

**TEXAS**

# **JOB HUNTER'S GUIDE**



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Texas Workforce Commission

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice)

# READY, SET...

So you're looking for a job. You may think you're "unemployed," but you're not. You're going to be working very hard until you find your next job. You just won't get paid for it! The truth is, you already work for a company. It's called Me, Inc. You are its founder, CEO and only full-time employee. You will run this company your entire working life. Today you're just hunting for a paying client.

"I'm not self-employed," you may protest. Well, you might as well be. Today you can expect to change jobs, even careers, several times during your working life. The only constant in this picture is you! So think like a small business owner—the owner of Me, Inc.—even when you have a job. As the table below shows, you're probably doing it a bit already.

Embrace the idea that you need to job hunt all the time, even when you have a job. "View your job search as part of your professional work experience, not an interruption of it," advises career consultant Barbara Adler. It's a cycle, as the graphic on page 2 illustrates. And this booklet guides you every step of the way!

**HELPFUL HINT**

Me, Inc. is just a term to remind you that you must take responsibility for your career. No one else will. Just fill in your name—Juan or Sara, Inc. or whatever. Me, Inc. is you!

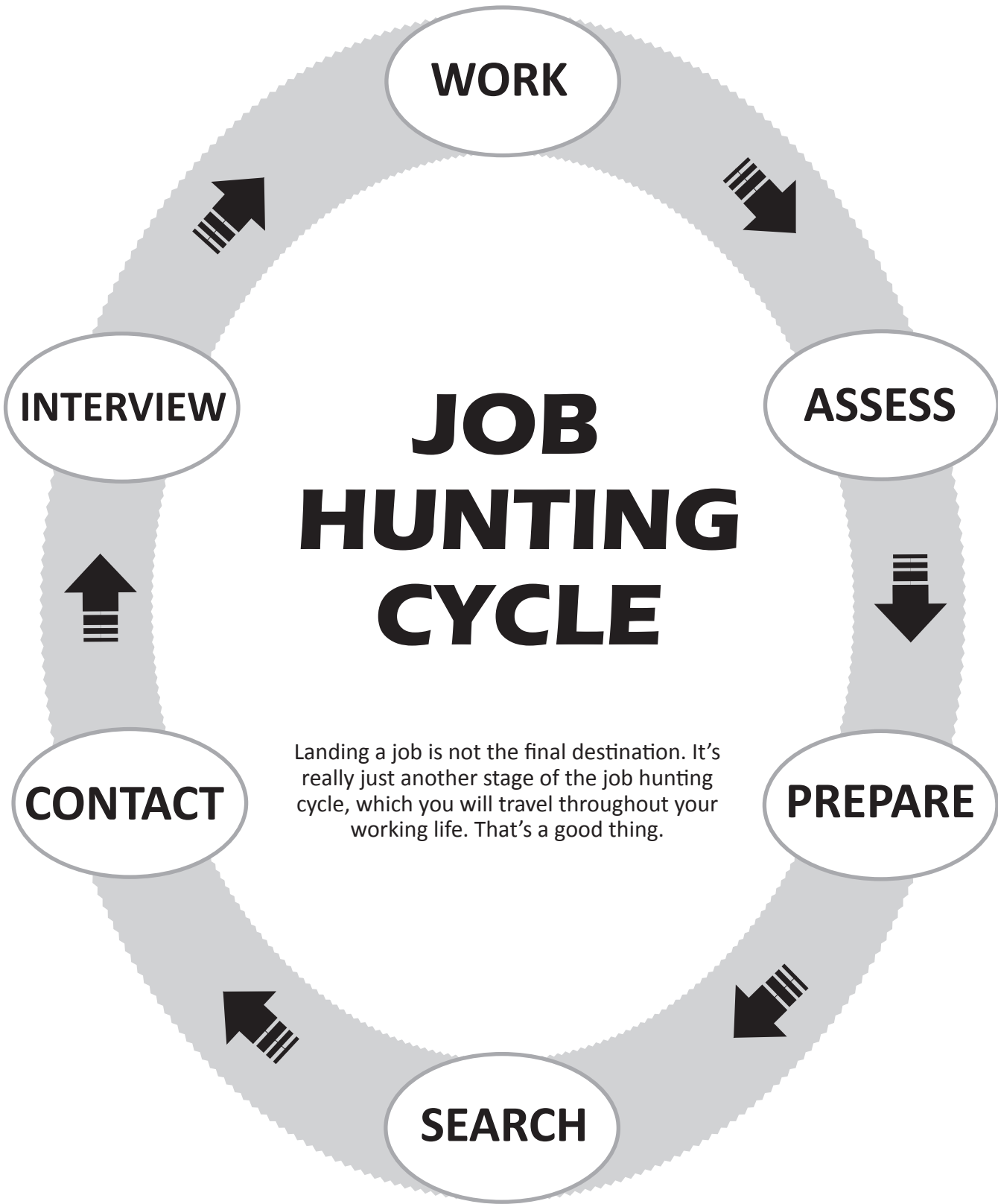
From this new perspective, each job becomes more than a way to earn a paycheck. It's an opportunity to increase your skills and knowledge and value to employers. It's also a chance to build relationships with coworkers who may help you find your next job. By thinking like Me, Inc., you ensure lifelong employability—the ability to find work easily. That's good because no one is guaranteed a job for life anymore.

## COMPARING TODAY'S WORKERS WITH BUSINESS OWNERS

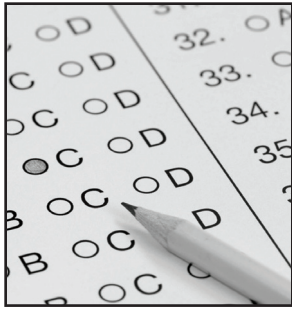
The Me, Inc. concept is relevant because today's workers already operate like small business owners. Or they should! Here's how the two compare:

<b>Business Owner</b>	<b>Today's Worker (You!)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realizes that there is no "job security;" that hard work and continual learning are the only security to be had.</li> <li>Has customers/clients: the public and/or other companies.</li> <li>Provides customers with goods and services in exchange for money.</li> <li>Keeps customers happy by providing good service.</li> <li>Regularly improves services to please customers.</li> <li>May lose customers through no fault of their own.</li> <li>Attracts new customers through marketing campaigns that include ads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realizes that there is no "job security;" that hard work and continual learning are the only security to be had.</li> <li>Has customers/clients: supervisors, coworkers and others</li> <li>Provides employer with skills and knowledge in exchange for pay and benefits.</li> <li>Keeps employer/customers happy by providing good service.</li> <li>Regularly improves skills and knowledge to please employer.</li> <li>May get laid off through no fault of their own.</li> <li>Attracts new employers (jobs) through marketing campaigns that include résumés and interviews.</li> </ul>









# STEP ONE: ASSESS YOURSELF

- Identify Assets, Deficits
- Prepare Portfolio
- Develop Résumé
- Target Specific Jobs

Job hunting begins with an assessment. You have to know what type of job you want before you can find it. And you have to assess yourself and your situation to know what job you want.

It's like an inventory that a business takes. You see what you've got, what you need, what works and what doesn't. Instead of widgets, though, you're examining your skills, knowledge, abilities, interests, needs and character.

Self-assessment can be done in many ways. First, you can do exercises, such as those on the following pages. You also can take formal tests or use computer programs that match your qualifications with specific jobs.

Next, create your career portfolio (page 10) and your résumé (page 11). Both require you to assess your history; list your achievements, experience and education; and to compile evidence or examples of each. This process will help you better understand the type of work you can do best. In addition, you'll get a head start on preparing for future interviews.

By the time you complete Step One, you will know what jobs interest you. You will also realize what you can offer employers and what skills, knowledge and experience you may need to gain.

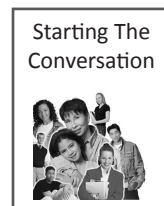
Only then can you move on to Step Two and prepare for the hunt!

The Texas Workforce Commission offers many free or inexpensive products to help you do your career self assessment. Here are a few examples:

**Texas CARES** ([www.TexasCARESONline.com](http://www.TexasCARESONline.com)) is a career exploration website that offers a wealth of Texas-specific occupational and educational information. It also provides a number of assessments that allow you to view occupations that match your interests and needs.



**Starting the Conversation** is an informative handbook for parents and students, describing the worlds of work and education. It even includes a special copy of Texas CARES.



You can use another product, the **Career Success** newspaper, to quickly and easily assess yourself. Just read the hundreds of job descriptions it lists and identify ten that interest you. Then explore those ten further.



For more information or to place an order, visit [www.lmci.state.tx.us](http://www.lmci.state.tx.us) or call 1-800-822-PLAN. Also, check with your local high school, community college or One Stop Workforce center; they may provide free access to Texas CARES.

## EXERCISE 1: CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

Employers want employees with certain positive characteristics. This exercise assesses your character to identify to what degree you have those qualities. It then becomes a blueprint to help you make yourself more employable.

For each quality, HONESTLY indicate whether you are that way rarely, sometimes or often. *When you interview for jobs, stress the qualities you marked “often.” Before you interview, improve on those you marked “rarely!”*

Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Characteristic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Follow</b> Do you take direction cheerfully and accurately? Do you support your supervisor or team leader?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Lead</b> Do people follow your suggestions? Have you held positions of responsibility?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Learn</b> Do you turn mistakes into learning opportunities? Can you understand, remember and synthesize information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Listen</b> Do you listen closely to others? Do you strive to understand them without rushing to state your opinion or defense?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Remember</b> Do you recall names, places, figures and ideas accurately?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Able to Work Alone</b> Do you plan your own work? Can you work without supervision or reminders?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ambitious</b> Do you take on extra assignments? Do you try to reach new levels of achievement?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Articulate</b> Can you express ideas easily, both verbally and in writing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cheerful</b> Are you friendly to customers and coworkers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Competent</b> Do you meet deadlines? Is your work thorough?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Conscientious</b> Do you do a full day’s work? Do you double-check your work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cooperative</b> Do you volunteer to help? Do you do your part on teams?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Courageous</b> Do you take on challenges and stand up for your beliefs?

Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Characteristic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Creative</b> Do you come up with new ideas? Do you look for possibilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Decisive</b> Can you make decisions under pressure?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dependable</b> Do people trust you? Is your attendance good?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Diplomatic</b> Can you handle difficult situations with grace and tact?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Discreet</b> Can you keep secrets? Do you guard confidentiality? Do you avoid gossip or interfering in others’ business?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Efficient</b> Do you plan your time well? Do you try to work faster and better?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Emotionally Stable</b> Do you maintain self-control, staying even-tempered and cool?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Empathetic</b> Do you understand others’ problems? Are you sensitive to others’ feelings and circumstances?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Enthusiastic</b> Are you interested in and excited by your work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Flexible</b> Do you embrace change? Can you adapt well to new situations or challenges?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Focused</b> Do you focus on work despite personal challenges? Do you avoid distractions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Generous</b> Do you share ideas and credit with others? Do you help those who need it? Do you focus on the common good?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Honest</b> Do you tell the truth? Do you avoid using company materials for personal use? Do you give credit and accept blame honestly?

## EXERCISE 2: JOB VALUES INVENTORY

This exercise helps you identify which job qualities you value most.

Rank each item from 1 to 12 with 1 being most important and 12 least. Use all 12 numbers: no “ties.” Place a star next to the top 5 qualities you selected.

Once you begin exploring job possibilities, focus only on jobs that meet your standards on these five criteria.

- | Rarely<br>Sometimes<br>Often   | Characteristic   |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Industrious</b><br>Do you work hard and to the best of your ability?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Loyal</b><br>Do you strive to be a good representative of the company? Do you avoid doing or saying things that make it look bad?                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Observant</b><br>Do you look for what needs to be done or could be improved?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Organized</b><br>Are you neat? Do you plan and arrange things logically?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Patient</b><br>Can you keep your temper and stay calm under pressure?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Persistent</b><br>Can you stick with difficult and time-consuming tasks?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Persuasive</b><br>Can you sell ideas and products?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Proactive</b><br>Do you address issues before they become full-blown conflicts or problems? Do you make plans that avoid potential pitfalls?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Resourceful</b><br>Can you work your way out of difficult situations?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Responsible</b><br>Do you admit mistakes, correct them and accept the consequences with good grace? Do you treat your job as you would your own business? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Sober</b><br>Do drugs and alcohol affect your work?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Thrifty</b><br>Do you avoid wasting supplies and equipment?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Tolerant</b><br>Are you open-minded? Do you associate with different types of people?   |

*Adapted from Opening Doors: A Practical Guide for Job Hunting by Jane Goodman, Judith Hoppin and Ronal Kent*

\_\_\_ Good salary

\_\_\_ Good benefits (insurance, retirement, etc.)

\_\_\_ Job security

\_\_\_ Work hours that meet your needs

\_\_\_ Satisfactory location

\_\_\_ Compatible coworkers, supervisors, customers

\_\_\_ Opportunity to learn and develop skills

\_\_\_ Challenging and satisfying work

\_\_\_ Good working conditions / environment

\_\_\_ Like / believe in what the organization does

\_\_\_ Chance for promotion / advancement

\_\_\_ Prestige and respect

*Adapted from Inservice Model for Strengthening Secondary Teachers Skills in Career Counseling, Texas A&M University-Commerce*



## EXERCISE 3: APTITUDE ASSESSMENT

This exercise helps you assess your aptitudes, which are abilities that you naturally have. They may or may not be developed into full-fledged skills.

For each item, list whether you think others would rate your aptitude as high (H), medium (M) or low (L).

Search for jobs, such as those listed below, that require your high aptitude tasks. Avoid work for which you have low aptitude.

### Finger dexterity

The ability to move fingers rapidly and to accurately manipulate small objects. Used in playing guitar, doing puzzles and sewing on buttons. Related occupations include Jeweler, Photographer, Plumber and Tailor.

### Motor coordination

The ability to use eyes and arms/hands and legs/feet rapidly and accurately in precise movements. Used in playing football, moving furniture and dancing. Related occupations include Hairdresser, Athlete, Machinist and Carpenter.

### Form perception

The ability to see detail in objects, such as the shapes of figures and widths/lengths of lines. Used in making sketches, sorting differently-sized nails and measuring areas by sight. Related occupations include Architect, Artist, Surveyor and Mechanic.

### Spatial perception

The ability to understand forms in space and their relationships. Used in reading blueprints, solving geometric problems and planning where to place furniture in a room. Related occupations include Interior Designer, Drafter, Engineer and Air Traffic Controller.

### Clerical perception

The ability to identify detail in written or verbal material containing words or numbers. Used in taking telephone messages, proofreading letters and checking bank statements. Related occupations include Bookkeeper, Editor and Teller.

### General learning

The ability to “catch on,” to understand, reason and make judgments. Used in memorizing facts, making decisions and reading instructions. Related occupations include Musician, Historian and Teacher.

### Numerical

The ability to perform arithmetical work quickly and accurately. Used in balancing a checkbook, estimating food prices and figuring interest rates. Related occupations include Budget Analyst, Nuclear Engineer, Bookkeeper and Loan Officer.

### Verbal

The ability to understand meanings of words and associated ideas and use them effectively. Used in making speeches, giving messages and writing reports. Related occupations include Clergy, Counselor, Marketing Manager and Sales Reps.

## EXERCISE 4: SKILLS ASSESSMENT

This exercise assesses your skills. Skills are aptitudes that you’ve put into practice and improved. There are two types. Transferable skills apply to a wide variety of jobs. Technical skills are more highly specialized.

Identify the skills that others would agree you possess. For those that you would enjoy using regularly, check whether your skill level is high, medium or low.

Search for the type of work that requires your high level skills. Increase your transferable skills; they give you more job options. To see more skills that you might have, use the Texas CARES software (page 3).

### Transferable Skills

Low	Medium	High		Low	Medium	High	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	fixing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	public speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	observing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	teaching
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	lifting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	remembering
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	creating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	listening
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mediating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	managing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	inspecting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	figuring
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	typing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interpreting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	persuading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	critically thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	directing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	comparing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	proofing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	leading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	doing math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	predicting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	organizing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	researching
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	taking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	selling
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	sorting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	communicating				

### Technical Skills

Low	Medium	High		Low	Medium	High	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	painting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	fitting eyeglasses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	roofing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	processing X-rays
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	cutting glass
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	plastering walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	installing carpets
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	helping patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	driving a backhoe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	arranging flowers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	caring for a child
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recording sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	driving a truck
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	trimming trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	farming
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	testing water purity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	playing an instrument
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	reading blueprints				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	welding				

## LIVING WITHIN YOUR MEANS

“Living within our means” is absolutely vital when you’re between jobs and don’t have much savings to tide you over. It means spending only what you have and saving up to buy items that you can’t currently afford. It means relying on loans only to pay large-ticket items, such as a house or car. It means paying credit card bills in full each month. If you haven’t been living this way, now’s the time to start. When you’re job hunting, you curb your spending!

