

# Presenting Your Best Self to Employers

Your resume and your job interview serve as first impressions for a potential employer. Following these tips to present your skills and experience may help you land an interview or job offer.

## Resumes

A resume is an informational document that sells you and your experience to potential employers. When writing and editing your resume, consider these tips:

- **Highlight your contact information** by using a large, clear font. You want to make sure that a hiring manager can easily get in touch with you to set up a job interview!
- **Remember to include volunteer work.** Paid work experience isn't the only way to gain important skills. If you've worked as a volunteer or unpaid intern, you probably gained important knowledge that will serve you well in the workplace.
- **Proofread** your resume to check for any errors, including spelling mistakes, formatting issues or other typos. Ask a friend or family member to proofread it, too; they may be able to identify mistakes and help you identify skills and experience that you didn't think to include.
- **Tailor your resume for specific jobs.** Spend a few minutes comparing your resume to the responsibilities and qualifications for specific job listings. Circle some of the keywords that the employer used and use the same words in your resume if you have those skills and experience.



- **Revisit and revise your resume.** Updating your resume with any new experience or skills you've gained helps you present a whole picture of your work to potential employers.

## Interviews

Knowing how to translate your experience from your resume into a conversation can help you land a job. Consider these tips to make a strong impression:

- **Research the company** or business before your interview. Many interviewers may ask why you want to work for their company, and doing research beforehand will help you identify the missions and values of the company that you appreciate.
- **Arrive early.** Determine how you're going to get to the interview location a day or 2 before you need to be there and plan to arrive 10 minutes early. Allow extra time for possible delays on your way to the interview to make sure you arrive on time and feeling calm.
- **Dress appropriately.** While business suits and professional dresses are appropriate for office jobs, you can plan to dress to fit the work environment. If you're interviewing for a more casual workplace, consider a collared shirt and khaki pants. No matter what type of job you're interviewing for, make sure your clothes are clean and pressed.

- **Practice answering questions.** This can help you think about how to talk about your experience and skills and show how you'd make a great addition to the business or company. Practicing and polishing your answers will help you feel more confident during the actual interview.
- **Prepare questions to ask.** Interviews are also for you to get to know the employer. Asking questions shows that you have a serious interest in the position. Consider these questions:
  - What is a typical day or week like for someone in this position?
  - What's the most important thing someone would need to accomplish in the first 3 – 6 months in this position?
  - What's your favorite part of working for this business?
  - What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- **Mind your manners.** Being respectful by showing up on time, turning off your phone and giving the interviewer your full attention will make a strong impression during the interview. Afterwards, follow up with your interviewer to thank them for the time and restate your interest in the position.

## Disability and your job search

It is your choice if you'd like to disclose your disability to an employer; however, you will need to disclose if you need to request an accommodation, whether it's for the job application and interview process or for the workplace.

If you're working with a Ticket to Work service provider, they may help you think about the decision to disclose, and if you need an accommodation, they can help guide you through the process of making the request.

## Ticket to Work and your job search

Social Security's Ticket to Work (Ticket) program supports career development for people ages 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work. The Ticket program is free and voluntary.

Through the Ticket program, you can work with a service provider, like an Employment Network (EN) or your State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, to receive free supports and services that can help on the path to financial independence through work. Services may include a variety of options, like benefits counseling and job-search assistance. And many ENs and State VR agencies offer resume writing and editing services as well as interview preparation and mock interviews to help you present your best self to employers!

Find a Ticket program service provider using the Find Help tool at [choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp](https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp).

## Learn more

To learn more about the Ticket program, call the **Ticket to Work Help Line** at **1-866-968-7842** or **1-866-833-2867** (TTY) 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. A representative can answer your questions and send you a list of service providers.



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