

# Job Seeker Handbook

Job Searching 101 ..... pg. 2  
Resumes ..... pg. 3  
Interviewing ..... pg. 9  
Job Seeker Community Programs ..... pg.12

# JOB SEARCHING 101

There are many steps in the job search process, from figuring out what you want to do and where you want to work to actually receiving a job offer. A helpful order of job search steps for job seekers is:

1. Finding focus, by naming job search targets and defining keywords.
2. Reach out to your communities and let them know that you are looking for a job and what kind of job you are looking for.
3. Finding openings of interest either online or through referrals.
4. Creating a strong resume and cover letter that can be adjusted for various positions.
5. Preparing for interviews.

A job search is not always a linear process. It is likely that after a job seeker completes the first four steps above that will continue to:

- Adjust a resume and or cover letter to fit for specific positions
- Establish new connections or reconnect with others
- Submit applications and interview for positions

## **Finding Focus: Job Search Targets**

The first step in a job search is to figure out what kind of work you are looking for. This is known as a job search target. It is helpful to be able to name the type of job function you want paired with employer context.

### **Examples:**

*Job Search Target: Nurse (function) in a large hospital (context)*

**You can get more specific with the job function if desired.**

*Job Search Target: Emergency Room Nurse (function) in a large hospital (context)*

**You can vary the function or the context to create more targets.**

*Job Search Target: Nurse (function) in an outpatient facility (context)*

*Nurse (function) in a residential rehabilitation facility (context)*

The amount of flexibility you have in your targets can help you speed up or can slow down your search. Generally, it is recommended to have multiple job search targets. If you want to learn more about different types of occupations and related job titles, visit O\*NET: [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org).

## **Learn about job openings**

Successful job seekers use a variety of search strategies including online applications in addition to referrals and networking. Many positions may never be posted and oftentimes they are filled through referrals. Online job searching is also important, and this includes finding jobs on job boards or on company websites. Relying only on a single strategy to find positions could result in missed opportunities, so it is important to spend time on multiple strategies.

## **Online Job Boards**

The two most used online job boards are Indeed.com and the job feature on LinkedIn.com These boards will

scan the internet for job postings and recruiters will also post positions there as well. As one of the most comprehensive job search boards, Indeed likely will have any posting that is available on the internet. When applying online, it is best to go to the company website and apply directly even if you found the job posting on another website such as Indeed.com or LinkedIn.com. One way to increase the effectiveness of online job boards is to set-up email alerts so that you are notified via email when a new job meets your search criteria, then you can quickly apply.

### **Company Websites**

Identify companies in the area that you would be interested in working for, that also hire employees to perform one of your job functions and review their job postings frequently. Checking their sites one to two times a week can be a good goal.

## **RESUMES**

### **General Advice and Information**

Your resume is your personal advertisement for a new position. It is helpful to adjust your resume for every application by including relevant keywords from the job description. Many companies now use automated systems to manage job applications; the systems scan resumes for keywords and typically work best with Microsoft Word documents. Proofread and have at least a second person review your resume if possible.

### **Resume Sections**

#### **Section 1: Header**

- Your formal name, centered at the top of the page or at the far left margin. Your name should be in capital letters and bold type so that it stands out.
- Address; you do not have to put a street address, simply including the city and state is enough
- Include your telephone number and e-mail address. Make sure your email address is one you can check regularly and that the address is some version of your first and last name.

#### **Section 2: Summary of Qualifications or Profile**

- The next item on your résumé is summary of qualifications, or a profile, but you don't need both. Objectives no longer commonly used on resumes.
- A summary of qualifications is never required but is typically used if you have a lot of experience that you need to tie together. You might change the summary of qualifications each time you apply for a job.
- The summary of qualifications should also be targeted to the employer's needs and typically consists of 3-5 concise statements.

#### **Example:**

##### Summary of Qualifications

- Five years' experience with retail management and supervision
- Proven communication skills developed through coordinating hiring and training
- Experienced sales generator as a result of accurate sales report analysis

### Section 3: Experience

- Experience is much more than your paid work experiences. It can include full-time, part-time, internship, volunteer experience.
- You can divide your experience into a few sections (ie, Relevant Experience, Additional Experience, Volunteer Experience, Leadership Experience depending on your job search target)
- List your work experiences in reverse chronological order starting with your present or most recent experience.
- Write the title of your position, the name of the employer, the city and state where your job was located, and the beginning and ending dates of employment (month & year only).
- Then, describe what you did; do not just list your responsibilities. Write a brief statement of your accomplishments and skills gained. Also, be sure to start each description with an action verb.
- Choose the jobs that are most relevant to your new target for bullet statements. The rest can go under another section (such as Additional Experience) and they can either have one statement or no statements.
- Try to make each job entry unique, even if much of what you did is the same but maybe you did it at a different responsibility level or did the same job at different places.
- There isn't a specific number of bullet statements you should have. For the experiences that are most relevant, try to have anywhere from 3-6 per entry.