### WHAT TO AVOID

Don’t go on a spending spree! During tough times, some people think “I’m going to have financial troubles anyway; I might as well buy that DVD player I’ve been wanting!”

Don’t do that! When you’re in a hole, look for a way out; don’t dig yourself in deeper!

### HOW TO LIVE RESPONSIBLY

Here are some suggestions to help you responsibly live within your means when you don’t have (or may soon lose) your main source of income:

- Do identify your financial needs using Exercise 5.
- Don’t waste your time pursuing occupations that can’t meet your bottom-line financial needs.
- Do cut down on non-essential expenses such as entertainment.
- Do continue to set aside a little money for fun.
- Do postpone expenses whenever possible, especially major purchases such as new furniture.
- Do take care of all critical needs, such as illness and car repair.
- Don’t buy gifts; give of your time and talents instead.
- Don’t use your credit card or take out a loan unless you have the money to pay it off immediately.

### HELPFUL HINT

Don’t forget to consider taxes when you’re deciding how much your next job needs to pay. A great resource to help you plan for the future is the website Texas Reality Check. Reality Check helps you understand the connection between the lifestyle you want and the importance of your education. Texas Reality Check can tell you how much money you will have to make to live the way you want. Check out [www.texasrealitycheck.com](http://www.texasrealitycheck.com) and explore your future!



### EXERCISE 5: FINANCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This exercise identifies your current financial needs. Seek only jobs that cover your financial needs AND the taxes you’ll need to pay.

Expense	Cost / Month
Rent or mortgage	\$ _____
Electricity	\$ _____
Home gas and water	\$ _____
Telephone/mobile phone	\$ _____
Home insurance	\$ _____
Cable/satellite	\$ _____
Car payment	\$ _____
Car insurance	\$ _____
Gasoline	\$ _____
Car maintenance	\$ _____
Food (restaurants, etc.)	\$ _____
Food (at home)	\$ _____
Household supplies	\$ _____
Clothing and footwear	\$ _____
Self-care (haircuts, makeup)	\$ _____
Entertainment	\$ _____
Laundry/dry cleaning	\$ _____
Medical (doctor visits, meds)	\$ _____
Medical/life insurance	\$ _____
Debt and loan payments	\$ _____
Child support/alimony, etc.	\$ _____
Savings	\$ _____
Miscellaneous	\$ _____
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

**THIS IS THE MINIMUM TAKE-HOME PAY YOU NEED.**

Taxes (Total Expenses X 1.175) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS IS THE MINIMUM MONTHLY WAGE YOU NEED.**

(This formula works if you are in the 15-percent tax bracket. For other brackets or an explanation of this formula, select Texas Job Hunter’s Guide at <http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp>.)



## EXERCISE 6: INTEREST ASSESSMENT

When your job matches your interests, you are more likely to be happy and successful there. This exercise suggests jobs you might enjoy based on what you enjoy doing.

The activities are grouped under six categories. Read over all six. Check the activities and interests that you enjoy and consider yourself good at. Then pick ONE activity group that has the most checks.

Consider working in one of the occupations listed in that category. They just might suit you!

### THINK AND ASK QUESTIONS

#### Do you like to...

- Work independently
- Use computers
- Perform lab experiments
- Read technical journals
- Analyze data
- Do research
- Be challenged
- Understand theories

#### Can you...

- Think abstractly
- Understand scientific theories
- Do complex calculations
- Use computers at a more than casual-user level
- Solve math problems
- Use a microscope
- Interpret formulas

#### Then you might make a good ...

- Marine Engineer & Naval Architect
- Agricultural Scientist
- Financial Manager
- Forensic Scientist
- Chemical Engineer
- Petroleum Engineer
- Fire Investigator
- Judge
- Economist
- Accountant
- Editor
- Meteorologist
- Police Detective
- Optometrist
- Pharmacist
- Oral Surgeon

### TAKE ACTION

#### Do you like to ...

- Work outdoors
- Use your hands
- Tinker with machines/vehicles
- Work on electronic equipment
- Be physical
- Go camping
- Build things
- Tend/train animals

#### Can you...

- Fix electronic things
- Solve mechanical problems
- Read a blueprint
- Operate tools and machinery
- Set up camp
- Play a sport
- Plant a garden

#### Then you might make a good...

- Computer Operations Technician
- Truck Driver/Heavy Tractor Trailer Operator
- Welder
- Electrical Engineering Technician
- Health Information Technician
- Industrial Machinery Mechanic
- Aviation & Service Technician
- Plumber/HVAC Mechanic
- Barber or Hairdresser
- Cement Mason
- Roofer
- Dental Hygienist
- Court Reporter
- Graphic Designer
- Construction Laborer
- Athlete

### CREATE THINGS

#### Do you like to ...

- Read fiction, plays, poetry
- Express yourself creatively
- Deal with ambiguous ideas
- Attend concerts, theaters, art exhibits
- Work on crafts
- Take photographs

#### Can you ...

- Sketch, draw, paint, sing, act, dance
- Play a musical instrument
- Write stories, poetry, music
- Design fashions
- Design interiors

#### Then you might make a good ...

- Multimedia Animator/ Graphic Designer
- Architectural Engineer
- Dance Choreographer
- Marketing Manager
- Landscape Architect
- Website Designer
- Actor/Singer
- Fashion Designer
- Cosmetologist
- Interior Designer
- Jeweler
- Make-up Artist
- Floral Designer
- Culinary Chef
- Music Composer or Musician

**I think I like to:**

---

## PERSUADE PEOPLE

**Do you like to ...**

- Meet influential people
- Win competitions or contests
- Make decisions affecting others
- Start your own service or business
- Campaign politically
- Be elected to office
- Be recognized as an expert or leader

**Can you ...**

- Sell things or promote ideas
- Give talks or speeches
- Convince people to do things or think your way
- Initiate projects
- Lead a group

**Then you might make a good ...**

- Personal Financial Advisor
- Market Research Analyst
- Public Relation Specialist
- Radio and TV Announcer
- Advertising Promoter
- Property Manager
- Insurance Agent
- Corporate Lawyer
- Real Estate Broker
- District Attorney
- Political Lobbyist
- Salesperson
- Coach
- Legislator
- Grant Writer

## HELP OTHERS

**Do you like to ...**

- Help people with problems
- Participate in meetings
- Work with young people
- Work in groups
- Do volunteer work
- Serve others

**Can you ...**

- Cooperate well with others
- Express yourself clearly
- Plan and supervise activities
- Media disputes
- Teach/train others
- Lead a discussion

**Then you might make a good ...**

- Customer Service Representative
- Physical Therapist/ Funeral Director
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Interpreter/Translator
- Registered Nurse
- Social Worker
- Paramedic
- Psychologist
- Chiropractor
- Firefighter
- Teacher
- Physician
- Counselor
- Veterinarian

## ORGANIZE

**Do you like to ...**

- Collect or organize things
- Be responsible for details
- Follow clearly defined procedures
- Work with numbers
- Type/use computers
- Build things

**Can you ...**

- Work well within a system
- Keep accurate records
- Write effective business letters
- Use a computer
- Organize a room
- Do paperwork quickly

**Then you might make a good ...**

- Training and Development Manager
- Nursing Instructor/Teacher
- Administrative Assistant
- Human Resources Manager
- Management Analyst
- Postal Service Worker
- Construction Manager
- School Superintendent
- Material Mover
- Air Traffic Controller
- Financial Planner
- City Manager
- School Principal
- Urban Planner

## Prepare Portfolio

Your portfolio collects examples of your work and training, usually in book form. Compiling your portfolio helps you assess your past achievements and experience, which will help you determine what types of jobs to seek in the future. Creating your portfolio also helps prepare you for job interviews, where you'll show it to employers. In most cases, a physical portfolio is best but for some occupations, a web portfolio (see page 42) is better.

### BENEFITS OF HAVING A PORTFOLIO

During a job interview, your portfolio makes you stand out from the competition.

- Employers will be impressed that you prepared.
- Employers will see you really want the job.
- Employers will believe you can do the work.
- Employers will remember you.

### HOW IT SHOULD LOOK

Your portfolio can be very simple:

- Use a new three-ring binder.
- Keep the cover clean—no doodling.
- Put pages in sheet protectors.
- Have a table of contents (see right).
- Divide sections with tabs—you'll find pages easily.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

Include only relevant material in your portfolio.

- Stick with work-related items; it's not a scrapbook.
- Use items that bring your résumé to life.
- Highlight items related closely to the job you want.
- Bring copies of material for the interviewer to keep.
- Include relevant volunteer and other activities.

### HOW TO USE YOUR PORTFOLIO

Your portfolio represents your work and it's valuable. Treat it with respect!

- Never send it with your résumé.
- During the interview, show examples related to the discussion; don't go through it page by page.
- Put it away if the interviewer seems uninterested.
- Never leave it with the employer.

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### Achievements

Customer evaluations/comments	p. 3
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Awards	p. 7
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### Education

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### Sample of Work

Before/after repair photos	p. 15
Work schedule (shows speed)	p. 21
Writing sample	p. 17
Spreadsheet (math ability)	p. 19



## Résumé Achievement Statements

Résumé writing is an important part of the assessment process. Your résumé, like your portfolio, is essentially a list of your achievements. It requires you to review all that you've done so far. Creating and reviewing your achievements reveals your strengths. It also prepares you for interviews.

### LIST YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Think about your past jobs, extracurricular activities and volunteer work. Jog your memory by asking:

- What can I do better than anyone else?
- When did I take the initiative?
- Was I promoted? How often?
- Did I win awards, e.g., Employee of the Month?
- Did I get good performance reviews?
- Have I received complimentary letters from customers or coworkers?
- Have I produced anything tangible (e.g., a publication or product)?
- Did I finish a major project on time and under budget?
- Did I start some system that improved efficiency?
- Did I participate in my company's employee suggestion program?
- Have I saved the company time or money?
- Did I work with someone important, e.g., the vice president of company?
- What are the 10 greatest accomplishments of my life and what skills did I use to achieve them?
- Was I recognized for excellent attendance?
- Did I file all the forms daily so that there was no backlog?
- Did I complete tasks in less time than expected?

### WRITE YOUR STATEMENTS

Now comes the actual writing process. Use the CAR method to arrange your sentences. Each sentence should contain these three components:

- **Challenge:** a problem or opportunity
- **Action:** what steps you took to meet the challenge
- **Results:** what happened (using dollars, time, percentages or amounts)

Your achievement statements should be brief and always begin with an action word, as the examples in the box below illustrate.

### EXAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT STATEMENTS

Here are some examples of achievement statements. Notice how using numbers gives them more impact.

- Developed a new employee orientation program that 100 percent of the company locations adopted.
- Responded to over 85 customer calls daily and solved 90 percent of their concerns.
- Submitted over 500 construction bids annually and was awarded 90 percent of the contracts.
- Served customers in a positive way, receiving two customer service awards in the past year.
- Assisted credit manager in account collection by phone and mail, increasing accounts receivables by 20 percent.
- Co-chaired a series of blood drives in the local area, netting over 1200 units of usable blood.
- Created a multimedia campaign that increased enrollment by 700 students in eight years.

*For a list of action words to use in your achievement statements, other résumé resources and résumé examples, select Texas Job Hunter's Guide at <http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp>.*



## Résumé Guidelines

Your résumé advertises your achievements. Like a commercial, it has to gain an employer's interest in 15 seconds or less. Its sole purpose is to get you an interview. If you follow the guidelines below, you will compose an attention-grabbing résumé and complete your self-assessment process at the same time.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Following these résumé writing guidelines will make your résumé appealing to employers.

- Begin by writing your achievement statements (see page 11 for instructions).
- Be honest: don't lie or inflate accomplishments.
- Emphasize skills needed for the position you seek. (For more about researching the job, see page 49.)
- Write it yourself; it's a sample of your work.
- Don't include everything you've ever done.

### TYPES

There are three basic types of résumés:

- Functional: focuses on skill groupings; good for first-time workers and career changers
- Chronological: focuses on the progression of jobs and assignments over time; good for most workers
- Combination: combines the two other types

### HOW TO USE IT

Once your résumé is complete, submit it properly.

- Always include a cover letter with it (see page 37).
- Attach it to application forms you submit.
- Send it only to targeted employers and contacts; mass mailings waste time.
- Send it only for jobs for which you are at least 70 percent qualified.
- Don't attach transcripts, recommendations or photos.
- Don't use it for quick-turnover, low-skill jobs such as Fast Food Servers or Laborers.
- Bring extra copies of it to each interview.
- Always follow-up with a phone call (see page 41).

### BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

Mistakes or sloppiness on your résumé can cost you jobs. Take these steps before you send it to employers:

- Read it out loud—EVERY word.
- Ask a friend to read it CAREFULLY.



### WHY BE HONEST?

Your résumé, like all information you give a prospective employer, should be accurate and honest. Here's why:

- It's the right thing to do.
- It shows your integrity as a person.
- Most employers check what you say.
- You won't get hired if employers think that you inflated your achievements and abilities.
- You set yourself up to fail if you get hired based on qualifications and experience that you don't have.



## THE WORDS

Your résumé's language and words are critical.

- Avoid complete sentences.
- Don't use articles such as "an," "a" and "the."
- Don't use pronouns such as "I," "me" or "my."
- Skip "responsible for" and "duties include."
- Include "buzz words," e.g., AUTOCAD for Drafters or "chip" for Marketing Managers.
- Avoid jargon that the reader won't understand.

## THE CONTENT

Your résumé should contain (and avoid) certain types of information. Here are some do's and don't's.

- Do list city and state for each employer you've had.
- Do list months and years for employment dates.
- Do list jobs starting with current or most recent and moving backwards whatever your résumé format.
- Do list your participation in activities that involve teamwork, such as sports.
- Do focus only on the past ten to fifteen years.
- Don't explain why you left jobs.
- Don't repeat information.
- Don't include personal information such as age, height, weight, marital status, religion or politics.
- Don't mention skills that you don't want to use.
- Don't mention high school unless you just left it.
- Do always tailor your résumé based on your research of the company and the job you seek.

## THE LOOK

Your résumé should look:

- professional—on white or very light bond paper;
- clean—no smudges or stains;
- uncluttered—lots of blank space on it;
- serious—with plain fonts, such as Times Roman;
- unique—not the typical computer template;
- easy to read—with bullet points, not paragraphs;
- well-organized—with main points at top of page;
- well-spaced—without justified text blocks;
- flat—no staples and, if possible, no creases;
- brief—one page if under ten years' experience.



## DOES YOUR RÉSUMÉ PASS THE TEST?

Kim Isaacs of monster.com advises you to ask yourself three questions before you send out your résumé:

1. Can the reader see your main skills within ten to fifteen seconds?
2. Does important information grab the reader's attention?
3. Do you "sell yourself" well on the top quarter of the page?

If not, go back to the drawing board!



## Example Résumé

Tammy is a recent graduate with a short work history. She has no direct office experience, but this FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ shows that she has the necessary skills for the job she seeks.

Put your objective on the résumé or in your cover letter. Be specific. Here Tammy uses the actual job title for the position she wants. *Each job requires a new objective.*

**TAMMY HERNANDEZ**  
1234 Avenue A  
Big City, Texas 77777 111-222-3333

### OBJECTIVE

Seeking position as a bilingual office assistant.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- Speak and write Spanish fluently
- Outstanding technical, customer service and organizational skills

### EDUCATION

Associate Degree in Business, Texas Community College, June 2015  
GPA 3.70

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Access, Excel and PowerPoint on Windows or Mac
- Tested at typing speed of 60 words per minute

### CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

- Earned tips averaging 20 percent because of friendly, courteous and prompt service in a pressure-filled environment
- Selected to train new hires because of communication and leadership abilities
- Recognized for ability to calm and assist irate customers
- Had choice of assignments as most sought-after babysitter in the neighborhood

### ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

- Oversaw production of monthly newsletter, meeting every deadline
  - Coordinated activities for children, ensuring that they ate, played and studied according to their parents' specifications
- Managed finances for own business, from fee setting to tax paying

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Waiter	Sam's Diner, Big City, Texas	April 2012 to August 2013
Babysitter	Self-employed	2008 to present

### VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

Assistant Editor	West Texas High School Gazette	Sept. 2012 to May 2013
Treasurer	Spanish Club	Sept. 2012 to May 2013

**Responsible, dependable and hard-working**

Notice how the bulleted achievement statements support the summary of qualifications at the top. Well organized and easy to read, this résumé puts Tammy among those candidates worthy of an interview.

