

# **GAINING EMPLOYMENT: A COLLECTION OF RESOURCES**

# Making the most of this collection

The collection was created in collaboration with Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, and the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth IPS Learning Collaborative. This collection is in the public domain, and was designed to be used by individuals seeking assistance in joining or re-joining the workforce, and their supporters.

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## Employment Rights Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA protects you from discrimination in all employment practices including: job application procedures, hiring, firing, training, pay, promotion, benefits, and leave. It also calls for you to be free from harassment because of your disability, and the right to request a reasonable accommodation. Here are some additional rights you have under the ADA.

- All employers with 15 or more employees are required to follow the Federal law (the ADA).
- Employers may NOT ask about your disability, but they can ask if you can perform the job duties with or without a reasonable accommodation.
- An employer cannot refuse to hire you if you need an accommodation to do the job unless the accommodation would cause an undue burden on the employer or would create a direct threat to safety.
- An employer cannot require a medical exam before you are offered a job. After you are hired they can require a job-related medical exam as long as they require that of ALL new employees.
- Examples of a reasonable accommodation:
  - Making the work site accessible.
  - Modifying work schedules.
  - Providing readers or interpreters.
  - Allowing time for treatment.
  - Personal care assistants.
- In order to request an accommodation:
  - You must tell your employer that you are a person with a disability.
  - State that you are requesting a reasonable accommodation under the ADA.
  - Identify the problems with the job task.
  - Explain what you want for an accommodation.
  - Invite your employer's accommodation ideas.
  - Ask for a response in a reasonable amount of time.
  - Your request can be verbal but written requests provide a record.
  - A doctor, family member, peer, advocate, or other support person can make a request on your behalf.
  - The accommodation cannot be at your expense (lower pay, or money taken out of your salary).
- The employer does not HAVE to give you what you ask for if they can prove that the accommodation would cause a huge burden or expense.
  - Document your request and any correspondence related to it.
  - Seek assistance from Disability Rights services in your state.

### Reference:

*Survivor's Guide to Overcoming Disability Barriers: A Guide to Overcoming Barriers to Employment and Housing and Obtaining the Benefits You Need.* –Disability Rights Vermont, Inc. 2013.

## Setting a Job Search Goal

A job search goal contains small, achievable steps — like, “use the computer to job search”, or “contact at least 3 employers at the mall” - that can help us move forward with finding employment. When setting a job search goal, be as specific as possible. The more detailed we are about goal setting, the more likely we will achieve our goal. Be honest about personal limits, and think through supports and resources needed.

- On the calendar below, block out the times you cannot dedicate to job searching – like appointments, favorite shows, or support groups.
- Next, write your job search goal in the open calendar spots
- Use this weekly calendar, share it with someone you trust, and stay on track to reach your job search goals!

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8am-10am							
10am-12pm							
12pm-2pm							
2pm-4pm							
4pm-6pm							
6pm-8pm							
8pm-10pm							
Did I complete my goal today?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
What helped or got in the way of me achieving my goal today?							

## My References

Most businesses require applicants to list three people as job references. Think about three people who know you well and would sound professional on a phone call. These can be past co-workers, vocational counselors, landlords, or even supervisors. Here are some additional tips:

- Before you list a person as your reference, ask if they are willing to be a positive job reference for you. Be sure to find a person who will be confident when describing your strengths to an employer.
- Describe the type of jobs you want. Not only does this help your references understand how to describe you, it helps with networking (the person may know of someone you can contact about a position).
- If you need to explain a legal history during a job interview, consider using your probation or parole officer as a reference, but only if you know that person would be positive.
- After the interview, alert your references that they may receive a call from that company.

### My References:

#### Reference #1

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

Years known: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reference #2

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

Years known: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reference #3

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

Years known: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Work and School History

This worksheet can be used to gather information about your work and education history in preparation for working on your resume, or completing job applications. Start with the most recent Job/School first.