**Example:**

**Warehouse Manager**

*National Envelope*

Lenexa, Kansas

June 20xx – August 20xx

- Supervised and trained staff of 6 forklift operators
- Anticipated operating needs by quickly loading machines to increase efficiency
- Maintained operable and safe warehouse by keeping area clean and free of obstructions
- Recognized as Employee of the Year for organization by demonstrating commitment to safety and efficiency

### Section 4: Education

- Add your present or most recent educational degree first.
- Include the name and location (city and state only) of your school, the degree and major you received or expect to receive (no abbreviations) and date of graduation. Eliminate date of graduation if your graduation was more than ten years ago.
- If you have extensive employment experience and you graduated (more than 10 years ago), your education will typically go after your experience at the bottom of your resume. If you recently graduated, your education will be one of the first sections, either under your header or under your summary of qualifications.
- If you earned a GED or H.S diploma, only include it if you do not have a 2-4 year degree and the job posting says the position requires that level of education. If you are attending a 2 or 4 year degree, there is no need to list your high school.

**Examples:**

**Associates Degree, Metropolitan Community College, Kansas City MO**

May 20xx

Or

**GED, Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO**

## **Resume Formatting Tips**

Effective formatting helps the reader scan your resume quickly. Formatting should be consistent throughout the document so that information is easy to find. Additional tips:

- Your resume should typically 1 page in length; 2 pages with graduate level degree or higher; highly specialized or academic positions may require a CV of 2+ pages with no limit.
- Use 10-12 point, easy to read font. Most utilized fonts include Calibri, Cambria, Times New Roman and Arial. Use consistent size and font.
- Use bolding, italics, all caps to make the important things stand out (Name, section headers, position titles, etc).

## **Items to Avoid on Your Resume**

There are several things to avoid in your resume. It is suggested to avoid the following items because they could be distracting, provide too much personal information, keep your resume from being read accurately by the applicant tracking system or are no longer used in the hiring process. Try to eliminate the following:

- Borders, shading, photos, graphics; Personal information such as age, birthdate, parental or marital status, gender identity, race, hobbies etc.
- Avoid listing groups of vague skills, such as “Good communication skills” or “strong team player.” Show excellent communication skills by talking about them the action statements in experience section.
- “References available upon request” and Objective Statements are no longer necessary; references belong on a second separate page.
- Avoid personal pronouns “I” “me” “my” etc.
- Templates are helpful to get an idea of formatting, but sometimes cannot be read by ATS systems.

## **Ways To Save Your Document**

Now that you have a start on your resume, it is important to save it in a place that is easily accessible for the future and in the right format.

- Microsoft Word Document (.doc or .docx) is best for uploading or attaching a resume to an online application.
- Plain Text (.txt) is best for copying and pasting a resume into the text boxes on an online application.
- Portable Document Format (.pdf) is best for emailing a resume directly to a hiring manager or human resources department. Note, some ATS systems cannot read PDFs.
- It is highly recommended to apply directly on the company’s website instead of posting a resume on job boards such as Indeed.
- Store your resume on a USB drive or in your Google Drive connected to your email so you can easily adjust it for future job applications.

# Resume Worksheet

## Header

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Qualification or Profile

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## Work Experience

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Skills & Accomplishments

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Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Skills & Accomplishments

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Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Skills & Accomplishments

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## Writing Effective Bullet Statements

Bullet statements convey your experiences, skills, and the impact you had on your previous place of employment. Strong bullet statements are one of the most important parts of an effective resume.

Ineffective	Effective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bussed tables</li> <li>• Took orders</li> <li>• Cleaned workstation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided excellent customer service by using strong communication and listening skills when taking guest orders</li> <li>• Utilized strong attention to detail when maintaining clean food preparation station according to health guidelines and regulations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operated forklift</li> <li>• Loaded trucks</li> <li>• Strong work ethic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipated operating needs by quickly loading machines to increase efficiency</li> <li>• Maintained operable and safe warehouse by keeping area clean; reduced rate of workplace accidents by 20%</li> <li>• Recognized as Employee of the Year for organization by demonstrating commitment to safety and efficiency</li> </ul>

Another formula is the Problem - Action - Result framework. For each task or responsibility, what problem were you seeking to address? What action did you take to address this problem? What were the results of your action? Once you have determined these answers, you can summarize the content into one (or more) statements.

