

Network to Work Meeting

February 2023

RESOURCE DOCUMENT – *APPLYING FOR JOBS ONLINE*

How to Apply for Jobs Online

When looking for a job, many applications will be completed online - either directly on an employer website or via a job board. Before you start job searching, you should first prepare to complete online job applications. This requires gathering all the information you'll need to apply. It will be easier to get your applications in if you have all the employment information employers want on hand.

There are many steps and things to consider when using the internet to search and apply for jobs. Here we will introduce you to many of the most important.

What You Need to Apply

In order to apply for a job online and to complete online job applications, you'll need Internet access, an email address to use for job searching, an up-to-date resume, a cover letter for some jobs, your employment history, and your availability to work if you're applying for a part-time job.

In addition, as part of the job application process, you may need to take an online employment test and be prepared to provide employment references.

Get Your Resume Ready

Before you start looking for jobs and completing online job applications, you'll need an updated version of your resume ready to upload. This resume should be tailored to the job you are applying for and **include keywords contained in the job listing**.

Make sure your resume includes your current contact information and work history. Save your resume as yournameresume.doc, rather than with a generic file name like "resume." This way, the hiring manager will connect you with the resume when they review it.

You should also have a basic cover letter ready that you can customize for each job you apply to. You should always include a cover letter when applying for a job, unless the job listing specifically says not to.

Some sites let you upload an existing resume from Microsoft Word on your computer with the click of a button. Sometimes you will be asked to convert the document to a PDF or other kind of file. On other sites, you may need to copy and paste your resume into an online profile or use a resume builder that is incorporated into the job application system.

Know Your Employment History

Have the details of your employment history ready. Online application systems typically ask for the same information as paper job applications, including your contact information, educational background, and employment history including job titles, starting and ending dates of employment, and salary for each position.

You may need the full address of your previous employers, along with the phone number of the company and your supervisor's name.

Review Sample Job Application Forms

One helpful practice is to download a sample job application form and complete it before you start your online applications. Print and fill it out so you will know and have ready the exact information you will need to enter.

Here is a list of some of the information frequently requested on job applications:

- Name, address, telephone number, email
- Desired job
- Desired salary
- Previous positions, including titles, duties, employers, locations, and dates of employment
- Salary history (in locations where it is legal to ask)
- Names of previous supervisors
- Permission to contact your current employer
- Reasons for leaving prior jobs
- Educational background, including majors, degrees, schools, locations, dates of attendance/graduation, GPA, honors, awards
- Extracurricular activities
- Military experience
- Volunteer work

- Specific skills related to the job
- Essay with topics such as why you're interested in, or qualified for, the job
- How you learned about the job
- Employees you know at the company
- References (typically three references with their contact information)
- Licenses/certifications
- Whether you have access to an automobile for work purposes
- Driving record (with limits on what can be released)
- Whether you have the authorization to work in the U.S.
- Times and days you're available to work
- Start and end dates you're available for seasonal and temporary jobs
- Whether or not you have been convicted of a crime and, if so, what crime and when (only legally required in some states)
- Certification that all the information you have supplied is accurate

Create Accounts on Job Sites

Some job boards and company websites require users to create an account when they apply for jobs. It's a good idea to start your online job search by creating an account on at least one of the major job boards including Monster, CareerBuilder, and Dice for tech jobs. If you're seeking a professional position, it's also important to create a profile on LinkedIn.

In order to create an account, you'll need to register with a current email address so that your account can be confirmed. Your user name will either be your email address or a name you select. You'll be able to choose a password for your account. Be sure that your email address is professional – usually some variation of your name.

Some sites allow job seekers to register with their Facebook or LinkedIn information. On those sites, you'll be able to use your Facebook or LinkedIn user name and password to access the site. You may also be able to import your employment history from the site you use to connect.

Post your Resume or a Candidate Profile Online

Most jobs sites provide a system for job seekers to post a resume online. After you upload your resume, you'll be able to use it to quickly apply for jobs on the site.