Add a strong ending: people remember what's at the top and the bottom of a page. There's no need to mention references here.

# Final Analysis

The last stage of the assessment process requires you to analyze all you've learned. Your experience with completing assessments, compiling your portfolio and creating your first résumé should have given you an idea of what type of job to seek. The SWOT Analysis and Gap Analysis will help you decide if this is the work for you.

## DO A SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis addresses every area of your career situation. As the box below reveals, SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and it helps you see if the job you seek is a good match and a good idea. If it's not, pick another!

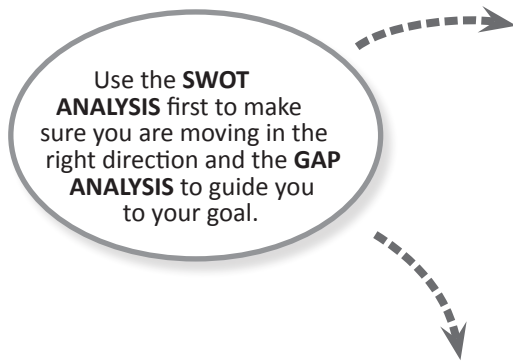
First, compare your personal strengths and weaknesses with the job requirements. You don't have to be an exact match but you need to be fairly close.

Next, identify challenges and opportunities in your career area. For example, will this occupation soon disappear as technological advances render it obsolete? If so, choose another job type! You can get information about occupational challenges and opportunities from Texas CARES (see page 3 for details). If the job type seems promising, do a Gap Analysis.

## FILL IN THE GAPS

Use what you learned in the SWOT analysis to focus on the part you have control over: personal weaknesses, especially those that education and training can improve. If, for instance, the job you want is viable but you lack certain skills that it requires, develop an action plan to help you attain them. If you lack personal characteristics, such as honesty, begin working TODAY to improve yourself. Use the Gap Analysis and Action Plan as your guide.

Be realistic. If the gap between your strengths and the job requirements is great, focus on other work in the short term. You can train for that other job later on.



SWOT ANALYSIS		
<b>INTERNAL</b> you can control	<b>Strengths</b> you have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills, knowledge, abilities</li> <li>• work experience</li> <li>• positive characteristics</li> <li>• network of connections</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> you have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of certain skills, etc.</li> <li>• lack of certain experience</li> <li>• negative characteristics</li> <li>• lack of goals and/or education</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL</b> you can't control	<b>Opportunities</b> in your career field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• likelihood of job growth</li> <li>• chances to increase skills</li> <li>• chances for advancement</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> in your career field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• likelihood of downsizing</li> <li>• amount of competition for jobs</li> <li>• dead-end type of work</li> </ul>

GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN					
Employer Needs (job requirements)	I Have (skills, knowledge)	Gaps (difference)	Action Needed (steps to bridge gap)	Who Can Help? (people I know)	Timeframe (start/finish)
e.g. know spreadsheet software	know only word processing	software knowledge	enroll in short course at community college	Silvia will babysit while I'm at class	June 5-July 8

**The type of job I'm looking for is:**

---

## MARKETING YOURSELF

The services you provide as Me, Inc. constitute your product, and you need to market that product just as every company does. You begin by developing your own “blurb” and making sure that everyone knows what you represent.

### DEVELOP YOUR “BLURB”

On TV, companies have 30 seconds or less to convince you to buy their products. That’s why they devise catchy phrases—“blurbs”—that remind you who they are.

You have even LESS time to convince someone to give you an interview or even information that might lead to an interview. So, like any business, you need a short “blurb” or catch-phrase to describe your “product,” too.

This blurb should be a quick sentence stating what you have to offer and what you’re looking for.

- What you have to offer are your strongest skills and your most valuable character traits. Focus on what makes you unique and what you do best.
- What you’re looking for refers to the type of job and the type of company where you want to work.

Since your blurb is your advertisement. It should be brief, interesting, memorable and repeated often!

### BROADCAST YOUR “BLURB”

Like a great commercial that never airs, your blurb is useless if you don’t share it with people. Practice saying your blurb until it’s comfortable and natural sounding. Here are some suggestions:

- Speak confidently. Don’t sound embarrassed or shy when you talk about yourself.
- Say it often. Tell it to every friend and family member within earshot and then tell it to every new person you meet.
- Ask for information. When you say your blurb, ask your listeners if they know anyone who might have information that could help you.

You can market yourself most effectively if you see that many of the steps in job hunting are just ways to spread your blurb message. Your cover letters, résumés, personal appearance, telephone manner and interview style all should reinforce your blurb.

### BENEFITS OF THE BLURB

Here’s what happened when Deanne met Laura at a party and asked what Laura did for a living.

Laura did not give her usual response, which was to reply in an “it’s not important” way that she was an office manager looking for work. If she had, Deanne might have thought that Laura was unhappy and maybe needed help finding a job, maybe not. If Deanne knew of any office manager jobs available, she might’ve mentioned it—but that’s all she would have mentioned.

Instead, Laura stated her blurb in an assertive but casual manner. “Well I’m an office manager, which is good because I’m organized and enjoy leading. I’m actually looking for a management position with a small, high-tech company. So if you know anyone who works in that type of company, I’m all ears.” She instantly stimulated many more suggestions and actively invited feedback.

It turns out that Deanne knew of jobs other than office management that might suit Laura. She also had a friend who worked at an Internet company who might prove helpful. And she told Laura all about it.

Sharing your blurb as Laura did is marketing. It’s that simple. And that important!

*“I’m an office manager, which is good because I’m organized and enjoy leading. I’m actually looking for a management position with a small, high-tech company.”*



# STEP TWO: PREPARE

- OFFICE MATERIALS
- WARDROBE
- REFERENCES
- SUPPORT SYSTEM

In Step One, you identified what kind of job you want and what skills and experience you can offer. Now it's time to prepare for the hunt. That means getting yourself organized, supported and interview-ready. There's no sense running around to find employers when your home office is in disarray.

What home office, you ask? Well, since you're thinking of yourself as Me, Inc.—a self-employed person trying to find clients—you need an office. It may be a notebook you keep on the kitchen counter or it may be a real office with computer, copier and fax. Whatever form it takes, it needs to be organized well enough for you to find what you need when you need it.

Getting ready means more than being organized, though. It also means preparing your wardrobe and appearance. Today! Don't wait until you schedule an interview. You may borrow or buy one good "interviewing suit," for example, but you need to make sure that it fits and is ready to go. If you have a nose ring or pierced tongue, it's time to lose that jewelry. If you have a tattoo, you probably will want to cover it up. Employers hire people who look the part and, for most jobs, that means dressing conservatively.

Now is also the time to line up your references, those people who can vouch for your character and work performance. You need their permission and time to prep them before employers ask for their names (more about that on page 20). Similarly, you need to activate your support network. Tell your friends and family that you're job hunting and how they can help you.

If someone called you for an interview tomorrow, would you be ready to go? Maybe not. But by the time you finish Step Two, you will be. You will have the supplies you need, the clothes to wear, the references employers want and your friends lined up to support you during your job search. Time to begin!

*"There is no security in this life.  
There is only opportunity."  
Douglas MacArthur*



## OFFICE SUPPLIES

Since job hunting is like running your own business, you need office supplies! Before you start running around talking to employers, be sure you have the tools to back you up.

### THE BASICS

Here are some basic office supplies you'll need:

- Pens
- Highlighter
- Stationery paper and envelopes (light colored)
- Paper clips
- Stapler
- Calendar (preferably a daily calendar)
- Notebook
- Stamps
- Three ring binder for your portfolio (page 10)
- Sheet protectors for portfolio

### EQUIPMENT

Here is some equipment to which you'll need access:

- Answering machine/voice mail
- Computer and printer
- Internet access

### OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Once hired, and perhaps sooner, you will need these documents. It's best to gather them now.

- Copies of certifications, diplomas, licenses
- Social Security card (or immigration documents)
- Driver's license or ID card

### EDUCATION LIST

For each school/training center, include:

- The school's name, city and state
- Dates of attendance
- Any degree or certification you obtained
- List of achievements (academic and other)
- Name of classes related directly to work skills

### WORK/VOLUNTEER LIST

For each position, include:

- Position title
- Organization name, address and phone number
- Supervisor's name, title and phone number
- Start date and end date
- Number of hours worked per week
- Number of people you supervised, if any
- List of duties
- List of achievements
- Reason for leaving (application forms request it)

### HOUSING LIST

For each of your homes in the past ten years, list:

- The address and phone number
- Move-in and move-out dates

### HELPFUL HINT

Keep all of your work, school and housing facts on one list. TWC's Pocket Résumé (available at 1-800-822-PLAN) helps you do just that. It makes completing applications a breeze. See a picture of the Pocket Résumé on page 38.



# WARDROBE

Job hunting is a business. You need to look the part. Of course, what you wear depends on the type of work you will do. If you don't have clothes that would be appropriate for an interview, now is the time to think about it—not the night before you meet a prospective employer.

## HOW TO KNOW WHAT TO WEAR

Do a little research to know how to dress for the type of job you want.

- Visit the company and observe what other people are wearing, then dress one step more formally.
- Ask the human resources department (not the hiring manager!) what would be appropriate.

## WHERE TO GET THE CLOTHES

If you don't have the right attire, you can:

- borrow from a friend;
- purchase something from a thrift shop;
- check local not-for-profit organizations to see if they provide business clothes for workers in need.

## WHAT TO BRING

When you go to an interview, you can bring:

- a neat and clean briefcase or portfolio;
- an umbrella or coat depending on the weather.
- Never bring another person! If someone accompanies you, he or she should wait out of the employer's view.

## GROOMING BASICS

Here's a checklist for proper interview grooming:

- Clean and simply styled hair
- Clean, neat clothes without patches, tears, stains, missing buttons or wrinkles.
- Clean teeth and fresh breath
- Clean and trimmed fingernails—neither chipped nor brightly polished nor extra long nails
- Comfortably fitting clothes—not too tight nor too loose
- Conservative and small jewelry items (if any)
- Subtle (or no) perfume or cologne
- Clean and polished dress shoes
- No hats
- No clothes with words on them
- No tattoos and/or body piercings visible

## WOMEN BASICS

Women should:

- wear discreet, sparing makeup;
- wear conservative and small jewelry items (if any);
- avoid low-necked blouses or short skirts;
- wear skin-toned hosiery—not white or shiny;
- carry a clean, not-overstuffed handbag.

## MEN BASICS

Men should:

- be clean shaven or neatly trimmed;
- have trimmed hair;
- wear a conservative tie;
- wear a white or blue button-down long-sleeved shirt;
- wear no jewelry except a wedding or class ring.



## REFERENCES

References are like customer referrals. Before you hire someone to build your house, don't you want to talk to some former customers to make sure the contractor will do a good job? Of course. That's why employers want to talk to people who know your work and character. These people are your references. Eventually you'll be asked for a reference list on an application form or during an interview. Prepare it now!

### IDENTIFY POTENTIAL REFERENCES

In addition to your most recent employers, think of three to five people who:

- are respectable and trustworthy;
- are not related to you by blood or marriage;
- have positive words to say about your skills and character.

### GET PERMISSION

Never list a name without permission and discussion!

- Ask potential references for permission to be listed.
- Explain that employers may contact them.
- Give them an idea of the qualities and abilities you want employers to know about you.
- Thank them.

### PREPARE YOUR LIST

Print your list of references on the same paper you used for your résumé. Follow the format at right or a similar one and include all relevant facts:

- Reference name
- Relationship to you
- Job title
- Employer
- Address
- Daytime phone number
- Email address if available

### ASK FOR A LETTER

A reference letter describes why employers should hire you based on the letter writer's personal experience. Ask for a letter if your reference person:

- lives out of town;
- has excellent writing skills;
- is also willing to receive calls from employers.

#### Mario Miller Reference List

**Brandon Andrews**  
Former coworker  
Customer Service Rep  
ABC Industries  
ABC Lane, City, State  
(555)777-9999  
ba2002@email.com

**Amanda Moore**  
Friend and fellow  
volunteer worker  
Freelance Writer  
XYZ Blvd., City, State  
(555)999-7777





## SUPPORT SYSTEM

Job hunting can be as challenging as starting your own business, which in a way is what you're doing. Make sure that you get the emotional and social support you need to get you through any rough spots you may encounter.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

Job hunting requires multi-tasking, so keep it simple!

- Break tasks into small chunks.
- Congratulate yourself for each task you do.
- Focus on today, not the future or the past.
- Don't expect to find a job immediately. Be realistic.

### CARE FOR YOURSELF PHYSICALLY

Job hunting takes time and energy, so nurture yourself.

- Sleep at least 7.5 hours a night.
- Eat in the healthiest way you can.
- Exercise regularly to relieve stress.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Take time to have fun—without guilt!

### ASK FOR HELP

Identify supporters using the exercise on this page and then ask for their active assistance.

- Let them congratulate you when you deserve it.
- Call a friend before and after each interview: "bookending" reminds you that you're not alone.
- Share your hopes and fears about job hunting.
- Check in regularly with someone to stay on track.

### DEAL WITH YOUR FEELINGS

Job hunting can generate a lot of emotions. Control them so that they don't control you! Here's how:

- Identify how you feel.
- Express your feelings constructively by writing or sharing them with a friend.
- Let go of negative feelings you might have about former employers; no one wants to hire a bitter person!

### EXERCISE:

## IDENTIFY YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

This exercise helps you identify which of your friends can provide the different types of support you'll need while job hunting. You can list as many people per type as you wish.

TYPE OF SUPPORTER

FRIEND'S NAME

#### Cheerleader

knows and likes you

#### Mentor

gives directions, knows you'll succeed

#### Information broker

shares information about job hunting and employers; gives referrals for financial aid and other social services

#### Public relations rep

willing and able to make contacts with employers

#### Caretaker

willing to babysit, provide transportation, loan you equipment

adapted from "Opening Doors: A Practical Guide for Job Hunting" by Jane Goodman, Judith Hoppin and Ronald Kent



## A JOB HUNTING STORY

### ANNIE, INC.

Annie wasn't sure what she wanted to do for a living but she knew that she needed a job and fast! As a former stay-at-home mom who had recently become a single parent, Annie had to generate income quickly.

She visited her local Workforce Solutions office (page 27) after hearing about it from a friend. There she spoke with a career counselor and took a number of assessment tests to identify jobs that would suit her.

Although she had little employment experience, Annie had plenty of work experience as a mother. Her counselor assured her that her leadership, organizing, communication and planning skills were assets that many employers sought.

Soon afterwards, Annie answered an ad for a waitperson. They were willing to train and she began working immediately. This income gave her some stability so that she could hunt for a more permanent job without wondering how she could pay the rent.

Soon she returned to the workforce center. She used the Texas CARES website ([www.TexasCARESONline.com](http://www.TexasCARESONline.com)) to identify jobs that matched her skills and interests. She explored several occupations and decided that she wanted to do some kind of office work, but needed to get some computer skills first.

She began taking computer and word processing classes at the local community college. Her workforce center counselor, Faith, helped

her find the funding. She studied whenever she could, knowing that an education was her ticket to the kind of job she wanted.

She soon began job hunting in earnest. She liked waiting tables but was ready for something full-time. She told everyone she met that she was looking for office work and mentioned her new skills. Her supervisor even allowed her to mention it to the occasional customer. She went to several interviews but got no offers.

Her persistence finally paid off. One of her customers mentioned an opening at the company where he worked. Here was her "in!" He gave her the name of a manager, whom Annie called immediately. She mentioned the customer's name and asked for an interview. She got it!

Once in the interview, Annie put all of her practice and rehearsal to work. Beforehand, she'd identified the skills the job required. For each skill, she'd practiced telling three stories that showed how she'd used that skill in the past. Her preparation made her feel so confident that the interview was more like two coworkers talking than an employer questioning an applicant.

Annie got the job. She immediately began thanking all the people who'd helped her in her search and telling them her good news. She looks forward to helping one of them when they're job hunting!





## STEP THREE: SEARCH

- Use Varied Methods
- Connect With Others
- Track Progress

It's time to find the employers who might hire you. Now is the time to dig in and really work. Expect to devote 40 hours a week to Steps Three and Four if you have no job and 20 hours if you currently have a paying job.