- If you do not have all the information, here are some suggestions:
  - Look for contact information for previous employers and schools online
  - Write down your best guess if a business you worked for in the past is closed
  - Call previous employers and ask them if they have a record of when you worked there
  - Check with family or friends – they may remember some details that you can use

### Job # 1

Employer Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Name and Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wage History: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties/Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

### Job # 2

Employer Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Name and Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wage History: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties/Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

### Job # 3

Employer Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Name and Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wage History: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties/Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

### School #1

School name and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree and Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

### School #2

School name and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree and Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_



## Support for Writing My Resume

There are many different types of resumes. You should select a format that emphasizes your strongest points. If you have not written a resume before, consider getting help from someone who is experienced in this area. Some options for assistance include:

- **Career One Stop Centers:** These centers, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, provide free assistance with resumes, cover letters, and other job search strategies. To find the One Stop Centers in your state, go to [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org).
- **Libraries:** Many libraries have classes on resume writing and job searching.
- **Friends and family members:** Sometimes those closest to you may have helpful suggestions - especially if they work in fields related to the jobs you are seeking.
- **College Career Centers:** These centers may offer assistance if you have been enrolled recently in that school, or you are an alumni.
- **Online resources:** There are multiple websites with sample resumes. Try entering the job type you would like to obtain along with the words “sample resume” in a search engine to find samples that are specific to your work preference.

### My Resources:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Resume Writing Tips

Writing a resume can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here are some tips to help break down the process and get you on your way to building a powerful resume.

- Be brief. Many employers prefer to scan resumes rather than reading them carefully.
- Double check that the dates on your resume are consistent with your job application.
- Print and proofread your resume several times. Ask another person to also proofread your resume.

### Tips for Resume Sections

- Your contact information:
  - Be sure that the phone number you list has a simple and professional voice message. State your first and last name. Do not include music or noise in the background.
- Objective: Be specific about the type of work you want to do. Change your objective as you apply for different types of jobs.
- Education:
  - List your education in reverse order. Start with the most recent school or training program.
  - Include classes that did not result in a degree, particularly if they are related to the type of job you want.
  - If you do not want to highlight education (you did not graduate from high school or vocational school), skip this section of the resume.
- Work history:
  - Begin your work history with your last, or current, job. Then add other jobs in reverse order.
  - Do not embellish your work history by using long words or trying to make jobs sound impressive. Be accurate and direct about your work experience.
  - Do not include jobs that were a month or less, unless the job was seasonal or time limited.
  - If you have not had much work experience, or have had long gaps in employment, see the tip sheet on ways to describe past work experiences.

Include volunteer jobs that relate to your work history or fill gaps in employment.

## Describing Past Work Experiences

Have you had past work experiences that you worry will impact your ability to get a job – such as a large number of jobs, limited past work experience, or significant gaps in your work history? There are things you can do! One strategy is to create an “Experience Summary” which highlights your skills or experiences rather than a chronological list of jobs. It is important to be honest, but avoid highlighting something that may be a concern for employers. Here are some tips to get you started:

**Use bullet points that describe actions and outcomes, rather than a list of job duties.** For example:

- Maintained swimming pool and made it available to members every day of the season without complaint or equipment failure for first time in club history.
- Cleaned, maintained, and repaired facilities for local retail store.
- Responded to customer suggestions that resulted in fewer complaints for the maintenance division.

**Combine multiple jobs into one or two bullet points to highlight skills in a variety of settings.** For example:

- Successfully learned and applied new service styles in a variety of restaurant settings.
- Adapted quickly to new work settings, transferred appropriate skills in light assembly tasks.

**Explain long gaps in work history if they can be described in a positive manner.** For example:

- Successfully returned to school to complete HSED program.
- Primary care provider for relative with terminal illness.
- Completed custom bridesmaid dresses for six wedding parties on time.

**Target resumes to each type of business, and use words from the job description to explain your skills and strengths.** For example:

- If a job description asks for ‘customer service experience’; one of your headings should start with the same phrase: “Customer Service Experience”

**My skills and work-related accomplishments (actions → outcomes):**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Cover Letter

**Dale Kendall**

4045 Hoover Street, B-1  
Pittsburgh, WA 15601  
Cell Phone: (555) 123-4567  
myemail@domain.com

**RE: CNA Position (Job ID 44301)**

April 12, 2014

Mary Fuller  
Name of Nursing Home  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Fuller:

I am writing this letter in reference to your job advertisement for a qualified Certified Nursing Assistant. I would love to bring my compassion and enthusiasm for working with older adults to your retirement village.