Depending on the site, you'll be able to make your resume viewable for employers which will give your job search extra exposure.

Search for Jobs Online

In addition to using job boards (which post jobs submitted by employers), using a job search engine can save you a lot of online job search time. When you use a job search engine, you can search for jobs found across various job boards and employer websites.

Job Search Engines vs. Job Boards

Generally, job boards focus on a particular industry, location or job type (such as freelance, contract, remote, etc.). Employers usually post jobs directly to job boards. Individual job boards usually have fewer users than a job search engine.

A job search engine like Indeed will compile a wide range of job listings from thousands of online sources. These sources include various online job boards and employer career websites.

For example, the job search engine GetWork.com searches for jobs only on company websites, so all the listings you get will be current openings. Indeed.com searches jobs on job boards, newspapers, associations, and company websites, including most of the Fortune 1000 companies.

Search using the job search keywords list you created and you'll get a list of job openings that match your specifications very quickly. When you click on a job opening, you'll get instructions on how to apply and/or be directed to a company website to apply.

Tips on Using a Job Search Engine

Find your favorite: Searching many job search engines at once can be overwhelming. After checking out some of the top job search engines, select one or two of your favorites. Perhaps you will focus on a niche job search engine or one that has a useful advanced search option. Limiting the number of job search engines you use will keep you from getting overwhelmed.

Use the advanced search: Most job search engines have an advanced job search option. This is a great way to narrow down the many job listings on a job search engine. You can typically search by keyword or phrase, company, industry, or location. You can also search by salary. This is a helpful way to make sure you only look for jobs that are a good fit.

Create an account: If you find a job search engine you really like, consider registering for an account. Most job search engines allow you to register and upload a resume and cover letter. You can also typically bookmark jobs or request emails with the latest job listings.

Watch out for multiple listings: One drawback to job search engines is that, because there are so many listings from multiple places, repeated listings are common.

Be careful to avoid repeat listings, as well as expired job listings.

Use Job Search Keywords

When you look for jobs online, the most effective way to search is to use job keywords to find jobs in the career fields and industries you are interested in. Keywords would include various names for the type of work you are interested in or important skills you would like to use.

Keywords can be more effective than using the predefined search options in the job banks, because they search the entire listing (job description, job title, contact information, etc.) for the keyword(s) that you use.

It is helpful to create a list of job search keywords that reflect your job interests and skills, including the location(s) where you want to work, type of position, industry, etc.

Apply for Jobs on Company Websites

Company websites are a good source of job listings, especially if you know what companies you are interested in working for. You can go directly to the site and search for and apply for jobs online directly on many company websites. At most company sites, you can apply for all level positions online – from part-time hourly jobs to top management positions.

Whenever possible, you should apply directly on the company website, even if you find the listing elsewhere. Your application will go directly into the company's applicant tracking system and you'll be able to monitor its progress.

When Are You Available to Work?

Especially when applying for part-time jobs, you may be asked what days and hours you are available to work. Know your schedule and availability before you apply.

If you are flexible with your schedule, be sure to emphasize this in your job application (and later in your interview). Employers appreciate job candidates who are willing to work flexible hours and work shifts that others might not want to take (such as night, evening, or weekend shifts).

Job Application Instructions

It's important to follow all instructions when applying for jobs online. You may need to fill out a profile, upload your resume and cover letter, and/or take an employment test as part of the online application process.

Regardless of how you apply, it's important to follow the company's application instructions, to submit all the required materials, and to carefully proofread your application before you click the "Submit" button.

Keep track of the job site accounts you create so you can track your applications, apply for more jobs, and keep your resume updated. You can find ten easy ways to organize your job search here: <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/organize-your-job-search-2060710>.

Email Job Applications

In addition to applying for jobs directly online, you may also need to apply via email.

Some employers, especially smaller companies, don't have systems in place to handle online job applications. There is a right way – and wrong ways – to send your resume and cover letter.