For many people, job hunting means reviewing and answering newspaper want ads. People do find jobs this way. But you should also search for job openings that aren't yet "on the market." To do that, you have to use many varied methods to connect with others in the professional world, and build relationships. This is often called "networking."

Many jobs are quietly filled by word of mouth—an employee tells a friend about a position and the friend gets hired. Some organizations have policies that require them to advertise and interview applicants even when they plan to hire someone from within.

So, you need connections. That doesn't mean you have to know the president of a company; it means it helps to know an assistant who can mention you to the hiring manager. Or maybe your child's youth group leader has a brother who works in that company and might know of positions that are open. These are the kinds of loose connections you need. Soon you'll find that your search efforts build on each other. One contact leads to another, which leads to two more, and so on.

How to make these connections? One could say it's never been easier! If you have Internet access you can connect to friends, family and other professionals locally, regionally, nationally, and globally through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Use these for your job search! Follow and like groups for professionals who work in your desired field. Attend events held in your area so you're connecting face-to-face as well. The relationships you build here may pay off not only for the job you get next but further down your career path.

You'll have a lot of information to juggle, so keep good records. Study it, even. The average job hunt lasts several months. You'll want to have easy access to the jobs you're hunting, so that when an employer calls you don't have to ask "Which job is this again?" So track your actions and interactions.

All the effort and tracking pay off when your search leads to contacts with the employer (Step Four) and to interviews (Step Five) and eventually to a new job.

## LABOR MARKET REALITIES

Keep the following trends in mind as you search for your next job and consider your career development. They will give you perspective and help you make realistic decisions about your future. They can also help with your SWOT analysis (see page 15). Remember, these are trends, not universal laws. There can always be and are exceptions to every trend.

- **Lifelong employability**  
Strive to be employable—to have the skills that employers value—so you can find work easily even if you get laid off.
- **Diversity**  
Appreciate and work with cultural differences.
- **Computer skills**  
Develop strong computer skills and update them regularly.
- **Online presence**  
Create a professional online presence for yourself. Whether it is on a social media page like LinkedIn or your own website, make yourself and your portfolio discoverable. It's a good way to impress employers.
- **English, math and science**  
Develop strong math, science and communication skills.
- **Customer service**  
Always demonstrate a positive, helpful attitude toward customers, supervisors and coworkers. Employers value this attitude because gaining and maintaining customers is crucial.
- **Economy awareness**  
Pay attention to the local, national and global market, so you can be prepared for rapid change.
- **Post high school education**  
Obtain an education beyond a high school diploma. It's the only way to maintain a middle class lifestyle or, in many cases, to be self-supporting.
- **Targeted education**  
If you don't enjoy looking for jobs for long periods of time, get an education in fields where there are lots of job openings.
- **Continuous learning**  
Constantly upgrade your skills. Employers are often more interested in what you learned recently, than in what degree you earned 10 years ago.
- **Education costs**  
Find employers who will help train you. Since the price of college and technical education will continue to rise faster than inflation, this academic help is valuable.
- **Flattened wages**  
Many organizations are willing to replace long-term employees with younger, less-expensive workers. This practice has kept wages flat.
- **Doing what you love**  
Focus on work that fulfills and interests you once you begin long-term career planning.
- **Not just 9-5**  
Flex time, telework and cell phones have blurred the lines between work and home. Today, Americans work more hours than people in any other industrialized country.
- **Employer as client**  
The employer is your client. You provide your knowledge, skills and abilities in exchange for wages and benefits as long as it suits both of you. The relationship ends when one of you wants out or the contract expires.
- **High turnover**  
You may have many jobs and several different careers over a lifetime of work. The career ladders of old no longer apply, meaning you make your own decisions about what sort of career path (and therefore training) you need.

## METHODS

There are many different ways to search for a job, and you should use them all. Here are some of the main methods. To learn about searching online, see page 40.

### CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

Connecting with people, also called networking, means learning about and/or obtaining jobs through other people. (See details on page 28.) This is the most effective strategy overall. It requires proactive effort to reach out to others. Don't worry if you think you're shy or introverted. You can do this!

Where: The key is to connect with people in many different ways—both in person at events and online. If you can communicate with confidence your unique qualities, skills, and values, then the connections you make will bear fruit for your job search, sooner or later.

### PROSPECTING

Prospecting means finding jobs that are not advertised through unsolicited cover letters and résumés, etc. This can allow you to find those “hidden” vacancies and perhaps face less competition for positions. It can require a great deal of time and effort to research prospects, and there is always the possibility that employers who haven't advertised their openings will simply not respond.

Where: Ask owners of local businesses; select a company you like and visit its website; CONNECT by attending job fairs; CONNECT by joining associations; read the local Business Journal, Chamber of Commerce newsletter and local newspaper articles to see what companies are expanding, restructuring or moving to the area (all of which mean new opportunities).

### RECRUITING

Recruiting means getting professional help from “head hunters” (who get paid by employers), government employment agencies and not-for-profit organizations. These don't usually charge you money.

Where: Check out your local Workforce Solutions office. Go to [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org), click “Find Locations” at the very top, and type in your ZIP code. You can also check out your local community college career center; or Governor's Job Bank.

### ADS/JOB LISTINGS

You can find ads for job openings online, in the newspaper, or in signs in windows. These are fairly easy to find and can take little time to respond to. However, for the best shot at an interview you'll want to take a close look at the listing and tailor your résumé to show that you are a good fit for the posted position. Remember, many jobs are not advertised and competition can be fierce. And some job postings in these areas may not even be legitimate.

Suggestion: Target jobs that are advertised repeatedly but never seem to get filled.



## INFORMATION INTERVIEWS

Information interviews are like job interviews except you ask all the questions and they're about an occupation (like a bank teller), not a specific job (like bank teller at XYZ Bank in Muleshoe, Texas). You have two goals during the interview. First, learn about the occupation to see if it might suit you. Second, **CONNECT** with the person you're interviewing. If handled properly, information interviews can lead to job search suggestions or contacts—even offers!

### BENEFITS

Information interviews provide many benefits. You:

- make a contact—a connection with someone
- learn more about the company, industry and job
- gain confidence as you practice your interviewing skills
- learn, possibly, about “hidden” (unadvertised) jobs

### WHOM TO ASK

Interviews take time, so target only individuals who have occupations that you really want to pursue. You might ask:

- friends, family, neighbors, supervisors, coworkers and anyone these people know
- people listed in the yellow pages or association directories

### GUIDELINES

Here are some general guidelines for the interview:

- Interview three people for each occupation of interest.
- When you call, say how you got that person's name.
- Explain that you're seeking advice and experience.
- Ask to meet for 20 minutes and stick to it!
- Bring paper and pen with you and take notes.
- Research beforehand as you would for a job interview (see page 51).
- Dress and act as you would at a job interview.
- **DON'T** ask the person for a job in any way!

#### HELPFUL HINT

If you learn about a job opening during the interview, don't mention it then! Write it down, wait a day or two, and then phone the person you interviewed and express your interest in applying.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

Since they probably don't have much time, pick only a few important questions to ask. Here are some ideas:

- How did you get into this type of work? This job?
- What type of preparation/education/training did you have? What is required?
- What do you enjoy the most? The least?
- What three skills do you use most often?
- Describe a typical day or week.
- What motivates you?
- Describe difficulties you regularly face on the job.
- What are the advancement opportunities and limits?
- How does a person usually progress in this field?
- What must a person know to stay competitive?
- What's the economic outlook for this career?
- How does your job affect your home life?
- What are typical entry-level job titles and duties?
- How do you suggest I learn more about this field?
- Here are my strengths. How do they fit in this field?

### AFTERWARDS

When your scheduled time is almost up, end the interview.

- Before you leave, tell the person that you would like to be of service any time he or she needs it.
- Ask for referrals to others who might be available for an information interview.
- Get his/her business card.
- Say Thank You before parting ways and send a thank you note immediately after.
- Evaluate how well you conducted the interview.
- Decide how to weigh what the interviewee said. Trust your own judgment.
- Review your notes and decide your next step.
- When you get a job, tell your interviewees about it—they'll want to know how your search ended!



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Job hunting can sometimes seem like a lonely business but the truth is you're not alone. Beyond your support network, plenty of professionals make a living helping job hunters like you. Use them! Their expertise and the fellowship you find with other job-seekers will bring you out of isolation and jumpstart your search. Here is just some of the professional help available in Texas:

### CAREER INFORMATION HOTLINE

For a brief report about a specific occupation or college, university or technical school, call the Texas Workforce Commission's "hotline" at 1-800-822-PLAN. The call and reports are free.

### TWC'S WEBSITE

The Texas Workforce Commission's website, [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org), offers links to labor market information and to [WorkInTexas.com](http://WorkInTexas.com), which provides personalized job matching, helps you build a résumé, includes hundreds of thousands of job postings.

### LOCAL WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS OFFICES

Local Workforce Solutions offices, located throughout Texas, connect job-seekers and employers. Their services can include:

- job search resources
- career development information
- labor market information
- training programs
- unemployment benefits (in some cases)

- seminars on topics such as interview preparation, résumé writing, skills analysis for career transition, networking, "hot jobs" and local labor market trends
- the space for you to work independently or with staff assistance

Local Workforce Solutions offices' resource rooms have fax machines and computers that provide access to software programs, links to Internet resources, career development materials, information about training programs, training providers and job listings.

Workforce Solutions staff is dedicated to helping you overcome any barriers to employment that you may have. Best of all, their services are usually free!

To find the Workforce Solutions office nearest you, visit [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org). The website also has plenty of helpful information for job seekers and includes links to resources that can make your job search a success!

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Your local public library has a wealth of career-related information, including job hunting books, publications about specific companies and a staff trained to help you conduct research on any topic.



## CONNECTING

Connecting with other people and building relationships is the best way to find work. Connecting is simply the process of giving and receiving in all your relationships. It means knowing people, helping them and letting them help you. And it goes on before, during and after the job hunt: job hunting simply makes the process more deliberate.

### WHO

Connect with everyone you know and meet, including:

- friends;
- family;
- your neighbors, hairdresser, grocery store manager;
- your children's teacher's and friends' parents;
- everyone those people know.

Focus especially on people who work in the fields or organizations where you want to work.

### HOW

During the job search, connect with a purpose.

- Tell everyone you know and meet about your job search and where you're applying. (This assumes you don't have a paying job already. If you do, see page 31.)
- Ask if they know anyone who might have information about openings.
- Meet as many new people as possible. Accept all invitations to social gatherings and be open-minded.
- Do volunteer work; it's a great way to make contacts.
- Join professional organizations in your field.
- Schedule information interviews (see page 26).
- Promptly return every phone call you receive.
- Keep track of every person you meet. Write notes to remind you of opportunities, shared interests and any follow-up you need to do (see page 41).
- Be honest, respectful and responsible with each person you meet—don't take advantage of anyone.
- Be genuine!
- Ask for help: Be specific about what you need (e.g., information or a referral) and ask for only one thing at a time.
- Set and keep goals, such as "I will make three contacts today."
- Put others' opinions in perspective (their experience may not paint the whole picture).
- Put others' needs first—meet where and when they want.

- Be appreciative, e.g., do a favor for someone who really helps you or pay for their lunch.
- Send thank you notes and follow-up letters after meeting with someone.
- When you yourself refer someone to a friend, notify your friend and thank him or her in advance.
- Update the people who have helped you on your progress.
- Keep making and maintaining connections once you're employed; it makes the next job hunt easier.
- Stay in contact with emails, calls, holiday greetings.

### WHOM DO YOU KNOW?

You may be asking yourself, "What if I don't know many people?" But you probably know more than you realize. Use the graphic on the next page to jog your memory.

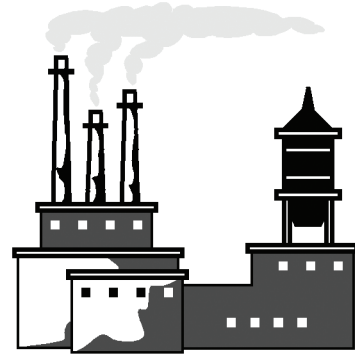
1. List 25 people with whom you could talk about your search and your abilities. Include people from different backgrounds and different lines of work.
2. Start with the people who have changed jobs in the past three years; they can best relate to your situation.
3. Talk to all 25 people about the type of job you want. Ask if they have any information that could help you or if they know someone who does.
4. Thank each person, follow up on the information, let them know how it turned out and offer to help them when they need it.
5. Help them when they need it!



# WHOM DO YOU KNOW?



Inner Circle  
Family  
Friends  
Neighbors

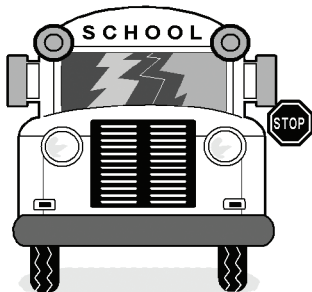


Work  
Former supervisors  
Co-workers  
Professional association members



Services  
Hairstylist  
Postal carrier  
Dry cleaner  
Mechanic  
Accountant  
Travel Agent

# ME Inc.



School  
Teachers  
Students' parents  
Fellow students  
Maintenance staff



Community  
Volunteer organization members  
Co-volunteers  
Self-help group members  
Religious community staff  
and members



Recreation  
Sports team members  
Gym staff  
Hobby partners

## TRACKING

Job hunting can take days, weeks or—more often—months, so you need to keep track of all the information and interactions you gain as you search. Track your efforts with a notebook and calendar to make the search smoother and simpler. It saves time and frees your mind from trying to remember what you said to whom. And it helps you see how much you've accomplished!

### WHAT TO TRACK

- Names of contacts
- Deadlines
- Actions taken and their results
- Information about prospective employers
- Copies of applications you have submitted
- Copies of cover letters you have sent
- Copies of job listings/descriptions/ads

### HOW TO USE YOUR NOTEBOOK

- Use one page (at least) per job.
- Tape the ad or listing or write the job description.
- Write the date you contacted the employer.
- Write the name and title of each contact person.
- Describe each phone, email, fax or face-to-face interaction.
- Note the main points of each conversation.

### YOUR CALENDAR

Your calendar helps you follow up on each job so that nothing slips between the cracks.

- Use your calendar to keep a daily to-do list.
- List calls to make and actions to take. Plan your traveling to be most time-efficient.



For example, if you submit an application on Monday, write the employer's name and number on the calendar page for the next Monday. Then you'll remember to call to confirm that your submission is in order.

### TRACKING PAGE EXAMPLE

Job: Purchasing Clerk  
 Employer: ZZZ, 888 Eighth St, 555-666-7777  
 Joan told me about the position; she works there.  
 Contact: Betty, receptionist, 555-666-7778  
 Contact: Trini, Purchasing Coord, 555-666-7795

2/02/15 I called and spoke with Betty. I need to send an application. Hiring mgr: Trinidad Diaz. I called him, mentioned Joan. He said go ahead and apply.

2/06/15 I hand-delivered my applic to HR dept and to Trini D.'s office.

2/10/15 Left msg with Betty re: status.

2/11/15 Betty called; they're reviewing applic

2/17/15 I called; Betty said Trini had been out of town so things were a little behind

2/20/15 Trini called. Interview scheduled for 2/22 with Trini and Michael Martin. Bring work samples. Told reference people to expect calls.

2/22/15 Had interview. Sent thank you letter to Trini and to Mike. I really want this job!

2/25/15 Got call for second interview: tomorrow with Bill Gregg, the CEO.

2/26/15 Had 2nd interview; sent thank you to Bill.

02/27/15 I got the job!!!

## HUNTING WHILE EMPLOYED

Job hunting while you're employed presents some challenges. You have less time to hunt. You must decide whether to tell your current employer and coworkers about your search. And, you must decide whether changing jobs is really the best move for you right now!

### SHOULD YOU RESIGN?

Before you begin searching for a new job, make sure that you'll really be better off leaving your present position.

- Honestly assess your situation. Ask yourself: Why am I looking for another job? Is it the job or could it be my own attitude? Can the problems be fixed? Remember, there's no wrong answer to these questions as long as you are honest with yourself.
- Speak with your employer about the problems that make you want to resign. If you're a good worker, your employer may change the situation to suit your needs.
- Make sure your next job is better than your current one. Use the exercise on page 55 to decide.

### HOW TO HANDLE THE HUNT

If you decide the time is right to look for a new job, follow these suggestions.