Problem	Action	Result
Sidewalks needed snow removal and bushes needed pruned	Shoveled snow, cut grass, and bushes	Hotel guests were safe, hotel guests had a better experience because the property looked nice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Maintained exterior of hotel property during all seasons to provide a safe and welcoming environment for guests</i></li> </ul>		

Problem	Action	Result

## Skill + Experience Decoder

Some common positions are listed in the left-hand column. If you have ever held one of these types of jobs, you might have used some of the skills or have experience in the areas listed in the right-hand column. You can use these transferrable skills or experiences in your bullet statements that describe your employment experiences.

Job	Potential Transferrable Skills/ Words to use in descriptions
<b>Maintenance/Janitor/Housekeeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention to detail</li> <li>• Prioritizing safety/following safety guidelines</li> <li>• Adhering to policies and procedures</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Conflict Resolution</li> </ul>
<b>Warehouse Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizing safety/following safety guidelines</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Efficiency</li> </ul>
<b>Food preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food safety</li> <li>• Attention to detail</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Adhering to policies</li> <li>• Efficient in fast-paced environment</li> </ul>

### Types of Skills

There are different kinds of skills – hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are usually directly related to a specific type of job. Soft skills are skills that can be used in any type of job. Personality traits are important, but employers would rather learn about your hard skills and soft skills on an application and see evidence of your personality traits through your interview answers.

Hard Skill Examples	Soft Skill Examples	Personality Trait Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating tools and machines such as forklifts, power tools, etc.</li> <li>• Computer software knowledge</li> <li>• Operating a cash register</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated</li> <li>• Hardworking</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> <li>• Passionate</li> </ul>



# INTERVIEWING

## Preparation + Research

Preparing for your interview can help you give the best first impression and can increase your chances of getting a job offer. It is important to prepare possible answers to interview questions by reflecting on your previous experience. It is just as important to research the employer. Conducting research on the employer can help you show your interest and enthusiasm for the opportunity and help you convey that you are a great fit for the organization. There are several different types of interviews, so it is important to ask the recruiter what type of interview you will be participating in so you know what to expect.

## Types of Interview Questions

There are several types of interviewing questions. The most common types include behavioral or situation questions as well general questions such as *“Tell me about yourself,”* or *“Tell me about an area where you would like to improve.”*

Behavioral or situational type questions are asked by the interviewer because oftentimes, it is common that how you responded in the past will predict your future behavior. These questions often ask you to tell the interviewer about a previous experience. An example of a behavioral or situational interviewing question might be *“Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict?”* It is important to give an answer that has enough detail, but not too much information. There are two answering strategies to help you answer behavioral or situational interviewing questions: STAR and CAR. These strategies are acronyms that can help you remember your answers. Do your best to use examples from previous work experiences instead of examples from your personal life.

Situation – Task – Action – Result or Challenge – Action – Result

STAR Example

*Tell me about a time you had to solve a problem.*

Situation	I was working as a hotel receptionist and there was a situation where a room had been double booked. Guests had arrived at the check-in desk and we did not have a room available for them at that time.
Task	I checked all of our reservations using the online booking system and found that we did have a room available, but it was in the process of being cleaned.
Action	Then, I explained to the guests that we did have a room available, but it was not quite ready. I offered them a drink voucher for while they were waiting for their room to be ready. I also called my manager to ask if I could provide a small discount to compensate for their inconvenience and my manager agreed.
Result	I was able to get the guests checked-in and as a result of my excellent customer service the guests were pleased even though their stay started off with an inconvenience. The guests ended up leaving a positive review of the hotel online.

## Top interviewing tips

1. Consider the interview a meeting to determine if you and the employer want to work together. Come up with your “agenda” or list of what you want the employer to know about you and what you want to know about the job and the employer.
2. Brainstorm moments where you were proud of yourself, or moments where you faced a challenge at work. These moments will likely be good answers for multiple interviewing questions. Jot down these moments or stories in the STAR or CAR format.
3. Arrive and check-in 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of your interview; you may want to arrive earlier, but wait to check-in 15 minutes prior.
4. Bring a list of questions to ask the employer.

5. Practice interviewing with a friend, family member, or the Career Resources Specialist. You can use the commonly asked questions list on pg 13.
6. Prepare a list of questions (about 3-5) that you can ask the interviewer. Even if you do not truly have any questions, asking a few make you appear more interested and enthusiastic about the employer and the job than a candidate who does not ask questions. Good questions to ask the employer are listed on pg. 13.
7. Sometimes you might be asked a question in an interview that is illegal. Illegal job interview questions solicit information from job candidates that could be used to discriminate against them. Asking questions about a candidate's age, race, religion, or gender, parental status, disability status marital status, and other certain personal topics are not allowed, but sometimes do get asked. If asked a question directly about one of these topics, it is suggested to avoid a direct answer and instead respond firmly with something along the lines of *My (insert topic you were asked about here) does not impact my ability to do this job. How does (insert topic you were asked about here) impact my ability to do this job?* This approach allows you to avoid answering the question directly and guide the conversation back to your qualifications for the position.