One important thing to do early in the job search process is to set up a professional email account for your job search. Avoid unprofessional email addresses like partyperson@email.com. Stick to addresses that simply include your name and some numbers.

Use the following link to find information on how to apply for jobs via email, including how to attach your resume and other documents, what to include in your email message, what to put in the subject line, and what information you need to include in your email signature. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/how-to-apply-for-jobs-via-email-2061595>.

Employment Tests

Along with filling out a job application online, you might also be asked to take an employment test. Some tests assess your skills or even your personality to see if you are a good fit for the job and company. Sometimes you are told immediately after taking the test whether you have successfully moved on to the next round of the hiring process or not. Others take more time.

There are many other kinds of pre-employment tests, including cognitive tests and emotional intelligence (EI) tests. Read here for more information on the kinds of tests you might be asked to take online, and how to handle them. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/organize-your-job-search-2060710>.

Online Job Application Follow-Up

If you have contacts at the company, they may be able to help get your job application noticed by the hiring manager.

After sending your application, check LinkedIn for contacts you may have at the company. If you have a contact, ask for a referral or an introduction, if a contact person is listed in the job posting. If there is no contact person listed, ask if your acquaintance knows who is on the hiring committee, and ask for an introduction.

Best Job Search Websites

Job websites are today's equivalent to the classified ads in the newspaper. Using a job website is one of the best, most efficient ways to search for and apply to dozens of job opportunities.

Here are some of the best:

- Indeed
- Monster
- Glassdoor (good for researching employers)
- FlexJobs (great for remote jobs)
- Wellfound: (angel.co) – for unique jobs at startups and tech companies
- LinkedIn
- Getwork
- Snagajob

Do's and Don'ts when you Apply Online

Here are some tips you might find helpful as you look for your next job.

1. Research the company before applying.

Before even applying, visit the company's website and social media pages to make sure it's a place you actually want to work and that your mission aligns with theirs. This will also help you in case you get called in for an interview.

2. Read the job description carefully.

Go over the job description several times to make sure you have a clear understanding of what the job duties are and what type of person they're seeking. If the ad says you need 10 years of

experience, but you've only got two, move onto the next job listing. Overlooking a key requirement will most likely result in rejection.

3. Apply as soon as you can.

When you see a job posting, remember that many others may have seen it as well. Make sure to apply ASAP, even if the application deadline is not for another 10 days. There's the off-chance the company might make a decision earlier, and you don't want to miss out.

4. Follow all instructions in the posting.

Following directions is extremely important. Postings may ask that you apply only via email or through a job portal. Either way, do what it asks. Also, include all of the information requested: cover letter, resume, work samples, references, salary requirements and whatever else.

5. Include your LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn is a common tool used by employers to review applicants. Make sure your profile is up-to-date.

6. Review your social media accounts.

Before including any social media accounts with your application, make sure they do not contain text or photos that could be deemed offensive or unprofessional. If you can't delete sensitive material, at least change all of your settings to private so no one except your friends and connections can see them.

7. Don't get too personal.

Like they always say, never discuss politics or religion with strangers. The same rings true when applying for a job. Keep your thoughts to yourself.

8. Make sure to follow up.

It's always a good idea to follow up a week or so after applying. A short email or phone call saying you're just checking in to see how your application is going might be fine (unless the job posting clearly states no follow-up emails or phone calls).

9. Don't hit the 'send' button too soon.

Proofread and revise your application and cover letter before sending. Compare what you're about to send with the original job posting to ensure they align. Always avoid submitting incomplete information, as that might indicate what type of worker you'd be if you got the job.

Signs of a Hiring Scam

While online job sites and video technologies are highly effective for their intended purposes, they are also sometimes used by criminals looking to steal your money or identity. They claim to be part of the hiring process for legitimate companies and use LinkedIn, Zoom, phone interviews, mail and email to phish for your information.