- Schedule interviews during lunch hours or after work if possible.
- Don't use the company computer, printer or letterhead EVER.
- Don't search the web for job and career information during work hours.
- Tell the truth if prospective employers ask if your current employer knows about the hunt.
- Ask prospective employers not to contact your current boss if he or she is unaware you're actively hunting.
- Don't quit without notice.
- Don't put down your current job or employer to your current coworkers; it's like criticizing their choice to stay.
- Make up time that you take off to pursue the hunt.
- Continue to perform your current job as well as you can.

### WHEN TO TELL YOUR SUPERVISOR

Until you're ready to resign, you probably should not tell your supervisor (or coworkers) that you're job hunting. Remember, in Texas your employer can terminate your employment at any time for any reason or no reason at all. If you tell your employer you're job hunting, your employer might consider that a reason!

And even if not, it stops your job's forward momentum. If your employer had planned a promotion or training for you (which might make it worthwhile to stay), it will be put on hold or even canceled.

It may be a good idea to tell your supervisor, however, if:

- you have a very good relationship with each other;
- it's expected (e.g., you're graduating or moving);
- you absolutely need his/her recommendation;
- you think he/she might help you find work.

### HELPFUL HINT

Unless your current employer has a written policy stating that they pay for leave time when employees terminate, you won't get reimbursed for unused vacation or sick leave.



## NON-TRADITIONAL WORK

A third of the American workforce is “non-traditional,” meaning they work part-time, have temporary jobs or are self-employed. Volunteering is also non-traditional work: you don’t get paid but you gain other benefits, such as experience and contacts. While non-traditional work is a way of life for some, for others it’s a temporary measure and a great job-hunting tool.

### TEMP WORK

Temping means that you work in a position temporarily—from one day to one year. You are employed by an agency that sends you to other companies to work. Temping offers a variety of job types and activities, wages while job-hunting, and it can help you to **CONNECT** with others in the professional world. Light on benefits (like insurance) and job security, though.

### VOLUNTEERING

Like temping, volunteering is a way to try out a job or type of work before devoting yourself to it “permanently.” It also provides a way to make connections outside the employment arena.

To maximize the benefits, devote at least 100 hours to each volunteer position to show that you are committed and not just dabbling.

### FREE AGENCY/SELF EMPLOYMENT

Instead of going through a temp agency, you can approach a company directly and offer to work on a temporary basis. In this case you are self-employed, meaning you are in control and could possibly earn more. You’ll need to 1) withhold your own taxes, and 2) be very motivated.

### RÉSUMÉ CONSIDERATIONS

Here’s some ways to describe your temping, volunteering and free agency work on your résumé when you try to find full-time “permanent” employment.

- If you’re a temp worker, you can present yourself as employed by one company: the temp agency. Or you can group similar jobs. Or, if you worked at one assignment a long time, list that as the employer but do indicate that you worked there through a temp agency.
- If you’re a free agent, you can simply write “self-employed” and treat it as you would any other job.
- If you did volunteer work, list the skills and accomplishments gained in the **EXPERIENCE** section of your résumé rather than the **VOLUNTEER WORK** section. The latter is optional and designed to show that you are well-rounded.







## STEP FOUR: CONTACT

- PHONE CALLS
- COVER LETTERS
- APPLICATION FORMS

Now it's time to get the interview. Whereas previously you may have contacted the employer to learn more about a job, now you're reaching out to be considered for it. You're putting your cards on the table. You initially make contact in three ways: phone calls, letters (including emails) and application forms. However you interact with potential employers (and that includes secretaries and assistants!), remember that your goal is to get an interview. It's too soon to think about hiring; you just need some quality face-to-face time.

To get an interview, everything about how you look, carry yourself, and communicate must convey one message: "I'll work hard and you can trust me."

That's why in every contact with an employer you (or your writing) need to:

- look professional—neat, clean and well-organized
- communicate using simple, direct, standard English
- be thorough—reflecting effort, thought and preparation
- demonstrate a humble, confident and helpful attitude

Focus above all on what the employer needs and how you can help. To paraphrase former president John F. Kennedy: Ask not what the employer can do for you, but what you can do for the employer.

And be calm. Showing panic or desperation during the job hunt turns people away. When you see an ad or hear about a job, take a deep breath. You have some time. Do the research and preparation needed to turn in a focused, attention-grabbing cover letter and a customized application form and/or résumé. Even if the position closes before you are able to submit your application, that's better for you in the long run than turning in something sloppy. After all, you might get another chance with that employer in the future. Remember, the goal of Step Four is to get an interview!

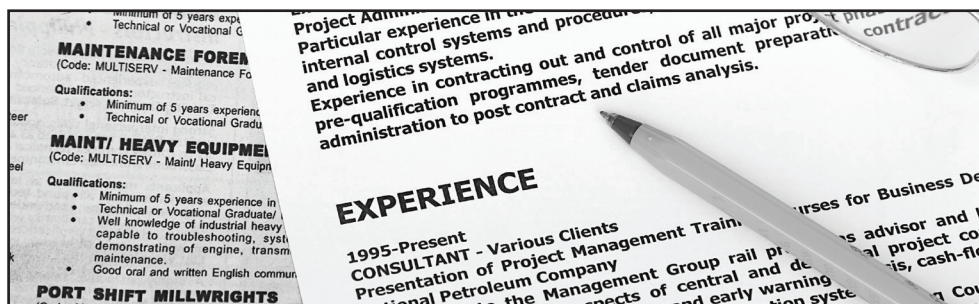
## PROBLEM WORK HISTORY

When you communicate with employers, the key words are: honesty, openness and employer-focus (not self-focus). You can never lie in your résumé and/or application form. The application is a legal contract. You can, however, put a positive spin on any problems you might have had in the past.

Potential Barriers	Possible Solutions
Job Hopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group similar jobs on your résumé</li> <li>• don't include every single job you've ever held</li> <li>• use your cover letter to stress that you want a long-term position</li> </ul>
Long Time with One Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• list promotions at different positions to show forward progression</li> <li>• have a Professional Development section to highlight your ongoing education</li> </ul>
Recent Employment Gaps (of months or years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show work that you did while unemployed, including volunteer and community work, projects, family activities and education</li> </ul>
Been Fired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• during the interview, take responsibility for your actions and/or put the situation in positive light, depending on the circumstances</li> </ul>
Been Laid Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on the present to show that you're moving on</li> </ul>
Not Enough Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasize adaptable skills (e.g., being a fast learner) and non-work experience</li> </ul>
Temp, Free Agent, Contract Work	see page 32 for ways to describe this type of work on your résumé
"Overqualified"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't include information on résumé you think may raise red flags</li> <li>• emphasize your eagerness to work at the job in question; show that you'll stay</li> </ul>
No College Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if you have some college credits, list the college without a graduation date</li> <li>• emphasize recent training, including workshops</li> <li>• skip the Education section entirely (unless you're a young person)</li> </ul>
Criminal History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remember that only convictions matter</li> <li>• avoid occupations related to any felony you might have (e.g., if you stole, don't try to work with money)</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address the issue head on and openly state that you have the ability to overcome any challenges your condition may pose</li> </ul>
Poor Grades (for students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on extracurricular activities or how you addressed your academic problem</li> </ul>

*adapted in part from Kim Isaacs and J. Michael Farr (monster.com) and Maureen Crawford Hentz (quintcareers.com)*

If you approach your potential problems directly and honestly, taking responsibility where appropriate, you may find that your former challenges become your most valuable assets. They demonstrate how you continue to grow, change and strive to better yourself as an employee and as a person.



# PHONE

The telephone is an essential tool for job hunting. You use it to gather information and connect with people. Employers use it to screen applicants before scheduling interviews. Whether you make the call or receive it, your phone manner can help you get—or keep you from getting—a job. Follow the suggestions below.

## BASIC PHONE GUIDELINES

- Speak audibly, clearly and at the other person's rate.
- Smile while speaking—people can hear it!
- Stand up while speaking—it gives you power.
- Listen closely.
- Don't fill every silence.
- Never click over to another call!
- Don't call while driving or doing anything else.
- Don't chew gum, drink or eat while on the phone.
- Initiate calls whenever possible—it puts you in control.
- Call sparingly—don't harass anyone.
- Call during regular business hours.
- When you call, immediately say who you are and why you're calling.
- Ask if the person has time to talk. If not, arrange for a more convenient time.
- Be brief—show consideration for people's time.
- When you call someone, end promptly, saying "Thank you for your time and have a nice day" or a similar phrase.
- If someone calls you, let him or her end the call.
- If you get a call at a bad time, say "I'm glad you called. I only have a few minutes. Is that OK or can we arrange another time to talk?"
- Keep your automated voicemail message brief and business-like. Include your name.
- Make sure everyone in your home answers the phone politely and takes accurate messages.
- Check your messages frequently.
- Return calls as quickly as possible.

## PHONE INTERVIEWS/SCREENINGS

If an employer calls you for any reason, treat it like a phone interview. Phone interviews give employers the chance to see if you are qualified, articulate, truly interested, and worth inviting to meet face-to-face.

- Screen calls: don't pick up unless you're prepared (see the box below for details).
- Keep your follow-up notebook, calendar and résumé close at all times so you can quickly remind yourself which job this is and what's happened so far in the process.
- Follow all the basic phone guidelines.
- Send a thank-you note afterwards.

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN EMPLOYER CALL

If you have scheduled a time to talk with an employer or you are about to initiate a call, prepare beforehand.

- Read over your notes about that company.
- Write a script of questions to ask and phrases to use.
- Get mentally focused and alert.
- Remember your Me, Inc. message (see page 16).
- Once the call begins, remember to focus on the employer.

Remember, the worst that can happen is you won't get asked to an interview. So RELAX.



## COVER LETTER

A cover letter introduces you, makes your sales pitch and proposes further action. It's one of your most valuable tools for contacting employers. To get the interview, you must uniquely tailor every letter to the unique job you want.

### GOAL

Cover letters, which “cover” your résumé, should:

- clearly state how your skills and experience will help the employer;
- convince the employer to grant you an interview.

### TYPES OF LETTERS

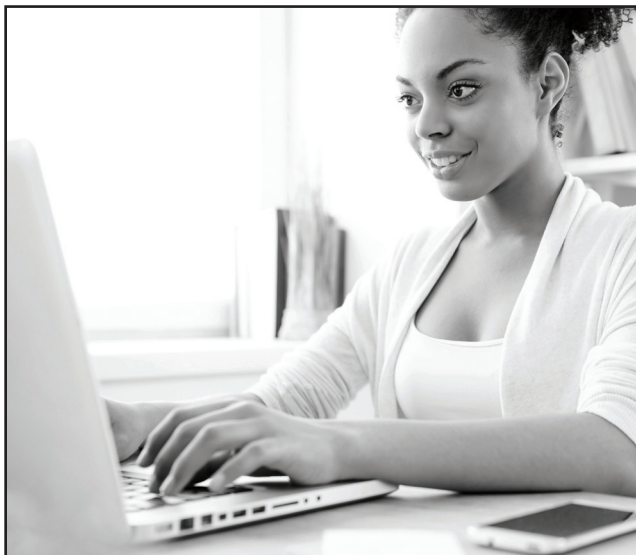
There are three types of cover letters but the basic format for each is the same. The types are:

- Response to an ad (e.g., in newspaper)
- Cold-call letter (asking about upcoming or unadvertised openings)
- Referral letter (mentioning a person known to both you and the employer)

### PREP WORK

Before you begin writing:

- Find someone who works at the company whose name you can drop (with their permission).
- Find out to whom you should send the letter. (If it's the Human Resources Department, send it to the hiring manager as well.)
- Research the company (see page 49 for details).



### GUIDELINES

Follow these guidelines to make your letter a success:

- Deliver it with a résumé that you've tailored for the particular job in question.
- Use the same paper as your résumé if possible.
- Write the letter yourself; it's a work sample.
- Don't just repeat your résumé. Compare the job specifications or ad language side-by-side with your abilities and experience. Don't say how the job will benefit you! Focus on how you will help the employer!
- Address the letter to a person, never a generic title.
- Use your first sentence to grab attention.
- If someone referred you, mention that person's name and title in the first sentence.
- Keep it less than a page.
- Use the format described on the next page.
- Make sure you have no typos or errors.
- Be neat—no smudges or crinkles.
- Say nothing negative!
- Use direct, simple language with active verbs.
- Show that you know a little about the company.
- Ask for an interview and say you'll call. You need to follow up; don't wait for the employer to do it.
- Don't say “Enclosed please find my résumé.” It wastes space and states the obvious.
- Sign the letter in blue ink to show it's an original.
- Keep a copy for your records.
- Use some parts of the letter for any employer but make certain sentences unique to the exact job.

# EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

July 15, 2015

Ms. JoAnn Shoemaker  
Nursing Manager  
YYY Clinic  
432 12th Street  
Anywhere, TX 77777

Notice that Tony addressed the letter to an actual person, not a generic title such as "Hiring Manager."

Every sentence stresses how Tony can help the employer, not the other way around. That attitude alone will get him noticed!

Dear Ms. Shoemaker:

Patricia Saphir mentioned that you plan to hire a new Licensed Vocational Nurse. After visiting YYY clinic and its website, I've identified a few ways that I can contribute to your team if you hire me.

- During my 10 years as an LVN, I've gained essential on-the-job experience and knowledge that formal LVN training rarely provides. This expertise would be an asset for you since many of your current LVNs are recent graduates.
- I have received two awards for my friendly customer service to patients, doctors and coworkers alike. I've also been asked to conduct in-service workshops on the topic. My emphasis on customer satisfaction and my joy in helping others dovetail perfectly with YYY's focus on client care.

My experience, expertise and enthusiasm could play a role in the continued success of YYY Clinic. I will call you on Tuesday, July 22 to discuss my qualifications and, I hope, schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

*Tony Williams*

Tony Williams, LVN  
1111 Blue Street  
Somewhere, TX 77777

Tony directly states when and why he will follow up. Never expect the employer to call you just because you sent a letter. You have to take action!

- Points to include:**
- who you are
  - why you are writing
  - the contact person's name or the ad you saw
  - explain why you're special (**Me. Inc.** blurb)
  - explain why you like this company
    - describe how and when you'll follow up



# APPLICATION FORM

Application forms are becoming increasingly common for positions at all levels as employers strive to be impartial in their hiring practices.

## GUIDELINES

As you complete an application form, keep these guidelines in mind.

- Have all the information that you need with you when you apply.
- Read all directions carefully before you start.
- Be honest; dishonesty can be used as grounds to fire you when your employer learns the truth.
- Be neat.
- Complete every section. Write “N/A” (not applicable) when an area does not apply to you.
- List relevant experience and skills first.
- Put “will discuss,” “open” or “negotiable” in the space requesting salary information.
- Attach your résumé but still fill in the application form completely.
- Make sure everything on the application matches your résumé, especially name and address.
- Proofread before turning it in.
- Keep a copy of the form if possible to use for future applications or in case the employer misplaces it.
- Follow up a week later (see page 43).

## PROBLEM QUESTIONS

If you have gaps in your employment history or other potential problems, be honest on your application form but don't go into detail.

- State the reason simply, giving just the facts.
- Focus on the positive; never say anything negative.
- Take responsibility for your behavior without excuses or blame.
- Attach an additional sheet of paper if you need more room.
- Write “will discuss in interview” on the form.

See page 34 for more about a problem work history.

## POCKET RÉSUMÉ

TWC'S wallet-sized Pocket Résumé allows you to carry a list of relevant information for completing applications. It helps you complete the forms completely, quickly and accurately.

It contains spaces for much of the information that you will need to complete any application form. With the Pocket Résumé, you'll never be caught unprepared again!

For more information or to order, visit [www.lmci.state.tx.us](http://www.lmci.state.tx.us) or call 1-800-822-PLAN.

## HELPFUL HINT

Dress nicely when you drop off your application. You don't know who'll see you. Some employers may want to talk with you on the spot, so be ready!



**Pocket  
Résumé**  
*For A Job Interview*

---

**Before the Interview**

- Learn all you can about the company
- Have specific job or jobs in mind
- Complete Pocket Résumé
- Mentally review your qualifications for job
- Practice answering questions about yourself
- Ask for location, directions, start time, and expected duration of interview, as well as parking guidelines
- Drive by location of building the day before
- Ask interviewer's name, title, and role with company

---

**During Tests**

- Listen to instructions
- Read each question thoroughly
- Write legibly
- Don't dwell too long on one question
- If unsure, stay with your first answer

---

**During the Interview**

- Go alone
- Be clean and well groomed
- Dress appropriately, neatly, and conservatively
- Be prompt
- Do not smoke or chew gum
- Keep your phone dark, silent, and out of sight
- Answer questions directly and truthfully
- Use good manners
- Use proper grammar and good diction
- Be enthusiastic
- Listen, maintain eye contact, and ask questions
- Thank the interviewer

Employers often ask for this information at a job interview. Fill in this résumé ahead of time and take it with you as a reference. Add additional sheets if necessary.