## Commonly Asked Interview Questions

### Opening Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Describe yourself.

### Questions about your background

Why are you looking for a new job?

Why do you want this job?

### Questions about growth and feedback

What are your weaknesses?

What makes you uncomfortable?

What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?

### Questions about your strengths

What can you offer us that someone else can not?

Why should we hire you?

What are your strengths?

### Questions about your company/industry knowledge

Why are you interested in working for [insert company name here]?

What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?

### Questions about your ability to work with others

What are you looking for in a supervisor?

How would your co-workers describe you?

Are you a team player or do you prefer to work independently?

### Questions about your aspirations/motivations

What motivates you?

What are your career goals?

What are you most proud of?

### **Behavioral/Situational Questions**

Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.

Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.

How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?

Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project.

Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss. ?

How do you manage stress?

Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict.

Describe a time you persuaded someone to see things your way.

Tell me about a time you had to communicate with someone who you may not have liked personally.

Describe a situation where you had to learn something new in a short amount of time.

### **Closing Questions**

What questions haven't I asked you?

What questions do you have for me?

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER**

#### **Questions about the position**

What are your future plans for this job/position?

What types of skills are the team missing that you're looking to fill with a new hire?

What can you tell me about this job that isn't in the description?

What are the prospects for growth for the person in this job?

What hours are typically worked in a week for someone successful in this job? Is overtime expected or accepted?

What is a typical (day, week, month, or year) for a person in this job?

#### **Questions about the organization/company**

What is the key to success in this organization/company?

How is [insert current industry trend or challenge] impacting your organization?

When and how is feedback given to employees?

#### **Questions about the expectations**

What have past employees done to succeed in this position?

What are goals for this role during the first 30 days, 60 days, year?

What is the top priority for the person in this position over the next three months?

#### **Questions about the people and culture**

Which other departments work most closely with this one?

What are the qualities of successful managers in this company?

What have you enjoyed most about working here?

How would you describe the work environment here - is the work typically collaborative or more independent?

#### **Questions about the next steps**

When will you be back in touch with me?

With whom should I stay in touch?

When do you expect to make a hiring decision?

When do you anticipate the person in this job will start work?

Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful or do you have questions I can answer?

## **JOB SEEKER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

These organizations provide further individual assistance with your job search.

**Career Specialist- Kansas City Public Library** [kathleenkennedy@kclibrary.org](mailto:kathleenkennedy@kclibrary.org) 816-701-3663

**American Indian Council** *\*tribal registered* 310 Amour Rd., Suite 205, KCMO 64116 816-471-4898

**Bishop Sullivan Center** 3936 Troost Ave., KCMO 64110 816-561-8515

**Catholic Charities KCSJ-Workforce Development** 4001 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Suite 250, KCMO 64130 816-221-4377

**Community Services League** 404 North Noland Rd., Indep., MO 64050 816-254-4100

**Connections To Success** 300 W. Linwood Blvd., KCMO 64111 816-561-5115

**Full Employment Council** 1740 Paseo, KCMO 816-471-2330

**Goodwill of Western Mo. & Eastern Ks.** 800 E 18<sup>th</sup> St., KCMO 64110 816-842-7425

**Guadalupe Centers** 1512 Van Brunt Boulevard, KCMO 64127 816-561-6885

**Jewish Vocational Service** *\*refugee services* 4600 Paseo Blvd., KCMO 64110 816-471-2808

**Journey To New Life, Inc.** *\*reentry following prison release* 3120 Troost Ave., KCMO 64109 816-960-4808

**KCMCC Second Chance Program** *\*reentry following prison release* 3100 Broadway, Suite 302, KCMO 816-231-0450

**Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation** *\*on disability or pending* 615 E. 13<sup>th</sup> St., Rm. 409, KCMO 64106 816-889-2677

**University Health – Truman Employment Services** *\*behavioral health* 300 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Ter., KCMO 64108 816-404-6270

**Urban League** 1710 Paseo Blvd., KCMO 64108 816-471-0550

**Women’s Employment Network** 4328 Madison Ave., KCMO 64111 816-822-8083

**Workforce Partnership - Wyandotte County** 626 Minnesota Ave., KCMO 66101 913-279-2600

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