Here are some red flags that may signal a scam:

1. **Payment requirements.** You should not have to pay an employer or an employment firm to get a job. You also shouldn't be asked to pay for any materials unless you have been hired and clearly agree to pay for something associated with the job, such as supplies or equipment.

Be especially suspicious of requests to deposit checks from the company and then provide reimbursement or payment to a third party using those funds. In instances of fraud, the checks eventually bounce, leaving you responsible for repayment of the fraudulent funds and associated fees.

2. **On-the-spot interviews or lack of preparation by hiring personnel leading up to the online session.** Be wary of any request to do an online video job interview immediately, without any prior contact by the hiring organization. A legitimate online interview is generally preceded by initial outreach, as well as information such as interview time, names and titles of those who may be on the call, among other things. A lack of advance preparation could be a red flag.

In addition, no legitimate employer will conduct an interview by text or email.

3. **Requests for personal information such as your Social Security number (SSN), credit card information or a bank account number.** The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and employment experts warn that asking for this type of information is a red flag that may signal job fraud. While many states allow employers to request SSNs on job applications, you can decline to provide it if you are uncomfortable. Furthermore, be aware that bank account information is generally requested only after you are hired—not during an interview. And even then, you should contact the company directly to confirm that the position and requested forms are valid before providing any personal information.
4. **Prompts to download documents or files.** Criminals phishing for your information may send you electronic files containing malware that captures keystrokes or mouse movements, or that even takes control of your webcam. If a file is sent to you via a virtual platform, the safest move is not to open it and to end the session.
5. **Odd or poorly written text**, including typos or unusual wording, on the online platform page or in other communication.
6. **Pressure to commit to a job quickly** or make equipment purchases.
7. **Language—spoken or written—that suggests a job is “guaranteed” or “waiting for you”** or that personal funds are required for purchases. This includes offers for a job for which you haven't interviewed.
8. **Interviews arranged for “previously undisclosed” jobs.** All federal job vacancies, for example, are announced to the public on usajobs.gov.

Here are six tips to avoid an online hiring scam:

1. **Don't respond to unsolicited requests** for an online interview. If you are not certain you applied for the job, don't engage in a session.
2. **Do an internet search to research the company and the hiring manager** or recruiter responsible for the job posting.
3. **Call the company's human resources department to verify** that the company does, in fact, use the designated technologies to conduct interviews remotely and that the company has scheduled an interview for you on the date for which you receive a request.
4. **Verify through the company that the person leading the online interview** or engaging in follow-up conversations is a current company employee or has been hired to represent the company.
5. **Terminate a call immediately if you are asked to provide personal or financial information** or to pay a fee that you did not expect, and do not respond to similar written requests.
6. **Trust your instincts:** If anything about the way the job interview or hiring process seems suspicious, contact the organization directly on your own to confirm the legitimacy of the position before taking any further action.

Sources:

"How to Apply for Jobs Online", by Alison Doyle, The Balance, Updated December 6, 2022

<https://www.thebalancemoney.com/how-to-apply-for-jobs-online-2061598>

"List of Questions Asked on a Job Application", by Alison Doyle, The Balance, Updated July 20, 2022

<https://www.thebalancemoney.com/list-of-questions-asked-on-a-job-application-2061577>

"Job Boards and Indeed", Indeed for Employers, <https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/job-boards#:~:text=with%20less%20work.-,Is%20Indeed%20a%20job%20board%3F,on%20Indeed%20for%20additional%20features>.

"Best Job Search Websites", by Emily Polner, The Balance, Updated January 13, 2023

<https://www.thebalancemoney.com/top-best-job-websites-2064080>

"10 Tips on How to Apply for a Job Online", by Indeed Editorial Team, Updated February 22, 2021

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/how-to-apply-job-online>

"Fake Online Hiring Scams: Don't Fall for Job Fraud", FINRA, June 24, 2022

<https://www.finra.org/investors/insights/fake-online-hiring-scams>