### Education

School \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course/Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Course/Subject \_\_\_\_\_  
 Degree Date \_\_\_\_\_ Degree Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Activities (clubs, offices, sports, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Honors \_\_\_\_\_

### Previous Employment

(Summer and part-time jobs, too)

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Salary \_\_\_\_\_  
 Military Service \_\_\_\_\_  
 Certificates \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Training \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hobbies or Interests \_\_\_\_\_

### References

(Get permission before using names)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Career Information Hotline 1-800-822-7526

(Rev. 2/2016)

# EXAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

List as many special skills and qualifications as possible. Many companies use application forms, not résumés, to screen candidates.

Special Skill/Qualifications: List all special skills you possess and machines or office equipment you can use, such as calculators, printing or graphics equipment, computer equipment, types of software and hardware, etc \_\_\_\_\_

multi-line telephone   10-key punch by touch   copier (advanced features)   fax (advanced features)  
public speaking   meeting planning   staffing exhibit booths at conferences  
software: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Allaire Homesite   main frame computer

If possible, use the description for the job you seek to determine what equipment and skills it requires. Then show that you have those qualifications and more.

Use bulleted lists; they're easier to read.

Position Title: <u>Data Entry Clerk</u>				Immediate Supervisor		Full-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Employer: <u>State Department of ZZY</u>				Name <u>John Doe, Jr.</u>		Part-time	
Mailing Address: <u>P.O. Box 1234</u>				Title <u>Department Manager</u>		Summer	
City and State/Zip: <u>Austin, TX 78711</u>				Supervisor's Telephone No.		Temp/Project	
Employer's Telephone No: <u>AC ( 111)111-1111</u>				<u>AC ( 111)111-1112</u>			
Starting Date		Leaving Date		Final Salary		Technical	
Mo.	Day	Yr.	Mo.	Day	Yr.	will	Non-managerial
<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>discuss</u>	<u>Supervisory/Managerial</u>
				If Supervisory,		number of employees you supervised	
Summary of experience:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Performed data entry on mainframe computer for a state agency</li> <li>* Monitored reports for accuracy, notifying supervisor when discrepancies arose</li> <li>* Serviced printer, changing cartridges and fixing paper jams and other problems</li> <li>* Backed up system nightly and stored disks according to disaster recovery policy and procedures</li> <li>* Taught new-hires how to operate the equipment and to follow agency practices</li> <li>* Collated, copied, and distributed reports throughout the agency</li> </ul>							
Specific reason for leaving: <u>Wanted a position with more responsibilities.</u>							

Customize each application form to show that your past jobs prepared you for the position you want. Here the applicant mentions her experience with policies because the new job requires it.

List what you actually did, not just your "official" duties. This applicant mentions training, which was not part of her job description.

Be positive when describing why you left a position. Emphasize what you hoped to gain, not why you wanted to leave. Be brief!

## JOB HUNTING ONLINE

The Internet has become a tremendous job hunting tool and it's important to know how to compete in that arena. Keep in mind, though, that the Internet has really just sped up traditional job hunt processes. You still need to connect with employers and other professionals via telephone and face-to-face.

### ASSESSING ONLINE

Many websites offer career assessments. You can find links to some of these if you visit the Texas Job Hunter's Guide web page at <http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp>.

### HUNTING ONLINE

To learn about employers who are hiring, visit:

1. webpages of employers that interest you;
2. career-oriented sites, some of which can be found at the link above.

### CONTACTING EMPLOYERS ONLINE

You can contact many employers online by completing an application form at their website or emailing your résumé and cover letter. Send a hard copy of your résumé and cover letter, too!

### ONLINE APPLICATIONS

To fill out an online application, follow the guidelines for a regular application (page 40).

### EMAIL RÉSUMÉS

Email résumés are simply email versions of your regular résumé (see pages 11-14). To send an email résumé, follow these steps:

- Save your print résumé as a text-only document.
- Paste the text into an email message. **DON'T** attach it! Many companies won't open attachments because of the risk of computer viruses. Also, employers may not take the time to open the attachment and convert it into software that they can use.
- Don't use bold, italics, underlining or other formatting.
- Do use asterisks as bullets, spacing to separate sections and capitalization on the headings.
- List the job title or number in the Subject line.
- Start your email with your cover letter (see page 36).

### MAKE YOUR BEST SELF EASY TO FIND

Once you've reached out to employers and they have your name, chances are they are going to search for you online. Your web résumé and portfolio can appeal to already interested employers.

### POSTING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

You can post your résumé online at any number of career sites, such as [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) or [WorkInTexas.com](http://WorkInTexas.com). Each site explains in detail how to proceed.

### WEB RÉSUMÉ AND PORTFOLIO

A web résumé (a webpage of your résumé) and portfolio (examples of your work online, e.g., photos) can be helpful. Once you create them, make sure you keep them updated!

- Format your résumé using HTML and add it to your personal website or webpage.
- Link readers directly to former employers' homepages.
- Link your résumé to high-resolution scanned images of your work and other items from your portfolio.
- Make sure it's well-organized and easy to navigate.
- Keep it simple: no clutter or slow-to-download extras.
- Avoid gimmicks, e.g., flashing text, hard-to-read colors.

### INTERVIEWING ONLINE

If you are required to answer interview questions online, respond just as you would in person. Make sure you don't have typing errors, though!

### IF YOU'RE "COMPUTER-CHALLENGED"

You can access a computer for free by visiting your local workforce center (see page 27). The staff can help you navigate the web. You can also learn by asking a friend, reading a book or taking a class.

## FOLLOWING UP

Following up means taking action and not waiting for the job to come to you. It shows your interest, your initiative and your sense of responsibility—qualities employers love! It means thanking employers after interviews and calling them after applying for jobs. Here are some suggestions to follow up successfully.

### PHONE CALLS

Keep calls to employers positive, brief and infrequent.

### AFTER APPLYING

A week or so after you submit your application and/or résumé for a position, follow up to check its status.

- Identify yourself and the position for which you've applied.
- Ask if the employer received everything you sent and if everything is in order.
- Ask when interviewing might begin.

### THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you notes can help get you jobs. You can send them after an information interview, after an especially helpful phone call—whenever you like.

- Be sure to repeat your interest in the job.
- As long as you keep it brief, you can emphasize a point you made in your application or cover letter.
- Be careful: a sloppy thank you note can do more harm than good.

### AFTER THE JOB FAIR

Job fairs are a little unusual. You may get a mini-interview with a recruiter but since you didn't go through the usual screening process, follow-up is necessary. In this situation, the thank you note is more like a cover letter (page 36).

Send a thank you note that:

- identifies and expresses interest in the position you seek;
- explains how hiring you would benefit the employer;
- includes a copy of your résumé tailored for that job.





## A JOB HUNTING STORY

### Gary, Inc.

Despite a prison record, Gary got the job he wanted because of his employer-focused “customer service” attitude. Here’s how it happened.

Gary responded to an ad for an office assistant by calling the company and asking some questions. Later he wrote a short note to Rachel, saying thank you for the friendly assistance she had given him over the phone.

It turned out the company was small. Rachel’s delight in the thank you note, which she passed around to everyone in the office, sparked a special interest in Gary. In fact, Rachel’s good opinion of him strongly influenced the decision of her supervisor, Elaine, to interview him.

Normally, Elaine probably would not have invited Gary for an interview because his application form indicated that he had been convicted of a felony. With so many other qualified applicants, why risk hiring a criminal?, Elaine thought. Fortunately, she gave Gary a chance. He had noted that his crime was non-violent and that he was eager to discuss the situation and how he had remedied it. “At least he is honest and has a good attitude,” Elaine told Rachel.

Gary had a history of abusing alcohol and drugs and had spent a couple of years in a Huntsville prison as a result. He felt very nervous about explaining his prison record to Elaine. He planned and practiced his responses with his girlfriend so he’d be ready.

During the interview, Gary explained his situation briefly and openly, taking full responsibility for his crime, which impressed Elaine. He said that he had undergone treatment and had made many positive changes since then. He stressed that he was clean and sober now. He also mentioned that he had a support network to help keep him on the right path.

He quickly moved on to describe his computer knowledge and how it would benefit Elaine’s company. He made it clear that he wanted to work—that helping her would demonstrate his commitment to living a clean life.

Gary’s honesty, enthusiasm and focus on how he could help convinced Elaine to give him a chance. As soon as he left, she began checking his references. Each person stressed that Gary was a good worker when he was clean and sober and that he was doing everything he could to remain that way.

Elaine knew that she was taking a risk by hiring Gary. What if he relapsed? Still, his honest and responsible behavior won her over. “Everyone deserves a second chance,” she thought. She gave him the job on a six-month probationary basis. Gary was ecstatic and went out of his way to prove to Elaine that she’d made the right choice.





# STEP FIVE: INTERVIEW

- RESEARCH
- QUESTIONS
- THE OFFER
- NEGOTIATIONS

Finally you have a chance to meet with and convince an employer to hire you. Congratulate yourself. Whether you get the job or not, you will strengthen your skills and learn from this experience.

You can improve your chances of getting the job by preparing effectively for the interview. Start by knowing your goal, the employer’s goal and different interview types.

## YOUR GOAL ...

is to answer these questions:

- Do I want this job?
- Will I fit into this work environment?
- Can I prove that I’m what the employer wants?

## THE EMPLOYER’S GOAL ...

is to:

- fill the position so that work can continue;
- hire someone competent, trustworthy, enthusiastic and socially skilled;

### WHAT TO ASK WHEN YOU GET AN INTERVIEW

As soon as you’re invited for an interview, get the details. It shows your thoroughness and foresight. Ask about:

- Location
- Directions
- Start time
- Expected duration
- Parking guidelines
- Number of interviewers
- Each interviewer’s name, title and role in the company (including correct spelling and pronunciation)
- Tests or tasks involved (see page 52)

## TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are many types of interviews; you may encounter more than one at a time. Be prepared for them all!

- Screening: A human resources representative interviews you (often on the phone) to check for initial qualifications.
- Traditional: You talk face-to-face with the interviewer(s), usually at the company’s facility. Questions focus on your attitudes, values and interpersonal skills; whether you’ll fit in; and what extra value you may bring to the organization.
- Behavioral: You perform tasks or take tests for the job (see page 52 for more details) and/or answer questions regarding how you handled actual situations or would handle future situations.
- Technical: Questions relate specifically to the job requirements and have right/wrong answers.
- Phone or Computer: You answer questions via phone, email or online form.
- One-on-one: You are interviewed by an individual—the most common situation.
- Team or Committee: You are interviewed by a number of people at the same time.
- Group: You are interviewed at the same time as other candidates; it happens rarely these days.
- Multiple level: You are interviewed individually by different people in a planned series of interviews.

## PREPARE

Few people can think on their feet well enough to ace an interview without preparing. Preparing makes you comfortable enough to be yourself. It also shows employers you care. Using the simple strategies below will increase the likelihood that your interview will lead to a job offer.

### STORIES

Telling short stories about your experience makes you memorable and believable to the interviewer. Follow these guidelines:

- Write two to three sample stories based on recent experiences that demonstrate each relevant skill.
- Take the stories mainly from work but also from other areas of your life.
- Quantify your results if possible using dollars, time, percentages or amounts.
- Use the CAR format, breaking the stories into three parts: Challenge, Action and Results (see page 11 for more details).
- Practice telling the stories until they feel as natural as talking about a recent vacation or TV show.

### QUESTIONS

Interviews involve questions and answers on both sides, so prepare what to ask and how to respond:

- Plan and rehearse your answers to questions that the employer may ask. See pages 46-48 for suggestions.
- Develop a list of questions to ask the interviewer yourself (see page 48).

### AND MORE

Preparing for the interview also requires you to take certain actions.

- Identify how you can help the organization meet its goals.
- Define why you want the position.
- Define your own career goals.
- Prioritize your career portfolio's contents to highlight the items that relate closely to the job requirements.
- Tell your references to expect a call from the employer. Describe the job and mention the skills and characteristics you want them to stress.
- If the upcoming interview is a follow-up, review the notes you took from your first interview.



## EMPLOYER QUESTIONS

### THE “SUPER SEVEN” QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Hiring someone is one of the riskiest moves an employer can make. If they choose unwisely, it will cost them lots of money, time and energy—as the box below reveals.

That’s why employers ask applicants a lot of questions. They want to lower the risk and make sure their decision is sound. For you, though, all those questions make it challenging to prepare for the interview. Do you have to practice answering every possible question an employer might ask you?

Fortunately, no. Employers essentially want to know the answers to seven very basic questions—the “Super Seven.” Every specific interview question an employer asks you really tries to answer one of these. You can determine which question is being asked by listening for key words and looking for the hidden concern behind the question.

If you prepare your responses to just the “Super Seven” questions, you’ll be ready for any question you get! Keep in mind that some of your responses will be verbal, some non-verbal and some you’ll put off until you get an offer.

To practice translating typical questions into the “Super Seven” questions, complete the exercise on page 47.

### TURNOVER COSTS MONEY!!

Employers face huge costs when they hire the wrong person and must re-hire someone else. These costs can run from the hundreds to the hundreds of thousands of dollars depending on the job in question, how long it’s vacant and how much damage the “bad hire” did. As a result, the employer’s credibility, even job, may be on the line. That’s why employers interviewing you ask so many questions. They do not want to go through all that again!



## THE “SUPER SEVEN” QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you feel comfortable answering these seven questions, you can handle anything that employers ask you. In the end, all other questions are really just different ways of asking these seven.

### Q1. ARE YOU TRUSTWORTHY?

What kind of person are you? Are you honest, responsible, dependable, trustworthy?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to hire someone she can't depend on or who will steal from her.

**Key words:** Personal qualities; “who you are”

**Response:** Respond honestly. Make good eye contact. If you're genuine and your appearance, words, tone and body language all match, you'll be trusted.

### Q2. CAN YOU DO THE JOB?

Are you technically competent? Do you have the skills, knowledge and abilities to do the job well?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to hire someone who is incompetent or unprepared.

**Key words:** Skills, abilities, strengths, situation

**Response:** Focus on your skills and how you can help the organization and employer immediately and in the future. Tell stories from your past experiences that relate to the job at hand.

### Q3. WILL YOU REALLY WORK AT THE JOB?

Are you a hard worker? Are you willing and eager to work?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to hire anyone who's lazy, has a bad attitude or won't work.

**Key words:** Initiative, attitude

**Response:** Show your enthusiasm and eagerness to work. Tell stories about your good work ethic.

### Q4. WILL YOU FIT IN?

Will your personality and work style mesh with the company's? Can you get along with others?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to hire someone who will become unhappy and leave or who will antagonize others.

**Key words:** Relations, coworkers, boss, customers

**Response:** Describe positive interactions you have had with supervisors, coworkers and customers in the past. Get along well with the interviewer!

### Q5. WILL YOU LEAVE SOON?

Will you stick around or will the employer need to go through this whole process again in six months?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to invest time and money in someone who'll soon quit.

**Key words:** Future, plans, goals, objectives

**Response:** Say that you want to build a career at the company and plan to be there for the foreseeable future. If the job involves extensive on-the-job training, you should stick around long enough for the employer to recoup the investment of time and money in you. This is how you, as CEO of Me, Inc., fulfill your obligations to your customers.

### Q6. ARE YOU SAFE?

Can you manage your temper and control your behavior? Will you hurt customers or coworkers?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to hire someone who may harm any person or property.

**Key words:** Conflict, stress

**Response:** Few questions directly address this concern. You have to show that you are safe. Always be friendly. Don't try to intimidate. Keep your appearance neat, professional and relaxed.

### Q7. CAN I AFFORD YOU?

Are the salary and benefits within range?

**Concern:** The employer doesn't want to waste time if he can't afford you. Also, he may want to pay you the minimum possible and wants to see if you will accept that.

**Key words:** Benefits, salary, overtime, compensation

**Response:** Answer such questions with “Are you offering me the job?” If “yes,” begin negotiating (page 56). If “no,” say you want to keep talking about whether you're a good fit for the job before discussing compensation.