As indicated on my attached resume, I have several years experience working with older adults. I began as a volunteer who drives elderly people to church for Sunday services. I have enjoyed this experience so much that I chose to pursue paid employment in a nursing home. As a dietary aide, I had significant contact with residents and decided it was time to further my career through education. In December 2013 I became a Certified Nursing Assistant.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you. I will call your office during the week of April 19 to follow up on my job application. In the meantime, I may be reached at (555) 123-4567 or through email, [myemail@domain.com](mailto:myemail@domain.com).

Sincerely,

Dale Kendall

## Sample Resume

### Dale Kendall

4045 Hoover Street, B-1  
Pittsburgh, WA 15601  
Cell Phone: (555) 123-4567  
myemail@domain.com

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**Career Objective:** To use my skills as a Certified Nursing Assistant to promote wellness and to help older people live with dignity.

### Education:

Name of School, Town, State  
Certified Nursing Assistant, 2013

Name of High School, Town, State  
Graduate

### Work Experience:

Name of Nursing Home, Town, State

Position: Dietary Aide

March 2011 to January 2012

- Prepared food and assembled trays for patients based upon dietary needs.
- Served food in cafeteria and in patient rooms.
- Assisted some residents with eating their meals and recorded the amount of food consumed.
- Assured that cleanliness and quality standards were met.

Name of Restaurant, Town, State

Position: Food Prep Worker

June 2010 to October 2010

- Washed, peeled, and chopped vegetables.
- Prepared cold salads and desserts.
- Assisted with dish washing and keeping the kitchen clean.
- Assisted cooks and kitchen staff with various other tasks, as needed.

### Volunteer Experience:

Name of Church, Town, State

Volunteer Driver

2010 to Present

- I have consistently volunteered to drive older people to church each Sunday



## Staying Motivated During My Job Search

The key to becoming employed is not giving up – persistence will pay off! Here are some tips to help you stay positive during your job search. Complete this worksheet each week until you reach your job search goals.

- Review what you have done each week to find a job, and congratulate yourself for each accomplishment - finding job references, completing job applications, asking to speak with managers, etc. If you had a tough week, that's OK! To stay motivated, be sure to write down your goals for the next week.
  - What steps did I take this week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What steps am I going to take next week? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- For support, talk to family, friends, or others who are also looking for work.
  - This week, I will talk to: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Keeping in touch with your strengths can help you stay motivated. Consider what it is about you that will make you a successful employee, and review your strengths each week. Ask others who know you well for their ideas.
  - My strengths related to working are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- It's important to remind yourself of *why* you are doing all this hard work! List your reasons for wanting a job each week to stay positive and motivated.
  - I want to work because: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Think of other times when you were successful in reaching a goal. What was the secret to your success?
  - My success: \_\_\_\_\_
  - The secret to my success was: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have a legal history, remember that a survey of 130 employers found that 62% said that they had knowingly hired a person with a felony. They said they believed the person had taken responsibility for her actions and was trying to turn her life around. People with serious convictions, and recent convictions are hired everyday.



## Tips for Written Applications

Here are some tips that might improve your chances of getting an interview.

### Get Prepared!

- Find the right time to work on the application. Applications require a lot of concentration. Complete applications when you are at your sharpest!
  - The time of day when I am most focused is: \_\_\_\_\_
- Be friendly and polite when you ask for an application. The person you speak to may be a manager or may share information with the manager.
- Ask for two applications in case you make mistakes on the first.
  - Research the position description you're applying for. This allows you to tailor your response to fit the position's job responsibilities.
    - The position I am applying for is: \_\_\_\_\_
    - What are some key responsibilities of the position I can highlight in my application?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Gather Materials (check off each box when completed)

- Refer to your resume, or the work history handout in this booklet, as you complete applications.
  - You can usually find contact information for previous employers and schools online.
  - For employment dates, call previous employers for a record of when you worked there.
  - If a business you worked for in the past is closed, write down your best guess.
  - Family or friends might remember some details that you can use.
- References: See the tip sheet on references in this booklet.
- Criminal history information
  - Obtain a current RAP sheet (if applicable) so that you know what will come up if an employer does a background check (sometimes these are not correct). Contact the state criminal justice record review division to obtain a copy of your RAP sheet. If you have a conviction in more than one state, you will need to contact the FBI.

