the appropriate weight for my height.
- I get strength from my beliefs.
- I drink less than four caffeinated beverages per day.
- I get an adequate amount of quiet time for myself during the day.
- I have one or more people to confide in about personal matters.
- I have a plan to better manage the stressors in my life

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total number of checks**

Add up the number of checks above. If there are seven (7) or less, you might not be doing all you can to reduce or manage stress in your life.

**Next steps:** Review the items above and identify one or two that you can do. For example, taking a long, vigorous walk three times per week could improve your health at stressful times in your life.

## How to Leave a Job on Good Terms

**Directions:** You have just received word that you got a new job. It might be the next step on your path to your dream job, or maybe you want to explore other opportunities. You might be wondering how to break the news to your current employer. The following steps will help leave a job properly in order to make sure that you receive a good reference for future jobs. Check off the items below as you complete them.

- Give at least two weeks' notice.** Be sure to tell your boss you are leaving before you tell any of your coworkers. Find out if Human Resources have a procedure to follow.
- Tell your coworkers.** Make sure they are prepared for your leaving. It is good to provide your contact information so your boss or coworkers can get in touch with you in the future if needed or desired.
- Complete all your work.** Finish all the projects you have been working on. This will help the person who replaces you as well as help you maintain a good reputation.
- Ask for an exit interview.** During this interview, thank your boss for all the opportunities the company has given you. Discuss what you have learned and how it will help you in the future.

## Manage Your Career: Notes

## Workbook Final Review

This workbook provided the tools and information you will need to find and maintain employment upon release. In Section 1 (**Assess Yourself**) you learned how to assess your skills, interests, strengths, and values. You also learned how to use those assessment results to obtain a job that is a good fit for you.

In Sections 2 (**Create a Plan and Set Goals**) and 3 (**Find a Job**) you learned about the different steps and efforts needed to obtain employment. You were able to create a job search schedule that will make the job finding process a little easier. You were also able to develop important job-seeking skills such as how to complete a job application, build a resume, write a cover letter, and interview with employers.

Section 4 (**Manage Your Career**) provided information and guidance about maintaining employment once you have been hired. In addition to stress-reduction strategies, you also learned how to leave a job on good terms to obtain a strong reference for your next employer. Positive references and a reliable work history will help you reach your career goals.

If you need more information on job search and employment support services you can use the resources in the next section. You can also visit the STEP AHEAD website ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html)) for more about each of the six steps of the career planning process.

## Resource: Minnesota Bonding Program

Any job seeker with a criminal background may be considered an “at-risk” applicant. Most insurance purchased by employers to protect them against dishonest, harmful employee conduct does not cover “at-risk” employees. As a result, employers may not hire such applicants because their business cannot be protected if the employee commits dishonest acts.

However, the Minnesota Federal Bonding Program is available to all employers who hire “at-risk” applicants. The program issues a no-deductible \$5,000 Fidelity insurance bond to the employers.<sup>3</sup> This bond protects them from employee theft of any money or property by means of theft, larceny, forgery or embezzlement.<sup>1</sup> The bond lasts for six months, and if no claim is made, Travelers Property Casualty will offer a standard commercial policy to employer to be purchased to cover the no longer “at-risk” employee.<sup>1</sup>

Research has shown that only 1% of employers who have used to the Federal Bonding Program have had to make a claim.<sup>4</sup> This statistic shows that job seekers with a criminal background may not be as big of a threat to a business if hired as employers and insurance companies once thought.

## Resource: Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), employers can obtain up to \$2,400 in income tax credit by hiring an individual convicted of a felony within one year after his or her release from a correctional facility.

The amount of credit the employer will receive depends on the number of hours the new hire works and the wages earned. For instance, the employer will receive full credit, or 40 percent of the new hire’s wages capped at \$6,000, if the new hire works 400 or more hours of work during the first year.

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<sup>3</sup> Dept of Employment and Economic Development, “Minnesota Federal Bonding Program,” *Positively Minnesota*, [http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/Find\\_a\\_Job/Targeted\\_Employment\\_Services/Workers\\_With\\_Difficult\\_Job\\_History.aspx](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/Find_a_Job/Targeted_Employment_Services/Workers_With_Difficult_Job_History.aspx).

<sup>4</sup> Dept of Labor, “The Federal Bonding Program,” *The McLaughlin Company*, < <http://bonds4jobs.com/index.html>>.



## State of Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

### Who is Vocational Rehabilitation for?

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is for people with significant disabilities who want to get or keep a job. Most people who get SSI or SSDI benefits and want to work are eligible.