### EXERCISE: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IDENTIFICATION

This exercise helps you translate employers’ typical questions into the “Super Seven” you’ve practiced answering. Write the number of the appropriate “Super Seven” for each query below. For example, “Have you ever worked without supervision?” relates to Q3 (Will you really work at the job?), so you’d write Q3 on the line.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ___ 1. Tell me about yourself.  | ___ 17. Describe a time when you successfully dealt with someone you didn’t like (or vice versa). |
| ___ 2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?  | ___ 18. What courses in school did you like/dislike?  |
| ___ 3. How do you define “being on time?”   | ___ 19. How do you count back change?   |
| ___ 4. Describe a situation in which you were asked to do something wrong. What did you do?         | ___ 20. Give an example of a time you showed initiative.  |
| ___ 5. What are your long-term goals?   | ___ 21. Describe a recent situation where you dealt with an upset customer or coworker.           |
| ___ 6. How did you prepare for this interview?  | ___ 22. Tell me about your worst/best boss.   |
| ___ 7. How would you describe yourself?   | ___ 23. Describe a situation where you planned ahead to avoid potential problems.                 |
| ___ 8. Describe a time when you handled a stressful situation successfully.                         | ___ 24. Why did you leave your last position?   |
| ___ 9. Tell me about a time when you solved a problem.  | ___ 25. Why do you want to work for our company?  |
| ___ 10. Give me an example where you set and achieved a goal.                                       | ___ 26. How can you contribute to our goals?  |
| ___ 11. How do you resolve conflict?  | ___ 27. Explain your qualifications for this position.  |
| ___ 12. Describe a time when you had to follow a policy you didn’t agree with.                      | ___ 28. Where do you want to be in five years?  |
| ___ 13. Describe an important document you wrote.   | ___ 29. How would your parents/teachers/former employers describe you?                            |
| ___ 14. Describe a situation where your job required you to go “above and beyond the call of duty?” | ___ 30. Why should we hire you over other people?   |
| ___ 15. Describe a time when you had to prioritize because you had too many things to do.           | ___ 31. What do you do best?  |
| ___ 16. Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision.                                      | ___ 32. Tell me about your first/most recent paying job.  |
|   | ___ 33. How do you feel about overtime?   |
|   | ___ 34. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?   |

<b>ANSWERS:</b> If you have questions about any answer, click on the Texas Job Hunter’s Guide at <a href="http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp">http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp</a> and click on the “Super Seven Interview Questions Quiz.”	1. Q1	6. Q3	11. Q4	16. Q1	21. Q4	26. Q2	31. Q2
	2. Q2	7. Q1	12. Q1	17. Q4	22. Q4	27. Q2	32. Q2
	3. Q1	8. Q2	13. Q2	18. Q2	23. Q2	28. Q5	33. Q7
	4. Q1	9. Q2	14. Q3	19. Q2	24. Q5	29. Q1	34. Q1
	5. Q5	10. Q2	15. Q1	20. Q3	25. Q3	30. Q2	

### HANDLING INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

Employers cannot discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability status. Still, some interviewers might ask related questions. If an employer asks if you have children, for example, you can respond in three ways:

1. Answer honestly. “Yes, I have two children.”
2. Refuse to answer. “I’d prefer to keep that information private.”
3. Answer the underlying concern. “You may wonder if my personal life will interfere with work. In fact, I have an excellent attendance record. I was at work 98 percent of the time at my last job.”

Answer 3 addresses the employer’s underlying question: “Will you really work at the job?” It reassures the employer that you will do the work required. It also shows that you can handle tough questions with skill and tact.

Of course, if you find a question offensive, you may decide you don’t want to work for such an organization in the first place!

## YOUR QUESTIONS

When you go to a job interview, size up the employer and the work situation. Just as the employer must say yes or no to you, you must say yes or no to the employer. Your questions help you decide. They also show your interest in the job.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

Plan to ask a few questions that really matter to you. Here are some suggestions:

- What are the top two expectations you have of the person coming into this position?
- If I were selected for this position, which training courses would I attend during my first six months?
- How does this company retain employees?
- Please describe an ideal employee.
- What skills are needed to perform this job?
- How do you measure and review performance?
- Please describe a typical day/week on this job.
- What are the best and worst aspects of this job?
- How long do people usually stay in this position?
- Why did the last person leave this position?
- How does this position fit in the organization?
- How many employees are in this department?
- How long have you worked here?
- What is the company culture here?
- What projects would the person in this position be working on over the next several months?
- What are the next steps after our meeting?
- When will you make your decision?

### QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

NEVER ask anything about:

- benefits, including holiday time, sick time and vacation time
- salary or stock options
- items already answered in the interview
- information you should already know from basic research

Finally, don't ask too many questions and thus take over the interview! Select several that seem most pertinent to the job.

### WHY ASK QUESTIONS

You must ask questions!  
When you do, you:

- make the interviewer's job easier
- impress the interviewer with your preparation
- show your interest in the company and the job
- find out how to distinguish yourself from other applicants
- gather information about the job and company
- assess the environment to decide if you like it



## RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

Research is crucial before you write a cover letter, tailor your résumé, complete an application form or go to an interview. It helps you prepare and it proves your interest to employers. These days, with all the readily-accessible information about employers, it's the least that you can do.

### FACTS ABOUT THE JOB IN GENERAL

You will impress the interviewer with your knowledge and greatly increase your ability to negotiate successfully if you research the job beforehand. (See page 56 for more about negotiations.)

### WHAT TO KNOW

Here's just some of the information you should learn about the occupation:

- Average salary, nationally and locally
- Economic outlook: is this field growing or declining?
- Typical advancement opportunities

### WHERE TO GET THE INFORMATION

You can get this information from many sources:

- Texas CARES (see page 3 for more information)
- SOCRATES for occupational profiles and employer listings at <http://socrates.cdr.state.tx.us>
- Career-oriented websites, some of which can be found by clicking Texas Job Hunter's Guide at <http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/jobhunters.asp>.
- Internet search engines
- Professional associations
- People employed in that position (see information interviews on page 26)

### FACTS ABOUT THE EMPLOYER

Knowing a little about the company where you're applying before you show up for the interview can only help your chances! The good news is it's easier than ever to find the information.

### WHAT TO KNOW

Here's just some of the information to research:

- Products
- Organizational structure
- Services
- Financial status, e.g., stock prices
- Competitors
- Reputation
- Recent major changes
- Upcoming major changes
- Goals
- Interviewer(s)' personality, background (optional)

### WHERE TO GET THE INFORMATION

You can get information from many sources:

- Company's newsletter and PR publications
- Company's website
- Company's annual reports
- Internet search engines
- People you know and their friends
- Company's customers
- Human resource and public relations departments
- Competitors and former employees
- Public library

## SOCRATES

Standardized Occupational Components for  
Research and Analysis of Trends in Employment System

All SOCRATES users should review the links below for TWC's "Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines", our "SOCRATES Planning and Research Documents" and the "WHAT'S NEW in SOCRATES" notices to stay abreast of updated data tables, research files and system enhancements for optimal use of these comprehensive regional LMI planning tools.

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SOCRATES software is designed as a tool to assist local Texas planners perform a regional labor market analysis. SOCRATES is useful for local workforce planning under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to generate lists of Targeted Industries and Targeted Occupations:

Explain  
Begin Targeting Process

Complimentary labor market analysis tools are also available in the SOCRATES system which are designed as integral modules for additional area economic analysis and career information scenarios:

Explain  
County Narrative Profiles

Explain  
View Occupational Profiles

Explain  
Employer Search

Explain  
Texas Wages and Employment Projections

Explain  
Begin Shift-Share Analysis

Explain  
Regional Occupational Evaluation

The planning guidelines issued for targeted industries and occupations and approved by the Texas Workforce Commission / Workforce Development Division are documented at:

### HELPFUL HINT

Call the HR department or visit an Internet site to get salary information about the job you seek. DON'T ask the person interviewing you!

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Some employers use pre-employment testing because it reveals whether job applicants really have the skills they say they have. Testing can also show whether you will fit in with the culture of the organization, and whether you are fit for the job.

If you refuse to take a test, you may not get that particular job but you may decide you don't want to work there anyway. If you do take a test, just do your best and relax.

### TYPES OF TESTS

There are many different types of tests you may be required to complete. For some, you can prepare in advance; for most you can't.

- Knowledge/proficiency: an actual task, e.g., a typing test
- Literacy: a reading or math test
- Personality: providing the employer your personal preferences, e.g., the Myers-Briggs assessment
- Honesty and integrity: a written test that inquires about your trustworthiness and honesty
- Physical ability: to demonstrate strength and/or flexibility if the job demands it
- Mental ability/aptitude: an intelligence (I.Q.) test, which employers may use to predict your learning ability
- Medical: visiting a doctor to assess your physical fitness
- Drug: providing a urine sample to test for drugs in your system
- Background check: the company may review your criminal record, driving record and credit history, with or without your knowledge (although they must tell you if they hire an outside firm to do the check)

### TIPS FOR WRITTEN TESTS

To improve your outcomes on written tests:

- Get a good night's rest beforehand
- Read the directions carefully
- Ask if it's to your advantage to guess
- Save the difficult questions for the end, especially if the test is timed

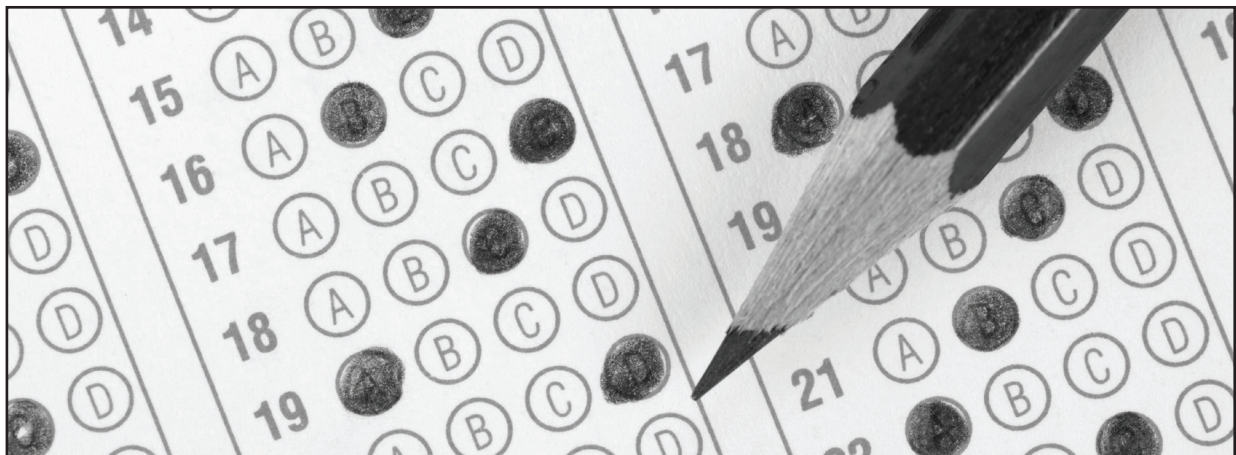
### THE UNSPOKEN TEST

Some tests are unspoken and subtle, focusing on your energy level or decision-making strategies.

One grocery store manager, for instance, would make stocker applicants run the gauntlet. He would meet them in one location and then BRISKLY walk through the store to his office.

If applicants didn't keep up with him and show some energy, they lost the job before the formal interview began. As he explained, "The job is fast-paced and requires high energy. If applicants aren't 'up' at the job interview, they're not going to last."

The solution? Show energy and enthusiasm at all times!





## BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

Whether you have a day or a week before the interview, it's important to be there on time, in good shape and well prepared. Here's how.

### PSYCH YOURSELF MENTALLY

Make sure that you prepare a positive mental attitude:

- Remind yourself that you have a great deal to offer.
- Vividly relive a successful moment in your life; it puts you in a winning frame of mind.
- Remember that interviewers don't hold your fate in their hands. There is life beyond this job!
- Tell yourself that you deserve the job (but remember that you need to prove it).

### REHEARSE

A little practice beforehand helps calm your anxiety.

- Review your unique skills and qualities.
- Study your résumé and application.
- Practice answering questions with a friend or a video camera. Strive for confidence and clarity.
- Identify your interviewing strengths and areas to develop.
- Don't over-rehearse or memorize your answers. Allow for spontaneity.
- Make sure your interview clothes fit, have no stains and feel comfortable for sitting and talking.



### A FEW DAYS BEFORE

Take all the last minute concerns out of the interview by covering all your bases:

- Drive to the interview location to determine travel time. Remember to consider the time of day!
- Clean your car; the interviewer might walk you to it afterwards.
- Buy your ticket for transportation, put gas in your car or re-confirm with the person who will take you.
- Have a back-up plan in case all else fails.

### THE NIGHT BEFORE

Preparing the night before brings peace of mind.

- Get the family ready for the next day.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Set aside everything that you need to bring.
- Get plenty of sleep.

### WHAT TO BRING

Set all your materials by the door so you don't forget:

- Notepad and pen
- Your career portfolio
- Extra résumés
- Copies of your references list
- Your questions and answers (see pages 47-50)

### THE MORNING OF

When you rise for the day, review this list:

- Remember that "less is more" when it comes to jewelry, make-up and cologne.
- Avoid too much caffeine.
- Brush your teeth.
- Leave so you can be AT LEAST ten minutes early.

### JUST BEFORE WALKING IN

When you arrive at the interview site:

- Freshen up in a bathroom.
- Remove any gum or candy from your mouth.
- TURN OFF your cell phone.
- Wait patiently for the interviewer.
- Look around and notice your surroundings.
- Breathe slowly and deeply.



## DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

The moment has arrived: Your interview is starting. It's your chance to shine. Here's how to shine your brightest.

### WHEN YOU ENTER

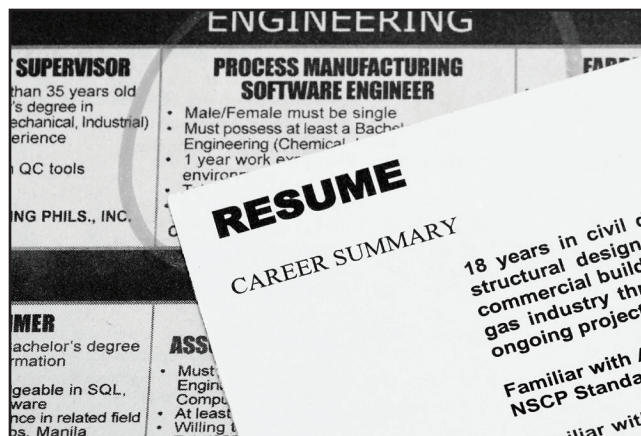
The interview begins when you arrive at the building.

- Be pleasant to the receptionist/secretary.
- Introduce yourself to the interviewer using your first and last name.
- Make eye contact and shake hands firmly.
- Say you are pleased to be there.
- Sit down only after you're invited to do so.
- Take out your notebook and pen.
- Wait for the interviewer to talk first.
- Address the interviewer(s) by name.
- Comment on the office environment and/or the interviewers' interests.

### MAKING YOUR CASE

Explain why you're the best person for the job.

- Don't expect your application or résumé to do your selling for you.
- Focus on what you can do for the company and this individual, not vice versa.
- Explain how your skills will help.
- Speak firmly and loudly enough to be heard.
- Never answer with just a "yes" or "no."
- Show off the research you've done on the company.
- Tell stories using the CAR format (challenge, action, results – see page 11) when asked about your experience. Show items from your career portfolio. Draw a picture if it helps you communicate your point.
- Show an interest in the organization, not just the specific job duties you may be assigned.



Texas Job Hunter's Guide

### ASSESSING THE SITUATION

Evaluate the interviewer and the surroundings. Do you like what you see and feel? You're an equal partner in this discussion!

- Treat the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation. Listen, respond and ask questions.
- Stick to the questions you planned (see page 48).

Follow career expert Don Monaco's advice to "Act like a consultant not an applicant. Think of yourself in problem-solving mode, in partnership with your interviewer."

### THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Your attitude should show that you want the job!

- Show an eagerness to work.
- Be positive—don't say anything negative and don't act desperate.
- Be energetic—don't slump, yawn, smoke, chew or look bored.
- Stay cool-headed—keep your temper.
- Stay calm—don't fidget or be overly-loud!
- Be real—don't be fake or overly flattering.
- Be serious—don't tell jokes.
- Be professional—use your best manners.