### Fill Out the Application

- Read through the entire application and each question prior to filling it out.
- Take your time and write clearly with a blue or black pen. Employers will examine the application to determine if it is completed neatly and all questions are answered.
- Apply for a specific position. Do not write that you will do "anything."
- If a topic does not apply to you (for instance, if you have not been in the military), write "N/A" rather than leaving the space blank.
- If you make a single mistake, draw one line through it and enter the correct information above.
- Double check for spelling errors.
- Many applications ask what your salary requirement is – you can answer "open to negotiation."
- If you have a legal history, only offer information that is required. Does the application ask for information about arrests and convictions? During what time period? If you do need to enter information, be honest and upfront, but contact the employer a few days after submitting the application to explain how your life has changed.
- Make a copy of your completed application to save in your job search folder.

## Tips for Online Applications

Many jobs require the completion of an online application as part of the hiring process. Here are some tips for completing online applications that can improve your chances of getting that job.

- Gather all of your necessary information before you start the application. Many applications will not let you finish and submit them without all of this information, so have your resume or a list of previous job and education experience handy.
- If you have trouble using a computer, that's OK! Ask a friend, family member, peer, or support staff if they can help you with the application or be available in case you get stuck.
  - I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help me.
- Double check that you are on the correct website for the business. Some websites are a scam to get personal information from people.
  - If the website asks questions about your income, whether you want to go to school, or anything strange, **do not keep filling it out**. When in doubt, access the online application through the employer's website.
- Online applications require a lot of concentration. Complete applications when you are at your sharpest!
  - The time of day when I am most focused is: \_\_\_\_\_
- Make sure that you have time to complete the application. Some online applications can take a few hours to finish. Thankfully, many times you are able to save an online application partway through, and complete the rest later.
- Many applications include personality assessments. They will have statements like "Slow-moving people make me impatient" and you can select a response like "strongly agree", "disagree", or "strongly disagree". These assessments can be difficult to complete. Employers have shared with us that it is important to be consistent in your answers.
  - For example, if you disagree that slow moving people make you impatient, then you should also disagree that it bothers you when people take too long in the checkout line.
  - Stay away from the "neutral" or middle responses. Answer "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" most of the time.
  - Some questions in personality assessments test you for honesty.
    - For example, when asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "I am always cheerful", your instinct might be to answer "strongly agree" because you think that is what the employer wants to hear. However, nobody is **always** cheerful. In this instance, it is more honest to answer "disagree".
  - Be sure to answer the questions with a positive attitude toward management and the company.

## Making Contact with People Who Hire

Employers may receive many job applications for a single position. One method to get ahead of the crowd is to meet in person with a manager or owner. This tip sheet includes ideas for how to do that. *(The ideas listed below may not apply for all types of jobs such as skilled or professional positions. For those jobs, think about people you know who work in your field, and ask if they can introduce you to others at their business.)*

- Complete a job application three or four days before visiting the employer
- Dress as you would for a job interview. Avoid wearing gym shoes, jeans, or t-shirts with logos.
- Do not bring friends or family members into the business with you.
- Bring a copy of your application or resume in case the manager wants to interview you on the spot. Offer it to the manager as you begin to talk.
- When you arrive, ask for the manager. If you are asked why you want to speak to the manager, say that you are following up on your job application, but do not volunteer that information unless asked.
- Be prepared to explain why you want to work at that company—do not say that you will take any job or need to earn money. Share your skills and strengths. Examples:

“My name is Mary Smith. I submitted an application for a certified nursing assistant three days ago and here is a copy of my resume. I wanted to be sure that you received that, and also let you know that I have experience working in a nursing home. I loved the residents. I want to make a difference in someone’s life.”

“My name is John Barrymore. I submitted an application for a customer service representative on Monday, but I also have a copy of my resume right here. You’ll see that I have worked in customer service before. I enjoy fast-paced work and I think that working with customers is interesting.”

“I’m Lisa Johnson. I submitted an application for a shelving position last week. I wanted to talk to you about my qualifications. I have been a reader all my life and love coming to the library. I also have experience working with the public.”

My Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Transportation Options

Transportation is important for many things including employment. Getting around town can be challenging if you do not own a car, but there are options available. Below are some ideas to get your started on finding the best transportation approach for you.

### Common Community Options

- Drive a vehicle (your own, borrowed, or rented), or get a ride with family, friends or supporters
- Walk or bike
- Taxi, Bus, Subway, or Train
  - **Tip!** If you have Medicaid or Medicare or a disability, you may qualify for a reduced fare. Call the transportation provider to find out.
- Paratransit (designed for people with a disability through the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Ride share opportunities (community members or co-workers)
- Vocational Rehabilitation may be able to offer assistance with transportation options.
- Free shuttle services (town shuttles, airport shuttles, hotel shuttles, medical offices, car repair services, etc.)
- Volunteer drivers through non-profit organizations or churches (Lions Club, senior citizens organizations, Community Action Centers, Independent Living Centers, Veterans Services,)

### Other Supports

- Call the free **One-Stop Career Center** (now called American Jobs Center) 1-877-348-0502 or TTY 1-877-348-0501 or call the free **One-Call Information Center** (dial 2-1-1) for help with finding transportation options in your area.
- See this online resource through CTAA called Joblinks for transportation ideas:  
<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=17&z=40>

### What to Bring:

- The phone number, address, and time you need to reach your destination.
- Your own identification and personal contact information.
- A map or printout from the Internet to help you navigate to the address you need to reach.
- Dress for the weather (umbrella, gloves, etc.).

### Planning for Your Trip (to drop off resume, to network, to interview, to first day of work, etc.)

- Determine the time you need to leave your house to ensure you are at least 15 minutes early
- If using public transportation, find the schedule for the type of transportation you will use. This will have locations of pick up, departure times, arrival times, and fees.
  - You may be able to transport your bike for free (bus) to help with bridging the gap between locations. This should be noted on the schedule.
  - Certain dress codes may apply.
  - Have the transportation provider's number handy, and call for assistance if needed.
- Let someone know when you will be traveling and when you expect to return.
- Consider where the public restrooms are located for use during your trip if needed.
- Prepare a back-up transportation plan if the first plan does not work (i.e. the person driving you gets sick, the bus drivers are on strike, the subway line breaks down)

## Preparing for a Job Interview

Here are some helpful tips to get you prepared for a job interview.

- **Select an outfit:** For jobs in stores and restaurants, it is fine to wear slacks and a nice shirt. Avoid t-shirts with logos, gym shoes, and sweatshirts. The key is to look neat and clean.
- **Practice interviewing:** Review the list of common interview questions in this booklet and think about what you will say. Then ask a friend or family member to ask you the questions. This is an important tip—your interview will be much better if you practice.
  - Who can help you practice? \_\_\_\_\_
- **Know your strengths and work-related experiences:** Be ready to talk about why you would be a good employee. Give examples that illustrate your strengths. “I am very reliable. At my last job, I only missed one day of work.” “I frequently take care of pets for my friends and family when they travel. I’m patient and comfortable with all types of animals.”

My Strength:	Example:

- **Learn a little bit about the company:** Look online to determine if the company has grown recently or has departments you did not know about. Share what you learned in the interview, “I read that your company is expanding into new states. Congratulations!”
- **Boost your confidence:** It is normal to feel nervous during job interviews, so select one or two strategies to manage those feelings, just in case.
  - Remind yourself of your strengths, “I have something to offer this employer because I am willing to work hard and I have a positive attitude.”
  - Be upfront—tell the employer you are nervous. “Actually, I’m a little bit nervous because I really want this job.” You may find that you are less nervous as soon as you stop trying to cover it up.
  - Try to smile. That may help you feel more relaxed.
  - Focus on something positive just before the interview—a place you like to go, a person who makes you feel good, a pet...
  - My Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Common Interview Questions

Here are some examples of common interview questions, and suggested responses.

**Tell me a little bit about yourself:** Give a brief explanation of experience related to the job you are applying for, as well as your reasons for choosing this type of work.