A staff person will talk to you about the world of work and help you decide if you want to apply for services. We also have information about other programs that may be able to meet your needs. We strive to help people to work full time in the regular labor market earning the same wages and benefits as anyone else.

### How do I find out if I can get services?

Qualifying for services is a three step process. In the first step, we consider whether you have a physical or mental condition that makes it difficult to prepare for, get or keep work. Existing reports from your doctor or mental health provider can assist us in documenting a disability. If you don't have a report or other information to send with your application, Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff can get it for you. In the second step, you and your counselor will determine if other services at the Work Force Center, or from other agencies, can help you reach your vocational goal, or if you require the specialized services of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Sometimes there are so many eligible people asking for services they can't all be served. When that happens, Vocational Rehabilitation Services must serve persons with the most serious work limitations first. In the third step, the seriousness of limitations caused by your disability is determined. You and a counselor will talk about any limitations you have in –

- Getting from one place to another
- Talking and listening to others
- Taking care of yourself
- Making plans or carrying out plans
- Getting along with people
- Your work strengths
- Your work skills

### How long does it take to find out if I can get services?

After you apply, your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor will tell you in 60 days or less. If more time is needed, your counselor will let you know and ask if it's okay to take longer.

### What can Vocational Rehabilitation Services do for me?

You and your counselor will develop a plan to help you find or keep a job based on your capacity, skills and/or limitation, and choices. There are many vocational rehabilitation services. You and your counselor choose the services that fit your needs.

## Vocational Rehabilitation, continued

### Examples of Services are:

- Counseling
- Training and education
- Services for keeping a job
- Job placement
- Equipment/ Assistive Technology

**Counseling:** Vocational Rehabilitation Services counseling helps people make choices about their jobs and careers. You and your counselor will work together to develop a plan that both of you agree will lead to employment.

If you aren't sure what kind of work you want to do, you will talk about what you are good at, your interests and how to get the information you need to make good choices. You and your Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor will talk about what you need at work to be successful.

After your plan is approved, Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff will meet with you from time to time – to talk about your progress, to be sure your plan is still working for you, and to talk about employment related issues important for your success.

**Training and Education:** If you need new work skills, you may need training either on-the-job or at school. If you don't know the exact training you need, a Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor can help you find it.

**Services for keeping a job:** Starting a new job is a big step. Getting along with co-workers and supervisors is just as important as the job duties themselves. Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff can talk to you about any problems that come up, especially in the first few months.

**Job Placement:** If you need information about planning a job search, finding job leads, or talking to employers, Vocational Rehabilitation Services job placement services can help.

**Equipment/Assistive Technology:** Modifying a work station, getting the right equipment or assistive technology, or changing your hours of work can make a difference when you go to school, look for work, or do your job. Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselors are experts at finding solutions. Equipment and assistive technology are often an important part of services.

### How much does Vocational Rehabilitation Services cost?

There is no charge for counseling, job placement, and several other vocational rehabilitation services. For some purchased services a sliding fee schedule, based on family income, may apply. You will be asked to pay part of the cost if you can afford to do so.

## Vocational Rehabilitation, continued

### Do I have choices?

Yes. Using Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the best information available, you are supported in making informed choices about your goal, your services and who provides them. If you want to develop a plan on your own, or with the help of someone you choose, you can do that too. Your plan must be right for you.

### Does my plan have to be approved?

Yes. In order for Vocational Rehabilitation Services funds to be spent, your counselor must determine:

- If it's reasonable to believe that your plan will lead to a job,
- If the services in your plan are those needed to reach your goal, and
- If the plan is complete.

### How long do services last?

In general, services continue as long as you are making satisfactory progress toward the job goal in your written plan. After you are employed, Vocational Rehabilitation Services will provide follow-up services for at least 90 days before closing your case. If you need services later, your Vocational Rehabilitation Services case can be re-opened.

### For more information:

- Call 1-888-Get-Jobs
- Visit: [www.positivelyminnesota.com/vrs](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/vrs)
- Go to: [www.iseek.org/exoffenders/find-job/voc-rehab.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/find-job/voc-rehab.html)

## Acknowledgements

The STEP AHEAD workbook is dedicated to Lori Sterner, Goodwill/Easter Seals Quality Assurance Manager, 1959 - 2013.

*"Never doubt that a small group of dedicated individuals can change the world.  
In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead*

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A copy of this workbook can be found:

- on the STEP AHEAD website ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/workbook.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/workbook.html))
- contact Christen Munn at [cmunn@goodwilleasterseals.org](mailto:cmunn@goodwilleasterseals.org)

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