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## Applying for a Job: The Young Adults Guide, Revised 2023 [English and Spanish versions]

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The Learning & Working Center

# Applying for a Job: The Young Adult's Guide

Tip Sheet

Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research

Revised May 2023

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN LOOKING FOR A JOB

- ✓ Pay, growth opportunities, benefits, flexibility, etc.
- ✓ Type of work you would like — Restaurant, childcare, store, outdoors, office, etc.
- ✓ Schedule — What days and number of hours you can work (try to keep as open as possible)
- ✓ Remote, in-person or hybrid — What format will work best with your needs
- ✓ Transportation — How can you travel to get to a job, will you get paid enough to cover transportation
- ✓ What you're good at — Your skills and abilities
- ✓ What you'd like to learn

# BEFORE APPLYING FOR A JOB



Have an email address that includes your name, is "G-rated", and is on a standard email platform (Gmail, Yahoo, etc.). Remember to check your email daily.



Research the types of jobs you want and the company you want to apply at, so you can learn what they are looking for.



Have a good [LinkedIn profile](#) set-up that is up-to-date and professional looking with a headshot. Look into getting [skills endorsements](#) from your connections. Take classes and add them to your profile and resume. Once ready to apply for jobs, make sure your profile is set to public and you can also set it so [recruiters](#) can find it.



Clean up your social media accounts so that you are comfortable with employers seeing them and that any employer would be comfortable hiring you. Employers may search for you online and you want them to feel confident in offering you a job. If not job-related, make social media as private as possible, so that it is not easily found. If you're looking for a job that requires social media, make sure your platforms fit their needs.



Identify 2-3 people who can act as a "Reference" for you for potential employers. These should be people that know you, your work ethic, or your skill set. Most employers will ask for the names and contact information of a few references so ask these people in advance if they will do this for you. References can include professors, teachers, leaders at volunteer organizations, etc.



Put together a resume. This outlines your educational and job experience and can include volunteer work, special skills, and interests.



Talk with an appropriate adult or peer about how you will address any "gaps" in education or employment when you interview. This is not uncommon and is not a big deal if you are prepared.

# WHERE DO I FIND JOB LISTINGS?

## Online

Check out company websites directly (e.g., Target.com, Homedepot.com). Often job postings are listed under “Careers” or “Human Resources” areas of the website.

Some examples of job search websites are <https://www.indeed.com/> and <https://www.monster.com/>.

If you are in college or any post-secondary education program, look at Career Office listings at your school and try <https://joinhandshake.com/>.

The LinkedIn platform hosts a job board with professional and entry level jobs. <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/>.

Check-out your local town/city/state websites for job postings.

If looking for gig work, do a web search for platforms such as TaskRabbit, Care.com, Fiverr, DoorDash, Instacart, and more.

Look out for job listings that might be fake. If they promise a lot of money or it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

To find more job-listing sites, Google things like “online job search sites” and you should find others.



## Other Ways to Find Jobs



**Career Centers/Clubhouses/Employment Supports** — Job support programs will help you with all the steps involved in getting and applying for jobs. Find your state’s [Vocational Rehabilitation](https://askearn.org/page/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies) agency online at: <https://askearn.org/page/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies>. Talk to your helpers (case managers, guidance counselors) for places to go.



**Networking** — Ask around! Family members, friends and neighbors may know of places that are hiring. LinkedIn.com and joinhandshake.com (for college students) are great places to network online. See more suggestions below.



**Job Fairs** — Job or career fairs can be run by specific companies or may be several companies in one location. Attending one is a great way to learn about a company you may be interested in, network, and make a good first impression. Bring plenty of copies of your resume and collect business cards.



**Staffing Agencies** — Sign up with a staffing or recruitment agency, which could help you find work (either permanent or temporary). They’ll need a copy of your resume and any certifications you have.



**Contact the Company Directly** — Sometimes the company you are interested in doesn’t have any jobs that match your skills on their website, so reach out to them directly via email or phone to see if they are looking for someone with your skills. You may not hear back from the company if they aren’t looking for someone with your qualifications but they may keep your information on file.

# FILLING OUT JOB APPLICATIONS

Most companies require filling out your application online, through a job website or an app. Some hints:

- You will need an e-mail address. You will need to check your e-mail by computer or cell phone regularly when you are job hunting. Make sure your voicemail message is professional.
- Have all your information ready before you start to fill in the application. If you can, go through the application first to see what you need. You will need to have references.
- If you are filling out an application on a job search website (ex: [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)), you may need to create an account. Make sure to keep your username and password somewhere safe so you can go back and track your applications and apply to other places later. Websites like [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) let you create your resume once and then send it to the various jobs you are applying to.
- Most online job applications give you the option to save the application and come back to it later.



# AFTER APPLYING



**Checking In:** Don't get upset if you don't hear back from the place you applied to right away. It can take a month, or sometimes more, to hear back about an application that you submitted. If you applied online, or via a kiosk at a large retail store, they will contact you if they want to speak with you.

If you applied in person to a local business, like your local pizza joint or garden center, wait about a week, and then call them and make sure they have your application, and ask if they have started interviews yet.

**Don't be discouraged if you don't hear from a company.** Many companies use filters and artificial intelligence (AI) to screen resumes instead of people. If you have a contact at the company, connect with them to see if they can find out if the software missed your application.

# WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU HAVE A HARD TIME FINDING A JOB

Sometimes it helps to build your experience, skills and resume through volunteering. Parents / guardians / coaches can often help you find volunteer opportunities. A great place to look is [Volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org). Also consider working with your local vocational

rehabilitation organization to help polish your job interviewing skills and get additional support. It can sometimes take a month or two (or more) to get a job that really interests you. If you don't get the one you applied for there will be others out there.

# RESOURCES

## Work and Wellbeing: A Job Guide for People with Mental Health Conditions

<https://www.joblist.com/guides/work-and-wellbeing>

## Help with Writing Your First Resume

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/first-resume-example-with-no-work-experience-2063278>

<https://joinhandshake.com/blog/students/category/resumes-and-cover-letters/>

## Writing a Cover Letter

<https://joinhandshake.com/blog/students/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-for-a-job-5-essential-tips/>

## Networking Help

<https://www.stridelearning.com/insights/importance-of-networking-for-teens.html>

<https://potentialmagazine.com/making-connections-offline/>

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-to-network>

<https://www.cNBC.com/2018/07/02/5-networking-secrets-every-young-person-should-know.html>

## What to Wear to an Interview

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/what-to-wear-to-an-interview-teenager>

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-not-to-wear-on-an-interview-for-teens-4061802>

## Practicing Interviewing Skills

<http://www.jobinterviewquestions.org>

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide

<https://doi.org/10.7191/pib.1070>

## Job Accommodation Network: JAN

<https://askjan.org/>

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Visit the Transitions ACR online at [umassmed.edu/TransitionsACR](http://umassmed.edu/TransitionsACR)

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