For example: *“I enjoy working with food and have experience as a food prep worker and also as a grill cook. I’m especially interested in working here because your menu is long and that would give me an opportunity to learn new things. I also enjoy eating here!”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you want to work here?** Avoid saying that you want any job because you want to work. Explain what about the position or business is related to your interests or career goals.

For example: *“I want to work around children. My favorite jobs were babysitting and working in a daycare center. I feel really energized around children.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why did you leave your last job?** If you left a job because you needed time to manage your illness, one option is to say that you left to take care of an ill family member (in this example, you are the family member). If you were fired, be truthful, but explain what you learned from the experience. Never complain about a past employer.

For example: *“I was let go because I could not manage the pressure of a long line of inpatient customers. What I learned from that experience is that I work better with small groups of people.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What are your strengths/what can you bring to this job?** Think about your strengths as a worker and add examples of how those strengths have helped you perform well on other jobs (or in other situations if you have not worked before).

For example: *“I have pride about the work that I do. My last employer commented several times that I always noticed what needed to be done and completed those tasks before she could ask for my help.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What are your weaknesses as a worker?** One option is to talk about a weakness that is not essential for the position, such as saying you do not enjoy working with the public if applying for a kitchen job. Another option is to mention a weakness that you have improved.

For example: *“I used to panic when I was overwhelmed at work, but I have learned to focus on one task at a time and ask for help if necessary.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**When are you available to work?** Be as flexible as possible but also be honest if there is a shift you cannot work.

For example: *“I cannot work Tuesday and Thursday mornings because I have classes, but I am available for all other shifts.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**On your application, you indicated that you have a felony:** If the employer does not ask about your past, bring it up yourself. This is your opportunity to address any concerns the manager has. Explain how your life is different now and what you are doing to try to change your life. Take responsibility for what happened.

For example: *“I was involved with the wrong crowd and I also had a problem with drinking. I was arrested for breaking and entering, and also for possessing drugs with the intent to sell. I regret those mistakes. I have been going to AA meetings for a year and I want to work in order to be responsible for myself. I would really appreciate a chance to work here and I would show that appreciation by doing the best job I can.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you want to do in five years?** Talk about a job that is related to the job for which you are interviewing.

For example: *“I’d like to work as a manager in a company like this one. I think my experience in construction will make me an asset to a do-it-yourself store, and I would like to teach other people how to provide excellent customer service.”*

What I will say: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Questions to Ask During Job Interviews

At the end of an interview, you will often be asked if you have any questions. Asking two or three questions can help indicate your interest and enthusiasm to the interviewer. Prepare the questions in advance and write them down if you think you might forget what you would like to ask - it is okay to refer to notes when you ask the questions.

**Demonstrate that you want to contribute to the company. For example:**

- Please tell me about someone who was successful in this position and what made that person successful.
- If I were to work for you in this position, what would be my top priority?
- How would I know if I was performing my job well?

**Ask about what you genuinely want to know, rather than asking questions just to ask questions.** For example:

- What is a typical day like for someone in this position?
- What training is offered to new employees?
- Are there opportunities for advancement?

**Ask questions related to what you learn during the interview**

- This will show that you are interested and paying attention. It is fine to take a quick note or two during the interview if you want to remember what to bring up later.

**Be positive**

- Frame questions in a positive way: rather than asking if there is frequent turnover in the position ask, "What have other people enjoyed about this job?"
- Avoid bringing up potential problems, such as, "Can you adjust my time if my children are sick?"

**Questions to avoid**

- Questions that have already been answered. For example, if the manager provided detailed information about the job duties, do not ask about the job duties or it may appear as if you have not been listening.
- Avoid asking about the salary, time off, other benefits, workspace, or work schedule. These questions are fine *after* you are offered a position.

**My Questions:**

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

**Bonus tip! End the interview with thanks and a positive statement.** For example:

- Thank you for your time! I enjoyed learning about your company and I am excited about this the possibility of working for you.

## Conclusion

We hope that you found the resources contained herein helpful, and that they are supporting you in your employment goals. Remember that persistence is the key to becoming employed. People obtain employment everyday in spite of having gaps in their employment, legal histories, or other issues. Follow up on every application by visiting the business to speak with a manager, or calling to express your interest in the job. Even if you have a perfect work history, follow up to stand apart from the crowd. Employers appreciate initiative!