# CAREER

GOALS  
EDUCATION  
SKILLS  
VALUES  
VISIONS



## HOW TO ANSWER

### HOW TO ANSWER

Your answers are important so take your time:

- Collect your thoughts before speaking.
- Keep your answers short.
- Be honest—never lie or exaggerate.
- When you don't know the answer to a question, say "I don't know"—and sincerely express your eagerness to learn.
- Don't discuss your personal life in any way.
- Don't flirt even if the interviewer flirts.
- Tell stories when possible—don't make vague, general statements.
- Allow there to be silence sometimes.
- Avoid slang and pause words (e.g., "um," "et cetera").
- Offer the interviewer choices. If asked what skills you offer, for example, you might reply "I'm dedicated, I write well and I really get along well with customers. Which of those would you like me to talk about?" And then you tell a story about the skill the interviewer picks.
- Listen more than you speak!

### WHY YOU SHOULD LISTEN

Listening is crucial during the interview.

- It helps you answer naturally and effectively.
- You'll know when to speak.
- You'll catch trick questions designed to see if you're really paying attention or are a "yes person."

### HOW TO LISTEN

Listening requires you to focus all your energy on the other person, not on what you'll say next.

- Pay attention to what the interviewers say and don't say, as well as what their faces, voice and body language reveal.
- Maintain eye contact and let your face show interest.
- Take occasional notes.

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE

When the interview ends, leave gracefully by taking some actions before you go:

- Ask for a business card.
- If you want the job, look the interviewers in the eye and say you want to work with them.
- Ask them to describe the next steps in the process.
- Thank them for their time and interest.
- Shake hands.
- Smile at and thank the receptionist when you go.



## AFTER

The interview doesn't stop when you say goodbye. Every interaction with the employer afterwards will factor into the hiring decision. It may also affect whether the employer and you feel pleased with the final decision.

### IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS

As soon as possible after the interview:

- Take notes about details such as people's names, their personal information and what you learned about the company. You will forget if you don't!
- Congratulate yourself for doing your best.
- Send thank you letters to each interviewer, including the person who arranged the interview. Fax, mail or email your thank you depending on how soon they'll make a decision.
- Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses during the interview and identify how you can improve.

### A FEW DAYS LATER

Follow-up with your reference people:

- Ask if the employer called.
- Ask how the conversation went.
- Thank them for their help.

The decision process can be slow. If you haven't heard back, follow up directly with the employer!

- Call the lead interviewer to express your interest and check on the decision's status.
- If you have other offers, let the interviewer know— it may help prod a decision.
- Ask a few more questions about the job—it shows your enthusiasm and thoughtfulness.
- Be patient.

### TO ACCEPT AN OFFER

Congratulations! You've been offered the job. Now you need to agree on the terms of employment.

- Call the employer immediately and arrange to meet to discuss terms (see page 56 for Negotiations).
- After the negotiations, send a follow-up letter to express your enthusiasm and confirm the terms.

### TO DECLINE AN OFFER

**WORD OF CAUTION:** If you are receiving unemployment insurance benefits and have received one job offer, you should think long and hard before declining it. Declining a job offer could disqualify you from receiving unemployment benefits. But if this is not your situation ...

Congratulations! You've been offered the job, but if you don't want it, you need to move quickly.

- Notify the employer immediately.
- Keep the doors open, e.g., "This position doesn't seem like the best fit but please consider me for other openings" or "I appreciate the offer very much but I've just accepted another position."

### IF YOU DON'T GET AN OFFER

**KEEP YOUR CHIN UP.** Many of the most successful people in the world got used to rejection and failure before hitting their big break. Remember that. Try, try again.

- Ask the employer
  - 1) why you were turned down; it might help you improve your interview skills or change directions;
  - 2) if the employer knows of other opportunities; and
  - 3) to keep you in mind for future positions.
- Send another follow-up letter, thanking the interviewers for their time.
- Assess what you might do differently next time.
- Remember that being the most qualified doesn't mean you'll always get the job.





## OFFER ASSESSMENT

So they've offered you a job. Should you take it? This is a question only you can answer and it may not be easy. If you've submitted other applications, should you wait and see if they pan out? If you have a job now, is the new offer better? The following exercise can help you decide.

### EXERCISE: SHOULD YOU TAKE THE NEW JOB?

This exercise helps you compare job offers, job possibilities and/or your current position. For each job in question, complete the exercise below. Label each item 1-4: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent. Then add up the score. Compare the scores to make your decision or just to assess your current job. If one job's overall score is 10 points higher than another, think seriously about choosing the first job. You might also select five items that matter most to you from the list below and compare the scores of just these to decide. It's up to you.

\_\_\_ **Meaningful and Challenging work**

spend most of my time on important, worthwhile assignments; have a variety of quality assignments

\_\_\_ **Possibility to Maximize My Potential**

opportunity to use my interests and abilities; chance to pursue what I like most; makes best use of my greatest skills and talents

\_\_\_ **Opportunity to Meet Career/Life Plan Goals**

meets immediate and short-term professional/personal needs; furthers my long-term objectives for professional/personal life

\_\_\_ **Pay and Benefits**

compares with industry average; commensurate with my experience, education and achievements; adequately compensates for all hours, including overtime; offers prospects for increasing income; benefits adequate for my needs, age and dependents

\_\_\_ **Relationship with Supervisor(s)**

compatible personalities; same management/work style; similar values, goals and ethics

\_\_\_ **Relationship with Coworkers/Subordinates**

compatible personalities and work styles; positive overall morale

\_\_\_ **Corporate Identity and Culture**

relate to company's purpose/products; company engaged in social policies or practices compatible with my beliefs

\_\_\_ **Work Environment**

basic atmosphere and ambiance; comfortable and well equipped; meets health and safety standards

\_\_\_ **Location**

in desirable city and neighborhood; easily accessible

\_\_\_ **Advancement Opportunity**

short-term/long-term opportunities for advancement; positive growth potential; policy toward promoting from within; record for upholding equal opportunity policies

\_\_\_ **Level of Job Stress**

sufficient time to meet deadlines; how demanding management is; types of crises encountered; likelihood of burnout or health problems

\_\_\_ **Work Schedule**

hours per week; requirements for working on weekends, holidays, split shifts; how much vacation and holiday time

\_\_\_ **Freedom and Flexibility**

control over what I do and when projects are due; express personal preferences in dress and conduct; flextime possible

\_\_\_ **Authority and Responsibility**

have the authority to meet responsibilities for which I'm accountable; how many decision-making opportunities; how many people do I supervise

\_\_\_ **Status and Recognition**

proud to be associated with this company; how do peers, clients, friends regard this job; does it measure up to my abilities and education; what type of feedback given for my accomplishments

\_\_\_ **Opportunity for Professional Growth**

lets me become more knowledgeable and proficient in my field; chance to acquire more skills through training programs or tuition reimbursement

\_\_\_ **Job Security**

company turnover rate; prospects of cutbacks or mergers; might my job be eliminated within the organization

\_\_\_ **Economic Outlook**

how position affected by local, national, international economic conditions; keeping up with technological advances and other changes

\_\_\_ **Impact on Personal Life**

enough time and energy to enjoy a balanced lifestyle and outside interests; how job affects my overall physical and mental health

\_\_\_ **Impact on Others**

how does my schedule, including travel, affect my spouse, family, friends; must family participate in work-related social activities

*adapted from Before You Say "I Quit!"  
by Diane Holloway, Ph.D. and Nancy Bishop*

## NEGOTIATIONS

Whether you're offered a job as an executive in a Wall Street firm or as a cook at McDonald's, you can and should negotiate the terms of your employment.

### WHY

If you negotiate:

- You'll feel better about your job
- Your supervisor may respect you for it
- You'll demonstrate how you'll negotiate future assignments and other issues at work

### WHAT

For entry-level jobs, wages may be fixed but you can negotiate other benefits. Consider:

- Hours (number, shifts, flexibility, overtime)
- Leave (number of days off)
- Tools, supplies and equipment
- Work space/office
- Insurance (when eligible for...)
- Ongoing education/training (type, frequency)
- Tuition reimbursement
- Job title
- Parking
- Dependent care
- Stock options
- Earlier performance review (and therefore earlier opportunity for wage increase)

### HOW

To negotiate effectively, follow these guidelines:

- Focus on the employer's needs, not yours!
- Research beforehand so you know what the position is worth for that industry, size of the company and how it is doing financially (see page 49).
- Decide the minimum you can accept before you begin.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Be ready to show why you're worth what you want.
- Let the employer make the first offer.
- Make sure you understand everything before you negotiate. Be thorough but don't be aggressive.
- When negotiating, be reasonable and respectful, not pushy or demanding. Remember, this job is not yours yet. The employer could withdraw the offer as easily as she made it.
- Get the final offer in writing and signed.

### HELPFUL HINT

Remember PIA when you negotiate:

- Give yourself **Permission** to ask.
- Gather the **Information** you need.
- Show a positive, calm and helpful **Attitude**.





## AN EMPLOYER'S STORY

### NATISHA, INC.

Natisha worked for a small but successful record store at the edge of a university campus. She thought it'd be easy to replace an employee who'd recently graduated and quit. She was wrong. Instead of placing an ad in the campus newspaper, Natisha asked all of her current employees if they knew of anyone who might be interested in a job. They agreed to pass the word onto friends. Within a week, she received several applications and soon scheduled interviews.

The first candidate, Mark, arrived for his afternoon interview looking like he'd just stumbled out of bed. He was unshaven, his clothes were sloppy and his hair matted. "Casual dress was one thing, but this is going too far," Natisha thought. "If he can't pull himself together for a job interview, when he's trying to make a good impression, he's never going to work out." His answers to a few questions caused her to wonder if he were on drugs or just a really spacey guy. Either way, she didn't want him working for her!

Natisha's next applicant was Teresa, who'd been recommended by Natisha's best employee. Even before she arrived, Natisha liked Teresa. Her application form was neat and she already had retail experience. Natisha had basically decided that if her interview went OK, she'd have the job.

Unfortunately for Teresa, she blew it. Although she dressed properly

and could speak well, she had the wrong attitude. Natisha asked what Teresa could do for the company. Teresa just looked at her blankly. "I thought you were going to tell me what YOU could offer so I could see if this is the job for me," she replied. Inwardly, Natisha groaned. Another kid who thought that the world owed her a living, and missed out on a job because of it.

A few days later, Natisha arranged another interview. Again, the application was good and this time the candidate had included a résumé, which impressed her. Natisha didn't want to get her hopes up but she couldn't help it. She was sick of wasting time reading applications and interviewing people when the store was short-staffed. She needed to hire someone soon!

She led Andres to her office, noticing with approval that Andres was clean, well-dressed and made good eye contact. When she asked Andres how he could help the store, Natisha braced herself. As he described his skills and experience, however, Natisha relaxed.

Natisha knew that working retail wasn't rocket science; she could teach most people the skills needed. What she couldn't teach was a positive attitude and eagerness to work. Andres had both and he got the job on the spot. Natisha believed she'd made the right decision and now time would tell!

# STEP SIX/ZERO: WORK

- TRACK ACHIEVEMENTS
- CONNECT WITH PEOPLE
- INCREASE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS
- ASSESS YOURSELF

Once you get hired, the real work begins. That's Step Six (or Zero, depending on how you look at it). Even if you like your new job, you need to prepare for your next job hunt and the future course of your career. Be STRATEGIC as you make your plans.

## **S — Seek Advice**

Continue to connect with people. Ask those you know or meet for career advice. Read career management books. Go to a career counselor. Visit a local Workforce Solutions office and ask for assistance (page 27). Learn what works and then do it!

## **T — Take Risks**

Step outside your routine. Ask for new assignments that will stretch your skills and raise your profile. Research and request equipment that will help you do your job better. Do work that may earn you a promotion. Consider changing fields.

## **R — Conduct Research**

Read about other companies and occupations that interest you, the economy and trends in your field. Research gives you an edge; if your circumstances change or you change, you'll be ready.

## **A — Form Alliances**

Build relationships with people in your organization, profession, industry and community. They may bring you opportunities and information. When you can, do the same for them. Volunteer and share your time and talents with others. Give back the help you received when you were job hunting.

## **T — Engage in Training and Development**

Your success depends on lifelong learning. Increasing your knowledge and skills makes you flexible and able to take on different types of work. Attend conferences and workshops. Take courses at your local college. Your employer might pay for some of this training, so investigate it!

## **E — Stay Energetic**

Take care of yourself. Eat well and exercise regularly. Surround yourself with upbeat, supportive people. Stay positive; it's the best energizer of all and helps you get more done.

## **G — Set Goals**

Establish goals that reflect your purpose or mission in life. Visualize yourself in your ideal job. What do you do? Who's with you? What's the environment? Develop and implement the steps needed to achieve your vision.

## **I — Be Innovative**

Try something new so you can do your work better, faster, cheaper. Innovation combines creativity with common sense and empowers you to turn your ideas into reality. Suggest ways to improve your organization's operations!

## **C — Make a Commitment**

Commit to guiding your career's future. Plan your life—don't just react to events. Then implement your ideas. Invest in yourself and your future the way any entrepreneur would. Remember, you run Me, Inc.

And keep track of your achievements, education and training, and contacts! You'll need them for your next hunt!

## KEEP ON ROLLING!

Good luck on this round of your job search! Remember, the more you travel this road, the more resources you gain and the easier it gets. Focus on possibilities instead of problems and you'll have a more worthwhile journey.

Answers to Job Hunting I.Q. Quiz on next page:

1. c (p. 23)    4. c (p. 46)    7. b (p. 58)    10. c (p. 48)  
2. b (p. 12)    5. b (p. 25)    8. b (p. 1)    11. a (p. 22, 36, 52)  
3. b (p. 28)    6. a (p. 1-59)    9. a (p. 24)    12. a (p. 12, 37, 49)

Being an excellent employee is the best way to job hunt. *Succeed at Work*, published by the Texas Workforce Commission, explains how to achieve excellence. It covers topics including a good work ethic, communication, customer service skills and much more. It also describes how to live a balanced life that supports your work success. It even suggests how you can enjoy any type of job—even one you think you hate!  
For more information or to order, visit [www.lmci.state.tx.us](http://www.lmci.state.tx.us) or call 1-800-822-PLAN.

## TEST YOUR JOB HUNTING I.Q.!

Think you're ready to begin job hunting?

Take this quiz, then review the answers on page 59.

If you answered all the questions correctly, you're ready to go. If you missed any, read this booklet!

1. If you are currently unemployed, you should expect to spend this much time each week looking for your next job.
  - a. 20-25 hours
  - b. 30-35 hours
  - c. 40-45 hours
  - d. every hour of every day
2. You can tell how much someone really wants to find work by the number of résumés he sends out each week.
  - a. true
  - b. false
3. Getting a job because "you know someone" is cheating.
  - a. true
  - b. false
4. How many interview questions do you really need to be able to answer?
  - a. 50
  - b. 10
  - c. 7
  - d. 20
5. It's best to pick one job hunting strategy and devote all your energy to it.
  - a. true
  - b. false
6. Your entire focus should be on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.
  - a. true
  - b. false
7. The best part about getting a new job is the fact that—finally—you can relax.
  - a. true
  - b. false
8. Which best explains the Me, Inc. concept:
  - a. I need to look out for number one and no one else—that means doing what I want when I want to do it. If the boss doesn't like it, I can find another job somewhere else.
  - b. I need to take responsibility for my career by making sure I'm constantly learning and improving my skills, doing the best I can and treating everyone—especially supervisors and coworkers—as valued customers.
  - c. I'm not sure what's going to happen but I'm not going to look for trouble. If I get laid off, I'll just try to find another similar job somewhere else. I'll deal with it when it happens.
  - d. My boss decides my career development. If I do well at work, I'll advance.
9. Knowing about the labor market and the economy helps you make informed decisions about your career.
  - a. true
  - b. false
10. When you first sit down for the interview, which of the following should you never do?
  - a. Comment positively on an unusual painting on the wall.
  - b. Take out your notebook and pen, poised to jot down any crucial points.
  - c. Ask the interviewer how many vacation days you'll get a year.
  - d. Smile at the interviewer, make eye contact and look enthusiastic.
11. The job hunting asset most likely to impress employers is:
  - a. a positive attitude
  - b. postage stamps
  - c. a résumé tracking database
  - d. local want ads
12. An effective cover letter, résumé and interview require you to research the employer and job first.
  - a. true
  - b. false

# NOTES





**Texas Workforce Commission**  
**Labor Market and Career Information Department**

101 East 15th Street, Room 0252  
Austin, Texas 78778-0001  
Phone: (512) 936-3200  
FAX: (512) 936-3204  
[www.texasworkforce.org/labormarket](http://www.texasworkforce.org/labormarket)  
Career Information Hotline: 800-822-7526

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice).

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